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**The Enemy of My Enemy is My Friend?
Comparing Soviet and Anglo-American
Discourse on Human Rights and Dissidents
1964-1991**

James Petrie Brown

PhD

2023

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Comparing Soviet and Anglo-American
Discourse on Human Rights and Dissidents
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the requirements of the University of
Northumbria at Newcastle for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Western discourse on Soviet dissidents like Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and Western politicians and journalists' citation of them as evidence of liberal individualism's inevitable triumph against communist totalitarianism, is interpreted by historians as having been integral to the Cold War's ideological conflict. However, this thesis demonstrates that the USSR was equally interested in depicting left-wing political figures in the West as dissidents who were evidence of capitalism's unpopularity and socialism's inevitable universal rise. This Soviet propaganda narrative primarily focused on figures from the Western New Left and trade unions. To counter the criticism Moscow received from the 1960s onwards for its abuse of Soviet dissidents' human rights, Soviet media utilised an interpretation of human rights that emphasised the centrality of labour rights. Soviet discourse depicted protesting New Leftists and striking trade unionists as dissidents who were the victims of Western anti-socialist state repression. Historians have only recently begun to study this aspect of Cold War history, and this thesis provides a new comprehensive study that reveals how the Soviet state invested significant media and diplomatic resources in building a narrative that depicted the West as the Cold War's worse abuser of human rights. By comparatively analysing Western and Soviet political discourse during 1964-91, making particular use of *EastView's* archives of Soviet newspapers and journals alongside other contemporary sources, this thesis presents findings that have important implications to historians' understandings of the Cold War. Particularly, they support the case increasingly made by scholars that Cold War history should be read forwards, rather than backwards from the vantage points of 1989 or 1991, to fully appreciate the complex development of the conflict by highlighting how human rights were a contested concept despite the eventual dominance of the Western interpretation post-1991 while also highlighting overlooked debate among Soviet elites and oppositionists over Western dissent.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas, and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved.

Approval has been sought and granted by the Research Ethics Committee on 29/09/2021.

I declare that the Word Count of this Thesis is 82,100 words.

James Petrie Brown

1/5/2023

List of Abbreviations

AFRI	American Foundation for Resistance International
BPP	Black Panther Party
CC	Central Committee
CDSP	Current Digest of the Soviet Press
CEU	Coal Employees Union
CPF	French Communist Party
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CPUSA	Communist Party of the USA
CREED	Christian Rescue Effort for the Emancipation of Dissidents
CSI	Club for Social Initiatives
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
FSC	Federation of Socialist Clubs
IMO	International Miners' Organisation
KGB	Committee for State Security
MEIMO	Institute of the World Economy and International Relations
MIF	Miners' International Federation
MTUI	Miners' Trade Union International
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
PATCO	Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization
RAF	Red Army Faction
RB	Red Brigades
RI	Resistance International
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
SDS	Students for a Democratic Society
SNCC	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
TUC	Trades Union Congress
USIA	United States Information Agency
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
YCL	Youth Communist League

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER: THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY IS MY FRIEND?

We are being told: 'Either change your way of life or be prepared for cold war.' But what if we should reciprocate? What if we should demand modification of bourgeois laws and usages that go against our ideas of justice and democracy as a condition for normal interstate relations?¹

Leonid Brezhnev, 1980

Introduction

The relationship between Soviet dissidents and their supporters in the West during the Cold War is a well-studied and revealing topic. Historians have explored the direct co-option of Soviet dissidents' campaigns by Western governments, such as James Peck in his study of successive US administrations' interest in Soviet human rights, while others like Elisa Kriza and Umberto Tulli have highlighted the interaction between the domestic politics of Western states and the issue of human rights in the USSR.² The extent of historical discourse on Soviet dissent and its international reception today was matched by the fervent contemporary discussion of Soviet dissidents in Western media and among politicians from the 1960s onwards, which said as much about the politics of the West as it did those of the USSR. The various Western attempts to enlist the Soviet dissidents as allies in the Cold War against the Soviet Union highlighted the different concerns and anxieties which informed Western politics during that time. Notable examples include left-wing activists' adoption of the cause of dissidents' human rights in the 1970s, and campaigns to support Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn led by conservatives in the US and UK as they grew pessimistic about the policy of détente but also the future of Western civilisation.³ Conservatives argued that détente and its

¹ Leonid Brezhnev, 'Report on draft constitution to CC, 24th May 1977', in *Socialism, Democracy, and Human Rights* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980), 165.

² Some recent studies include James Peck, *Ideal Illusions: How the U.S. Government Co-opted Human Rights* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2011); Elisa Kriza, *Alexander Solzhenitsyn: Cold War Icon, Gulag Author, Russian Nationalist?* (Stuttgart: Ibidem Verlag, 2014); Umberto Tulli "'Whose rights are human rights?'" The ambiguous emergence of human rights and the demise of Kissingerism', *Cold War History* 12, no. 4 (2012): 573-93; Kacper Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe: Human Rights and the Emergence of New Transnational Actors* (Cham: Springer Nature, 2019); Robert Horvath, *The Legacy of Soviet Dissent: Dissidents, Democratisation and Radical Nationalism in Russia* (Taylor and Francis Group, 2005); Benjamin Nathans, 'Talking Fish: On Soviet Dissident Memoirs', *The Journal of Modern History* 87, no. 3 (September, 2015): 579-614; Robert Horvath, "'The Solzhenitsyn Effect": East European Dissidents and the Demise of the Revolutionary Privilege', *Human Rights Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (2007): 879-907; Ann Komaromi, 'Samizdat and Soviet Dissident Publics', *Slavic Review* 71, no. 1 (Spring, 2012): 70-90; Mark Hurst, *British Human Rights Organizations and Soviet Dissent, 1965-1985* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017); Daniel Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights and the Demise of Communism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Sarah Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

³ For examples see Mark Hurst, "'To Build a Castle": The British Construction of Soviet Dissent', in 'Real and Imagined Communities', eds. Meagan Butler et al., special issue 7, *e-Sharp* (2013): 32-3,

accompanying softer tone on human rights abuses in the USSR against dissidents such as Solzhenitsyn, represented a betrayal of Western values of freedom of speech and liberty. More generally, Soviet dissidents were upheld in the West as evidence of the bankruptcy of Soviet socialism and the inevitable universal triumph of the individual and liberal democracy in an authoritarian society.⁴ However, despite the attention to Cold War dissent among historians there has been a relative lack of studies which ask whether the Soviet Union engaged in something similar, whereby it upheld examples of anti-capitalist dissidence in the West as evidence of Marxism-Leninism's inevitable rise.⁵

This thesis addresses this omission and conducts a comparative study of engagement with dissidents and figures of dissent in the opposing Cold War blocs by the Soviet Union and two Western countries, the US and the UK. The evidence presented in this thesis overwhelmingly points to the conclusion that the Soviet Union had a similar relationship with dissenting left-wingers in the West as Western countries had with Soviet dissidents in the way it depicted radical Western socialists as anti-capitalist dissidents, principally from the New Left and trade union movement, and as evidence of the superiority of Marxism-Leninism and its irresistible global rise. To understand the full scale of the USSR's attempts to exploit dissent in the West along these lines, this thesis applies the important methodological framework of 'dissidentism', introduced recently by Kacper Szulecki, which illustrates how media profiles of dissidents that depicted them as Westernised opponents of communism were created in the West to support the view of Western values as universal.⁶

https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_280636_smxx.pdf; Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Jeff Bloodworth, 'Senator Henry Jackson, the Solzhenitsyn Affair, and American Liberalism', *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 97, no. 2 (2006): 69–77.

⁴ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 14; Kacper Szulecki, 'The "Dissidents" as a Synecdoche and Western Construct: A Fresh Look on the Democratic Opposition in Central Europe Before 1989', *SSRN Electronic Journal* (July 2007): 9-10; Nathans, 'Talking Fish', 614.

⁵ Among the studies to do so are Meredith L. Roman, 'Soviet "renegades", Black Panthers, and Angela Davis', 503-19; Meredith L. Roman, "'Armed and Dangerous": The Criminalization of Angela Davis and the Cold War Myth of America's Innocence', *Women, Gender, and Families of Color* 8, no. 1 (Spring, 2020): 87-111; György Tóth, "'Red" nations: Marxists and the Native American sovereignty movement of the late Cold War', *Cold War History* 20, no. 2 (2020): 197-221; Kimmo Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', in *The Establishment Responds: Power, Politics, and Protest Since 1945*, eds. K. Fahlenbrach, M. Klimke, J. Scharloth, and L. Wong (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 139-56; Anton Weiss-Wendt, 'Moscow Taps the New Left: The Vietnam Antiwar Movement, Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement', in *A Rhetorical Crime: Genocide in the Geopolitical Discourse of the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Rutgers University Press, 2018), 102-19 Klaus Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, trans. Helmut Fischer (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975); Daniel Rosenberg, 'The Free Angela Movement in Global Context, 1970-1972', *American Communist History* 20, no. 1-2 (February, 2020): 1-38; Michal Kopeček, 'The Socialist Conception of Human Rights and Its Dissident Critique', *East Central Europe* 46, no. 2-3 (November, 2019): 261-89.

⁶ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 212-3.

Dissidentism has not yet been applied to the relationship between the Cold War authoritarian communist states and Western left-wing radicals. However, this thesis illustrates how the concept is equally as useful in analysing the Soviet relationship with those Western radicals it chose to depict as dissidents to draw out the similarities with the US relationship and UK relationship with Soviet dissidents and facilitates a comparative study with the West using a common framework of analysis.

The first of this dissertation's two guiding research questions is thus:

How did the Soviet and Anglo-American governments, political opposition, and press interact with dissidents and figures of dissent in the opposing Cold War bloc, and were these interactions comparable?⁷

The Soviet relationship with 'dissident' allies in the West, however, was more complex than just exploiting protests and other activism for propaganda. Those dissident figures in the West who received Soviet press support were socialists themselves with alternative views on how to achieve communism, the ideal form of society, and social justice. This meant that Soviet officials debated which types of Western socialists were more deserving of Moscow's support and suitable to depict as dissidents depending on their perceived compatibility with Soviet policies. This thesis highlights that there were significant political tensions which affected Soviet relationships with the left wingers it considered dissidents in the West, emanating from the conflict between reformers and conservatives within the Soviet leadership, given that these 'dissidents' frequently supported non-Soviet models of socialism. As the self-proclaimed leader of the international communist movement, the Soviet leadership, especially its conservative elements, often perceived other versions of socialism as rivals and threats. Indeed, New Left socialists offered many criticisms of Soviet socialism and conservative members of the Soviet leadership sought to suppress the Western movement, partially out of fear it could spread to the USSR and undermine the ruling party's authority, instead preferring to support groups like trade unions with more traditional socialist views as dissidents. This thesis explores all these tensions which ran throughout the Soviet Union's interaction with Western radicals who it viewed as Western dissidents during 1964-1991, illustrating

⁷ In this thesis, the term 'dissident' refers primarily to members of the Soviet and East European opposition movements. There are, though, a few select examples of where a Western figure was the victim of political repression which are highlighted in the analysis. Nonetheless, generally, this thesis takes the view dissidents were mainly a phenomenon of non-democratic countries and the product of the uniquely repressive political conditions in them, with a focus on the communist bloc. However, what was common to both the West and USSR, was the tendency to depict ideologically sympathetic figures of dissent, who in the West could be striking trade unionists or radical political activists, in the opposing ideological bloc as dissidents, regardless of their true status as dissidents or not, to depict that bloc as repressive.

how different left-wing groups gained preference at different times. The second guiding research question is therefore:

In the interactions the Soviet Union had with Western left-wingers it chose to depict as dissidents what were the ideological complexities, disagreements, and exchanges, why did they occur, and were certain left-wingers preferred as a result?

These two questions feed into ongoing attempts among historians to rethink approaches to studying the history of the Soviet Union and the Cold War. Increasingly, scholars advocate reading Cold War history forwards and avoiding deterministic approaches that assume the Soviet collapse and ‘defeat’ were inevitable.⁸ This thesis continues such efforts, by highlighting the USSR’s repeated attempts to compete against the West in the field of human rights, emphasising its confidence in projecting alternatives to Western human rights narratives and highlighting examples of Western repression of supposed anti-capitalist dissidents until the very end of the state’s existence in 1991. At the same time, an important theme includes exploring how tensions within the leadership over which dissidents to support reflected Soviet insecurities about the popularity of official ideology. The thesis’ pursuit of these research questions ultimately enables it to fill important gaps in the pre-existing literature on the subject of the Soviet Union and its relationship with Western radicals and how it portrayed them as anti-capitalist dissidents.

Historiographical issues: defining dissent, dissidents, and dissidentism

The primary subject of this thesis is the concept of political dissent during the Cold War. Usually, dissent in that era is associated with internal resistance against communist regimes, principally in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union, dissent began towards the end of a period of liberalisation by the communist regime under the premiership of Nikita Khrushchev (1956-64).⁹ During this time, the previously rigid restraints established under Stalin’s rule (1924-53) on the discussion of unmandated ideas in publishing and academia were partially lifted.¹⁰ Books critical of the regime were published for the first time, such as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s *One Day in the Life*

⁸ For a notable recent example of this debate, see the symposium published in *Cold War History*: Vladislav Zubok, Michael Cox, Vladimir O. Pechatnov, Rodric Braithwaite, Kristina Spohr, Sergey Radchenko, Sergey Zhuravlev, Isaac Scarborough, Svetlana Savranskaya and M. E. Sarotte, ‘A Cold War endgame or an opportunity missed? Analysing the Soviet collapse Thirty years later’, *Cold War History* 21, no. 4 (2021): 541-99.

⁹ Detlef Pollack and Jan Wielgoths, eds., *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe: Origins of Civil Society and Democratic Transition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 100-1. Also see Robert Hornsby, *Reform and Repression in the Soviet Union under Nikita Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

¹⁰ Pollack and Wielgoths, *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, 100-1.

of *Ivan Denisovich* (1962), while academics like Andrei Sakharov began to push the limits of what was permissible in research and politics to new lengths.¹¹

Eventually a conservative backlash ensued and, following the installation of the reactionary Leonid Brezhnev as General Secretary (1964-82), those that continued crossing the boundaries of censorship were subject to state sanction. The regime tried and found guilty two writers, Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel, of treason in 1966 for merely publishing semi-critical texts abroad under pseudonyms.¹² There followed an outcry from intellectuals which led to the beginning of the dissident movement in the USSR, to which the regime reacted with further persecution. By the late 1960s, the authorities had essentially made it impossible to explicitly critique official policy without sanction; Solzhenitsyn was later banished to the West in 1974, Sakharov, meanwhile, was internally exiled in 1980.¹³ Increasingly, therefore, individuals who disagreed with the government found themselves in opposition to it for critiquing it publicly, while being subject ever more harsh measures of repression.¹⁴

Dissent, from the more religious ‘apostate’, came to be the primary word to describe this type of action, while ‘dissident’ referred an individual taking part in it.¹⁵ Taking its lead from Szulecki, Detlef Pollack, and Jan Wielgohs, this thesis defines dissent as the legal actions of individuals or groups who publicly critiqued official state behaviour, typically seeking to promote a perceived ‘common good’, when that action resulted in state mandated persecution, usually through the security services.¹⁶ Both the words dissent and dissident gained prominent usage in the West during the 1970s

¹¹ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (London: Penguin, [1962] 2000). Also see Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago* (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1974); Pollack and Wielgohs, *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, 101.

¹² Pollack and Wielgohs, 101.

¹³ Hedrick Smith, ‘Solzhenitsyn Exiled to West Germany And Stripped of His Soviet Citizenship’, *New York Times (NYT)*, 14th February, 1974, 1; Craig R. Whitney, ‘Exile for Sakharovs Chills Soviet Dissident Movement’, *New York Times*, 27th January, 1980, Section T, 2.

¹⁴ The main laws used to prosecute dissidents were: ‘Article 190-1 of the Russian SFSR Criminal Code... Added to the code in 1966. Dissemination of fabrications known to be false, which defame the Soviet political and social system’ and ‘Articles 70 and 72 of the 1960 Russian SFSR Criminal Code... Article 70: Anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda... shall be punished by deprivation of freedom for a term of 6 months to 7 years, with or without additional exile for a term of 2 to 5 years, or by exile for a term of 2 to 5 years’, ‘Article 72: “Organisational activity directed towards the committing of especially dangerous State crimes, and equally membership of an anti-Soviet organisation”’. See, ‘Law and Order’, *A Chronicle of Current Events*, <https://chronicle-of-current-events.com/the-rsfsr-criminal-code/article-190-1/> (Article 190-1) and <https://chronicle-of-current-events.com/article-70/> (Articles 70 and 72) (accessed 22nd August, 2022).

¹⁵ Pollack and Wielgohs, *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, xii.

¹⁶ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 30; Pollack and Wielgohs, *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, xii.

when dissidents began to receive widespread attention from Western press and politics.¹⁷ Western attention was vitally important to dissidents, as it raised awareness of their cause on the international stage and placed pressure on the Soviet authorities.¹⁸

Szulecki has conceptualised the framework of ‘dissidentism’ to describe this process whereby dissidents’ actions were interlinked with ‘Western attention’.¹⁹ Szulecki introduced this term in a case study of Central European dissidents during the Cold War, but means for the concept to be applicable in other contexts, including the present, as he considers the ‘phenomenon of “dissidentism” around the world... comparable’.²⁰ A key element of this concept is that, as Szulecki and this thesis argues, the interaction between the West, namely its journalists and politicians, and the East European dissidents was a distinct aspect of the dissident phenomenon during the Cold War. Therefore, in analysing the history of the dissidents, historians should separate dissidents’ actual activities from what was said about them by Western journalists and politicians, otherwise the picture of dissidents’ actions would be largely shaped by unrepresentative presentations of them. Furthermore, what was said about the dissidents is a fruitful and revealing object of study in its own right, as it can shed new light on political developments in the countries which commented on the dissidents.

Szulecki argues that an idealised ‘dissident figure’ emerged in the Western press during the 1970s that depicted the dissidents as Westernised democrats resisting communist authoritarianism.²¹ This developed from a Western need to see the world in terms of Western values and find evidence of them in all political and geographical contexts.²² The West’s interest in dissidents stemmed from a desire to assert the universality of Western values, and politicians and journalists used the dissidents’ attacks on the Soviet government as evidence of this – as Szulecki says, the word dissident and the ‘dissident figure’ became short hand, or a ‘synecdoche’, to describe the inevitable triumph of Western individualism.²³ President Ronald Reagan (1981-89), for example, prominently used

¹⁷ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 211.

¹⁸ Szulecki, 171.

¹⁹ Szulecki, 33.

²⁰ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, xiii.

²¹ Szulecki, xi-xii.

²² Szulecki, xii.

²³ Szulecki, 33. Benjamin Nathans has also discussed how the popularity of Soviet dissidents in Western countries stemmed from the ‘West’s Cold War appetite for exemplary crusaders against communism’. See Nathans, ‘Talking Fish’, 614; and Szulecki, ‘The “Dissidents” as a Synecdoche and Western Construct’, 9-10

dissidents in his political rhetoric to attack communism, saying in a 1988 speech that the actions of Soviet dissidents illustrated a deep-seated appetite for freedom and Western-style democracy in the USSR, referencing what he called ‘the thrilling spectacle of mankind refusing to accept the shackles placed upon us when we read the works of Solzhenitsyn’ and urging his audience to ‘consider the heroism of [Anatoly Shcharansky] and Sakharov, and watch in wonder [the] last months as hundreds of thousands throughout the captive nations [had] gather[ed] to press for freedom’.²⁴

The image of dissidents created was often inaccurate, though, being largely a Western construction that depicted them as figures with Western-style political programmes, an image which dissidents themselves were not always happy with; often, the Soviet dissidents were simply calling on their government to cease its persecution in accordance with its own constitution which guaranteed political rights.²⁵ Nevertheless, the dissidents relied on Western attention as the best way to exert pressure on the Soviet government to respect human rights, especially following the signing of the Helsinki Accords by the USSR in 1975 which committed the Cold War powers to respect human rights, while high levels of Western interest could deter the authorities from applying sanctions for fear of diplomatic ramifications.²⁶

Ultimately, though, the figure of the dissident was a Western invention. While the Soviet and East European dissidents benefitted from the West’s attention to their cause, their depiction as Westernised dissident figures nonetheless obscured the diversity and character of the dissident movement to serve Western ends.²⁷ As Szulecki says, even to this day:

The West keeps looking for dissidents everywhere it encounters authoritarianism, wherever Western values are not acknowledged or are challenged... the “dissident” figure carries a presupposed notion of universal values – liberal values.²⁸

To establish the existence of dissidentism in a given relationship between a dissident and a transnational supporter, several requirements must be met: ‘open, legal, and non-violent action under a repressive sanction (dissidence), Western attention, as well as domestic recognition’ and

²⁴ Ronald Reagan, ‘Remarks to the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research’, 7th December, 1988, *Public Papers of President Ronald W. Reagan, 1988-89, Book II-July 2 1988 to January 19 1989* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1991), 1594.

²⁵ Serguei A. Oushakine, ‘The Terrifying Mimicry of Samizdat’, *Public Culture* 13, no. 2 (April, 2001): 193.

²⁶ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 170-1. The Helsinki Accords were a set of international treaties that committed the Soviet, West European, and North American government to respect human rights.

²⁷ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 14.

²⁸ Szulecki, ‘The “Dissidents” as a Synecdoche and Western Construct’, 9-10.

additionally ‘infamy’, with the latter reflecting the way in which dissidents were othered and presented as enemies of the people in the propaganda of communist regimes but nevertheless saw their profiles boosted by this depiction.²⁹ In Szulecki’s view, this only takes place in partially authoritarian systems. It cannot take place in a society where there is ‘brutal repression, overarching surveillance, full control of the media, and closed borders’.³⁰ Instead, dissidentism is ‘always the fruit of some degree of liberalization’ within an authoritarian society, by which a partial relaxation of originally total censorship leads to further and further demands for freedom.³¹ However, this also means in Szulecki’s view, presumably for what he sees as the absence of the above restrictions, that dissidentism is ‘not a feature of liberal democratic societies’.³²

This thesis does not fundamentally revise the definitions of dissent, dissident, and dissidentism. In fact, it recognises dissidentism as a significant development in the study of Cold War dissent. Szulecki has provided the field with one of the most comprehensive and effective frameworks through which to analyse transnational support for dissidents, drawing upon multiple disciplines and key developments in the scholarship towards comparative and transnational history. This thesis does, however, apply dissidentism to groups and individuals not usually considered dissidents in the same sense as Soviet dissidents but whose relationships with the USSR resembled dissidentism. Chiefly, this includes the New Left and striking Western trade unionists, especially those strikes led by far-left figures like the British miners’ strike of 1984-85 which features as a major case study in the thesis’ latter two chapters. From these movements the Soviet press attempted to create alternative pro-Soviet dissident figures, who acted as synecdoches and shorthand for the universality of communist values as well as their inevitable rise in the West; in the Soviet context, ‘dissident figure’ refers explicitly to the manufactured media profiles of select activists, which the Soviet press depicted as dissidents regardless of whether they met the criteria of a dissident in reality.

The New Left refers to the loose coalition of radical left-wing activists and ideas that emerged in the West in the 1960s, which coalesced around opposition to consumer capitalism, industrial society, the

²⁹ Publicly condemning dissidents served to help the state define what values it stood for, by defining itself against what dissidents stood for depicting them as dangerous outliers and provocateurs. Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 3 and 209-11. Also See appendix 1 for Szulecki’s diagram of the ‘dissident triangle’. Szulecki, 208.

³⁰ Szulecki, 212.

³¹ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 212.

³² Szulecki, 213.

Vietnam War, and social injustice.³³ Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, mass protests against the American intervention in Vietnam and capitalism erupted across the West, reaching their peak in 1968-69, presenting a serious challenge to the authority of the traditional governing elites.³⁴ The New Left eventually died out as a serious political force by the 1980s, before which the movement had simultaneously experienced contrasting turns towards peaceful Green politics and violent insurrection in the 1970s.³⁵

The British miners' strike, meanwhile, began in 1984 in response to the plans proposed by the Conservative government of the day led by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1979-90) to close several coal mines and make redundant thousands of miners.³⁶ The miners were led by the president of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), Arthur Scargill, a man with openly declared Marxist views and who expressed sympathies with the Soviet government.³⁷ Neither the miners nor the New Left have typically been considered dissidents in the same way as opponents of the Soviet government were. However, developments in the scholarship on dissent have led scholars to consider aspects of the New Left and the miners' activities and treatment by the authorities to amount to dissidence, and, more importantly to this thesis, for their interaction with the Soviet Union to be in several instances comparable to that between the US, UK and Soviet dissidents; notably, Anton-Weiss-Wendt and Meredith Roman have uncovered different examples of the Soviet press' utilisation of the New Left for propaganda.³⁸ The same applies to other far-left and trade unionist movements in the 1980s, principally the activities of the US Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organisation (PATCO) which staged a notable strike during 1981 and features as an additional minor case study in this thesis.³⁹

These two case studies, the New Left and striking Western trade unions, were chosen in terms of analysing Soviet engagement with dissent in the opposing Cold War bloc as they represented two of

³³ For a breakdown of the different components of the New Left, see Richard Vinen, *The Long '68: Radical Protest and Its Enemies* (London: Penguin 2019), 3-24.

³⁴ Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 1-2.

³⁵ Vinen, *The Long '68*, 14.

³⁶ T. Ghilarducci, 'When management strikes: PATCO and the British miners', *Industrial Relations Journal*, 17, no. 2 (1986): 117.

³⁷ Robert Taylor, 'Now Scargill upsets NUM rank and file', *The Observer*, 11th September, 1983, 4.

³⁸ For examples, see Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 503-19; Roman, "'Armed and Dangerous"', 87-111; György Tóth, "'Red" nations', 197-221; Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 139-56; Weiss-Wendt, 'Moscow Taps the New Left', 102-19.

³⁹ Herbert R. Northrup, 'The Rise and Demise of PATCO', *ILR Review* 37, no. 2 (January, 1984): 167-84.

the most significant forms of left-wing dissent in the West and were of immediate significance and interest to the USSR as the world's most powerful socialist state.⁴⁰ In the literature, there has been no sufficient explanation given as to why dissidentism might not have been possible between the USSR and these Western radicals, if we apply Szulecki's framework of 'open, legal, and non-violent action under a repressive sanction (dissidence), Western attention, as well as domestic recognition', and replace 'Western attention' with Soviet attention.⁴¹ Of course, Szulecki considers that dissidentism is 'not a feature of liberal democratic societies' arguing the possibility only existed in partially reformed authoritarian states, whereby independent political voices emerged after a period of relaxation but were still repressed by the state.⁴² Yet this argument, which is made without conducting a comparison with the West, underestimates the significant scope for political repression that existed in the West during the Cold War and the high level of Soviet interest in creating images of dissent in the West, issues which this thesis and other scholars seek to draw attention to.⁴³ Establishing the existence of Soviet-West dissidentism also connects to efforts in the field to complicate the history of human rights in the Cold War, and highlight the existence of competing conceptions of human rights, particularly those which still embraced the older language of class-based rights traditionally advanced by socialist political activists.⁴⁴

The lack of comparison with the West is additionally deleterious to Cold War history considering the fruitful results that the turn towards comparative studies in the field has yielded in improving understanding of the conflict.⁴⁵ The evidence presented in this thesis suggests there were numerous instances where political figures took 'open, legal, and non-violent action under a repressive sanction' and gained infamy in the West while they received attention from the USSR.⁴⁶ At the same

⁴⁰ Richard Shorten, 'The Cold War as comparative political thought', *Cold War History* 18, no. 4 (2018): 385-408; Milne, *The Enemy Within: The Secret War Against the Miners*, 3rd ed. (London: Verso, 2004), 291.

⁴¹ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 3.

⁴² Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 10.

⁴³ David Cunningham, *There's Something Happening Here: The New Left, the Klan, and FBI Counterintelligence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 6; Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 503-19.

⁴⁴ For work in this area, see Robert Brier, 'Beyond the quest for a "breakthrough": Reflections on the recent historiography on human rights', in *Mobility and Biography*, ed. Sarah Panter (Berlin, München, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015), 155-74; Mark Hurst, "'Gamekeeper Turned Poacher": Frank Chapple, Anti-Communism, and Soviet Human Rights Violations', *Labour History Review* 86, no. 3 (2021): 313-37.

⁴⁵ Patrick Major and Rana Mitter, 'East is East and West is West? Towards a comparative socio-cultural history of the Cold War', *Cold War History* 4, no. 1 (2003): 6-7.

⁴⁶ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 3.

time, there is also visible evidence of the Soviet Union projecting its ideals onto Western radicals and glorifying them as anti-capitalist dissidents in a similar manner to the way that the West often celebrated Soviet dissidents as liberal heroes. In doing so, the Soviet Union formed what this thesis calls transnational dissident-promoting coalitions with radical leftists in the West.

The concept of ‘transnational dissident-promoting coalitions’ is introduced to further refine the nature of, and capture the nuances of, the relationships between the targets of dissidentism, usually members of the Soviet human rights movement in West-Soviet dissidentism and left-wing radicals in Soviet-West dissidentism, and their supporters, which were usually governments, political parties, publications, or individual political figures, whereby they mutually benefitted one another.⁴⁷ Specifically, this concept draws attention to the centrality of strategic thinking and compromise in these partnerships on the part of the targets of dissidentism, whereby they allowed their identities to become attached to political causes beyond their own in order to gain media attention and political support.

Transnational dissident-promoting coalitions could be informal, based on supportive public or press statements, or organised into a formal active group with an established premises, identity, and funding; an example would be the organisation Resistance International (1983-93), which was a political action group run jointly by US anti-communists and East European dissidents aimed at coordinating dissident activity worldwide and appears as a minor case study here.⁴⁸ The term ‘coalition’, which more often applies to conditional agreements between parliamentary political parties one of which is typically a smaller partner, is used to emphasise the similarly strategic nature of cooperation between the targets of dissidentism and supportive third parties. Often, both sides would overlook or compromise on certain ideological differences to work together to achieve a greater and mutually important Cold War objective, usually the undermining of the target’s home government.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ For contemporary commentary on these relationships, see Hella Pick, “‘Monopoly’ on dissidents”, *Guardian*, 10th March, 1977, 1.

⁴⁸ Vladimir Bukovsky, *Judgement in Moscow: Soviet Crimes and Western Complicity* (Westlake Village, CA: Ninth of November Press, 2019), 596-600.

⁴⁹ While this thesis focuses mainly on government interactions with dissidents abroad, there has been revealing work recently published which complicates the picture of transnational cooperation between dissidents and allies abroad. Most notably, Irina Gordeeva has pointed to the interaction between the Western New Left Historian E. Thompson, through the European Nuclear Disarmament campaign (END), and

More importantly, though, coalition, as opposed to ‘alliance’ or ‘partnership’ which imply a close, equal relationship, reflects how these relationships saw two very different sides coming together to fight for a specific set of goals and form a union in which the targets consciously chose to accept support of a political actor despite the way this led to their own message becoming obscured by its attachment to that of a supporter abroad. Transnational is included as a descriptor to capture the cross-border essence of coalitions between targets of dissidentism and their supporters, highlighting how their cooperation left footprints in multiple localities and had resonance across borders, responding to recent efforts to explore Cold War dissent in a transnational context.⁵⁰ ‘Dissident-promoting’ refers to the process by which an individual was promoted as a dissident, whether or not they truly held the status of a dissident or were simply depicted as one by the promoter, reflecting the tactical aspect of supporting an activist as a dissident. Of course, attempts to form coalitions could fail due to irreconcilable ideological differences, examples of which this thesis explores, while targets’ messages could be co-opted by transnational actors without the former’s agreement or their reciprocation.

Figures within the New Left and Western trade unions on the left benefited from the formation of these coalitions by gaining media attention and in some cases more practical support in the form of diplomacy or even financing (in the case of unions) from the USSR. The Soviet Union, meanwhile, was able to demonstrate international support for its ideology, or at least evidence of its ideology’s predictions of capitalist crises precipitating revolutions being proven right. This is not to overlook the fact that there are still challenges in comparing the New Left and labour activists with Soviet dissidents, even if the focus remains on comparing the Soviet-West and West-Soviet dissidentism rather than directly comparing Western radicals and Soviet dissidents. However, new understandings of what characterised dissent during the Cold War have emerged and led historians to reconsider who can and cannot be considered a ‘dissident figure’ which, along with methodological innovations in the field, mean Szulecki’s criteria can be fulfilled in liberal democracies.

independent Soviet peace activists, drawing attention to cooperation between Cold War activists across borders. See Gordeeva, ‘Solidarity in Search of Human Agency: “Détente from Below” and Independent Peace Activists in the Soviet Union’, *Labour History Review* 86, no. 3 (2021): 339–68.

⁵⁰ For example, see Robert Brier, ed., *Entangled Protest: Transnational Approaches to the History of Dissent in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (Osnabrück: fibre Verlag, 2013).

Elsewhere, Szulecki has used the concept of ‘doxa’, borrowed from Pierre Bourdieu who referred to how ‘established order[s]’ ‘naturali[se]’ their own ‘arbitrariness’, to describe how Central European dissidents gained their political status.⁵¹ Cold War doxas existed which applied strict limits to the parameters of debate on Cold War geopolitics. He argues that discussions on geopolitics were constrained within the bounds of superpower domination and détente, and that arguments beyond this, in favour of either breaking the superpowers’ duopoly or ending the peaceful coexistence of détente, marked one out as a geopolitical ‘heretic’.⁵² Similarly, there existed doxas and doctrines, or dominant political ‘orders’, as Richard Shorten calls them, that constrained the discussion of ideology.⁵³ As Shorten says, regardless of ‘physical deeds’ being completed or not, ‘dissenting’, challenging doctrine ‘from within’, and ‘rebelling’, the ‘superseding of an order’, were features of both East and West as ways of ‘actively challenging the Cold War order and performed by both the East European dissident movements and the New Left as they articulated alternative visions for politics’, as well as by anti-détente conservatives according to Shorten.⁵⁴

In the USSR, during the period explored, adherence to officially approved Marxism-Leninism formed the parameters of political discourse. Anyone who moved beyond them was considered by the state to be an enemy, a heretic from Soviet doxa. Those who did, are now famous names. Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn gained fame due to their resistance of Soviet doxa and the persecution they suffered as members of the Soviet dissident movement. This situation prevailed until the arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev, at which point Soviet doxa was reformed in favour of a relatively more open political society. In the West, doxa was shaped by adherence to capitalism and the acceptance of superpower domination of international relations.⁵⁵ Dissent was less explicitly defined in the West, as one could oppose the state without suffering persecution. However, there were incidents of departure from the mainstream doxa resulting in state sanction for left-wingers. The Black Panthers, for example, a radical Black Nationalist group, certainly were victims of state-orchestrated

⁵¹ Kacper Szulecki, ‘Heretical geopolitics of Central Europe. Dissidents, intellectuals and an alternative European order’, *Geoforum* 65 (2015): 25-36. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 164-70.

⁵² Szulecki, ‘Heretical geopolitics of Central Europe’, 25.

⁵³ Shorten, ‘The Cold War as comparative political thought’, 406-7.

⁵⁴ Shorten, 405-7.

⁵⁵ Shorten, 406-7.

oppression in the US for their rejection of doxa through the concept of ‘Revolutionary Nationalism’ and were subject to covert surveillance and harassment from the intelligence services.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, David Cunningham has studied FBI counterintelligence measures during the 1960s and early 1970s and revealed that the scope of FBI targets for repression on the left included not only the Black Power movement, but the New Left at large, and illustrated the extensive and creative ways the FBI attempted to repress the movement.⁵⁷ In this way, but only in very select circumstances, New Leftists’ experiences could be compared to those of Soviet dissidents, because they departed from the prevailing doxa of the West and sometimes received state-sanctioned punishment for doing so though the scope for dissent was immeasurably smaller in the USSR and the punishment far greater. Further, even while its supporters were not under state sanction for their beliefs and activities, the New Left was still a ‘dissenting’ then ‘rebellious’ movement, seeking to challenge and later supersede the order of capitalism, and held importance to the USSR as an anti-capitalist movement with the Soviet media portraying them as dissidents regardless of the presence of genuine sanctions or not; Shorten also argues conservatives opposed to détente were also ‘rebels’ by seeking to alter the established Cold War order.⁵⁸

The miners, meanwhile, at times were also victims of political repression while taking legal action. Seamus Milne has gone as far to argue the Conservative British government waged what he terms a ‘secret war’ against the miners and used covert oppressive measures such as phone-tapping, akin to those used by the USSR against its dissidents, against the miners.⁵⁹ Equally, he has uncovered extensive evidence of Soviet solidarity with the miners, both in terms of financial and political support, as have Granville Williams et al. in *Pit Props* (2016) a study of international solidarity with the miners.⁶⁰ The NUM itself has also analysed Cabinet papers released in 2014 pertaining to the miners’ strike which it argues suggest a comprehensive government effort to denigrate the miners’

⁵⁶ Roman, ‘Soviet “renegades”’, 518; Jessica Christina Harris, ‘Revolutionary Black Nationalism: The Black Panther Party’, *The Journal of African American History* 85, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 162.

⁵⁷ Cunningham, *There's Something Happening Here*, 6. Countering Cunningham, others, like Darren E. Tromblay, have suggested that these FBI measures merely represented ‘excesses’ and that the FBI’s activities were relatively justified in the context of Cold War geopolitics. See Tromblay, ‘From Old Left to New Left: The FBI and the Sino–Soviet Split’, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence* 33, no. 1 (2020): 97-118.

⁵⁸ Shorten, ‘The Cold War as comparative political thought’, 406.

⁵⁹ Seumas Milne, ‘What Stella left out: The truth about MI5’s role in the miners’ strike will not come out in Rimington’s memoirs’ *Guardian*, 3rd October, 2000.

⁶⁰ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 265; Granville Williams, ed., *Pit Props: Music, International Solidarity, and the 1984-85 Miners’ Strike* (London: Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, 2016).

public image.⁶¹ The same release of Cabinet Papers also revealed the extent to which the British government sought to put pressure on the Soviet leadership, in the build-up to Mikhail Gorbachev's UK tour in late 1984, not to liaise or demonstrate public solidarity with the miners while the Soviet delegation was in Britain. British ministers reacted to the news that a radical Soviet miner was to be in the Soviet delegation who might address a crowd of British miners in a similar manner to the way Soviet officials had often responded to possible meetings between Western heads of state and Soviet dissidents, with one minister calling on the Prime Minister to instruct the USSR to cease what he perceived as Moscow's interventions in domestic UK politics.⁶²

Furthermore, while the literature has drawn significant attention to the links between anti-communist sentiment in the media and the government's smear campaign against the miners, this thesis will place the strike into the Cold War context of which it was expressly a part, in a way that has not yet been done.⁶³ The miners' strike became part of a wider propaganda struggle between the West and the USSR over the universality of Marxism and capitalism that was waged through the creation of suitable 'dissident' 'figures', which in this case focused on the personality of the miners' Marxist leader Arthur Scargill.⁶⁴ Of course, Western strikes were always of importance to the Soviet media as a way of proving Marxist predictions' accuracy and this is well documented in the literature. As Brian McNair has said, the Soviet media focused on strikes in the West as doing so:

reinforce[d] the Marxist–Leninist view that capitalism [was] in a more or less permanent state of crisis, and that the working classes of capitalist societies [were] in a more or less permanent state of conflict with 'the bosses'.⁶⁵

However, there have been no studies which draw attention to the extent to which the Soviet media was engaged in creating specific 'dissident' personalities from the Western left to support this narrative, akin to the West's discourse on Soviet dissidents. Highlighting the Soviet media's cultivation of 'dissident' profiles, in addition to illustrating the overlooked similarities with the West,

⁶¹ N. Stubbs, *Divide and Conquer: A Forensic Analysis of the 1984-85 Cabinet Papers in Relation to the Miners' Strike* (NUM: 2014).

⁶² Norman Lamont to Margaret Thatcher 'Soviet assistance to the NUM', 21st November, 1984, *The National Archives (TNA), Kew*, PREM19/1578; Phil Rawsthorne, 'Thatcher's Culture of Conformity: The Disintegration of Party/State Distinctions and the Weaponisation of the State in Response to the Miners' Strike 1984/85' (PhD diss., Edge Hill University, 2019), 88.

⁶³ For comment on the significance of the strike, see Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 291.

⁶⁴ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, xii.

⁶⁵ Brian McNair, *Glasnost, Perestroika and the Soviet Media* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 139-40 and 142

reveals the complexity and extent of Soviet interest in building narratives of trade unionists' human rights being abused in the West.

Another problem associated with comparing the miners, New Left, and other Western left-wingers with Soviet dissidents is the openly public nature of their dissent and opposition to the Western Cold War order. Dissidents' activities are typically understood as underground and beyond the realm of the public. In the USSR, the primary means by which dissidents could express and exchange their ideas was through limited-circulation, low-tech, self-published *samizdat* texts. *Samizdat*, meaning in Russian 'to publish something oneself', reflected the isolation of the dissidents from mainstream society and lack of access to a public forum. By contrast, the New Left theorists' texts were printed by major publishing houses in the West and were freely available for purchase; though government pressure could sometimes be applied to particular publications.⁶⁶

Yet this image of the Soviet dissidents, as secretive and underground, though accurate in many cases, is also one-dimensional and based on outdated stereotypes of Soviet society as divided between official and unofficial life.⁶⁷ Instead, as Serguei Oushakine argues, there was significant scope for dissidents to voice criticism publicly, while Alexei Yurchak points out that the Soviet state tolerated unsanctioned culture to greater extents than often estimated.⁶⁸ Therefore, the public nature of the New Left and other left-wing dissent becomes less problematic, when dissent may have been somewhat more public in the USSR than previously thought. In fact, the criteria of dissidentism actually require that dissent was public, as it was this character that gave it international resonance.⁶⁹

Of course, the danger of violence and imprisonment posed to dissidents by the KGB if they spoke out was ever present and must not be understated. Nor does this thesis argue that the level of repression in the Soviet Union ever came to close to being replicated in the West against left-wing-

⁶⁶ Herbert Marcuse, a key New Left theorist, for example, was published by Beacon Press, a large not-for-profit publishing group. Beacon Press did, however, come under pressure from the Nixon administration when it published the *Pentagon Papers* in 1971, which detailed American military overreach during the Vietnam War. The Attorney General in fact attempted to prevent *The New York Times* from printing the *Pentagon Papers* when it began publishing excerpts. Such examples outline that while the press was of course much freer in the US, there was significant scope for government intervention. See Andrew Hacker, 'Philosopher', *New York Times*, 10th March, 1968, Section BR, 1; Hedrick Smith, 'Mitchell Seeks to Halt Series on Vietnam, but Times Refuses', *New York Times*, 15th June, 1971, 1.

⁶⁷ Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 6.

⁶⁸ Oushakine, 'The Terrifying Mimicry of Samizdat', 192; Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More*, 23.

⁶⁹ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 3. Nathans has also challenged the notion of a 'giant underground' in the USSR. See Nathans, 'The Terrifying Mimicry of Samizdat', 613.

radicals. However, the primary focus of this thesis is not to illustrate that the status of political freedom was comparable in the US, UK and USSR. The West was undeniably freer, though there were examples of where political repression took place in the West against left-wingers which the analysis does draw attention to. The primary focus is instead on showing how Soviet media and politics portrayed left-wing radicals in the West as dissidents who were victims of Western repression in order to depict capitalism as corrupt form of society. The thesis studies how this Soviet narrative emerged in order to counter the effects of global human rights activism and Western press and political support for Soviet dissident personalities which pushed a globally received and damaging narrative of the USSR as a uniquely repressive state. The analysis also considers how these two narratives formed a key part of the wider ideological conflict of the Cold War, as both sides pointed to the existence of dissidents, perceived or real, in the opposing bloc to prove the respective universality of communist and Western values. This thesis is therefore primarily focused on the use of dissidents, and figures portrayed as dissidents, for political purposes by politicians and governments, rather than the more apolitical, humanitarian work of human rights groups and the UN which are already well covered in the literature.⁷⁰ The main thrust of the analysis is towards examining how dissidents, and figures deemed to be dissidents by different parties, were politicised in Cold War national politics and international relations. It is therefore possible to compare Soviet discourse on Western radicals as dissidents to Western discourse on Soviet dissidents, as some historians have already begun to do.

Literature review

Though no historian has yet applied dissidentism to the Soviet Union's interactions with figures it depicted as dissidents in the West and while there has been a dearth in the past three decades of monograph length studies specifically on the USSR's relationship with Western dissenters and Soviet attempts to cultivate dissident media personalities, studies have been completed approaching these directions.⁷¹ Notably, Michal Kopeček has drawn attention to the development of a specific state

⁷⁰ See, for example, Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Hurst, *British Human Rights Organizations and Soviet Dissent, 1965-1985*; Akira Iriye, Petra Goedde, and William I. Hitchcock, eds., *The Human Rights Revolution: The Human Rights Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁷¹ Though focused on a different context, Richardson-Little's recently published monograph examining how the East German state incorporated into its ideology and weaponised human rights to attack capitalism touches on similar themes. See Richardson-Little, *The Human Rights Dictatorship: Socialism, Global*

socialist concept of human rights among the Soviet Union and its allies during the Cold War.⁷² Kopeček has described how, during the 1950s and 1960s, scholars in the state socialist regimes of Eastern Europe developed an alternative mode of human rights which received official backing and ‘served as a tool of self-confident state socialist human rights politics’, before providing an important subject for dissidents’ critiques of human rights under state socialism and eventually undermining the legitimacy of the state socialist governments which promoted it.⁷³ Meanwhile, Ned Richardson-Little has analysed the USSR’s attempts to exploit the UN declaration of 1968 as the ‘International Year of Human Rights’ to ‘legitimise the status quo in Eastern Europe’, as well as the later development and promotion of a ‘Socialist Declaration of Human Rights’, designed to rival the Western variant and serve as a tool in Gorbachev’s efforts to remake the Soviet Union’s global image in the 1980s.⁷⁴ Taking a more *longue durée* approach, Benjamin Nathans has traced the deep roots of such ‘Soviet Rights-Talk’ back to the establishment of the USSR under Lenin.⁷⁵ As Nathans says, the Soviet state viewed rights through the prism of shaping the ideal Soviet citizens – the *homo Sovieticus* – initially by bestowing rights to those who had been oppressed under capitalism and later, as Soviet socialism entered its developed phase, to reward participation in the Soviet project whereby ‘[labour became] the gateway to other rights’.⁷⁶ In the Soviet view, human rights were socially constructed and not the guarantors of a ‘pre-existing’ harmonious natural order, and had to be actively used to push human society to a brighter future on the basis of which the Soviet state claimed to be ‘outperforming’ the West on political rights.⁷⁷

Solidarity and Revolution in East Germany (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). Christian Phillip Peterson, meanwhile, has explored the use of human rights as a ‘weapon’ in US-Soviet relations. His focus, however, is on the US administrations’ relationships with NGOs, dissidents, and private citizens, and has only a secondary focus on Soviet responses with Peterson primarily examining Soviet attempts to undermine the dissident movement at home and attack Western human rights critiques through diplomacy and general propaganda rather than studying in-depth the USSR’s relationships with Western dissenters and the Soviet media’s creation of equivalent dissident figures. See Peterson, ‘Wielding the Human Rights Weapon: The United States, Soviet Union, and Private Citizens, 1975-1989’ (PhD diss., Ohio University, 2009) and Peterson, *Globalizing Human Rights Private Citizens, the Soviet Union, and the West* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011).

⁷² Michal Kopeček, ‘The Socialist Conception of Human Rights and Its Dissident Critique’, 261-89.

⁷³ Kopeček, 261.

⁷⁴ Richardson-Little, ‘From Tehran to Helsinki: the International Year of Human Rights 1968 and State Socialist Eastern Europe’, *Diplomatica*, 1, no. 2 (2019): 180; Richardson-Little, ‘The Failure of the Socialist Declaration of Human Rights: Ideology, Legitimacy, and Elite Defection at the End of State Socialism’, *East Central Europe* 46, no. 2-3 (2019): 318-41.

⁷⁵ Benjamin Nathans, ‘Soviet Rights-Talk in the Post-Stalin Era’, in *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, 166-190.

⁷⁶ Nathans, ‘Soviet Rights-Talk in the Post-Stalin Era’, 189.

⁷⁷ Nathans, 183 and 180-1.

At the same time, scholars have pointed to the multifaceted concept of socialist internationalism, whereby communist governments expressed solidarity with socialist parties and groups abroad including in the West, as an example of the scope for Soviet involvement with allies in the West, while also highlighting how interest in supporting perceived allies was expressed independently of the regime by its own citizens in ways which undermined the Soviet state's policies.⁷⁸ However, in terms of specifically addressing to what extent the USSR actually sought to form alliances with and portray specific left-wing figures in the West as dissidents, some of the most revealing research has been carried out by Meredith Roman. Roman has demonstrated how creating dissident figures was a key tool on both sides in 'the confrontation between what historian Odd Arne Westad terms the "Empire of Justice" and the "Empire of Liberty"', and that 'Soviet and US authorities not only endeavoured to demonstrate the moral superiority of their own forms of modernity, but also focused on exposing the shortcomings and failings of their competitor's vision' by pointing out the existence of opponents of that vision in the opposing bloc for propaganda.⁷⁹

She has especially focused on the Soviet approach to the Black Power movement and most of all on the case of Soviet support for Angela Davis, a university professor and radical member of the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA), during her highly-politicised trial in 1970-72.⁸⁰ Roman identifies that the Soviet Union sought to form common cause with Davis and highlighted her persecution by the US authorities. The USSR of course continually interacted with the issue of race in American society before and after the Second World War, deliberately seeking to attract African-American workers to the USSR in the 1930s, such as Robert Nathaniel Robinson, whom the Soviet regime used as 'symbol[s] of racial oppression under capitalism and of communism's promise of racial equality', and then latching on to the growth of the civil rights movement and criticism of US racism in the 1950s as Barbara Keys and Mary Dudziak have

⁷⁸ Daniel Laqua and Charlotte Alston, 'Activism and Dissent under State Socialism: Coalitions and Campaigns in the 1970s and 1980s', *Labour History Review* 86, no. 3 (2021): 307; Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 514.

⁷⁹ Roman, 518. Also see chapters 1 'The empire of liberty: American ideology and foreign interventions' and 2 'The empire of justice: Soviet ideology and foreign interventions' in Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 8-38 and 39-72.

⁸⁰ Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 503-19; Roman, "'Armed and Dangerous"', 87-111. Also see, 'The Free Angela Movement in Global Context, 1970-1972', 1-38.

respectively addressed.⁸¹ However, as Roman argues, the Soviet press' interest in Black Nationalist critiques and the persecution of the likes of the Black Panthers was disingenuous and completely calculated, saying:

...in their efforts to expose the failings of their Cold War adversary with regard to democracy and dissent, Soviet authorities did not so much question the application of national-security measures against African-American dissenters. Rather they questioned the self-righteous claims coming out of the United States that Washington's national-security concerns were legitimate while those of the Kremlin were not.⁸²

The main objective in drawing attention to the Black Panthers' persecution was to combat Western criticism of the Soviet state's persecution of its own dissidents. Roman also highlights that the vast majority of the Black Power movement wanted nothing to do with the USSR and that Angela Davis represented an exception for her receipt of Soviet support, a decision which was itself calculated on the part of Davis as she sought tactical alliances in the binary Cold War context against her critics in the US.⁸³ This thesis builds on such existing work, and highlights how other anti-capitalist, dissenting groups and figures in the West were the recipients of Soviet attention that depicted them as dissidents and to varying degrees formed tactical Cold War coalitions with Moscow.

Another aspect of the USSR's relationship with the New Left includes the issue of accusing the United States of genocide. New Left accusations of genocide were made on three different accounts, in the context of the US bombing of civilian populations during the Vietnam War, Black Nationalist critiques, and the history of Native Americans' treatment at the hands of the American state.⁸⁴ Anton Weiss-Wendt has suggested that Moscow 'tapped' the New Left's various accusations of genocide against America, offering its diplomatic and journalistic support.⁸⁵ Earlier, contemporary Cold War-era works on the USSR and New Left, meanwhile, offer broader analyses of the two's relationship. The most significant remains the late Klaus Menhert's 1975 book, *Moscow and the New Left*.⁸⁶

Menhert's volume is still the only monograph-length study that directly addresses the relationship between the Soviet government and the New Left, a fact that draws attention to the striking dearth

⁸¹ Barbara Keys, 'An African-American Worker in Stalin's Soviet Union: Race and the Soviet Experiment in International Perspective', *The Historian* 71, no. 1 (2009): 31; Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 5.

⁸² Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 518.

⁸³ Roman, 518.

⁸⁴ Weiss-Wendt, 'Moscow Taps the New Left', 102; For a recent article on the alliance between second generation Red Power activists and the USSR, see Tóth, "'Red' nations", 197-221.

⁸⁵ Weiss-Wendt, 'Moscow Taps the New Left', 102.

⁸⁶ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*.

of research on this important but neglected topic and is an omission from the literature which this thesis addresses.⁸⁷ Menhert analysed Soviet newspaper and academic journals' coverage of the New Left to discern the USSR's response to the phenomenon of 1968's revolts and after. Menhert argued the response was largely negative, though noted that among the intelligentsia there was some genuine debate around the New Left and that in 1969 the Soviet Academy of Sciences ordered the journal *Voprosy filosofii* to conduct a wide-ranging study of the New Left with broadly defined parameters.⁸⁸

An additional key study of the USSR-New Left relationship conducted in the 1970s was that of Rein Taagepera.⁸⁹ Taagepera's analysis focused on Soviet Estonia, an interesting context given the high rates of education and national dimension to dissent in that Soviet Republic.⁹⁰ Both these facts meant that the Soviet leadership there was particularly anxious to denigrate the New Left's credentials, and the official response in Estonia was overwhelmingly negative. Yet as Taagepera also discovered, the authorities were simultaneously open to praising the protests organised by the New Left.⁹¹ According to Taagepera, such contradictory writing was 'a typical example of what the Estonian reader learned about the Western student unrest through the central Soviet channels'.⁹² Meanwhile, Taagepera's study also sheds light on the unofficial response to the New Left, pointing out the positive reception it received among the youth and intelligentsia.⁹³

Menhert and Taagepera's findings have been largely undervalued in the literature. Granted, the Cold War setting in which they wrote restricted their access to Soviet publications and led them to suggest a more limited engagement with the New Left by the Soviet political and academic establishment than was really the case. However, supplementing their research with newly available press archives and memoirs by leading ideological figures in the Soviet government, this thesis reveals that there

⁸⁷ Robert H. McNeal called it an 'extremely interesting discussion of the Soviet response to the "new left"', in his study of the revival of anti-Trotskyism, which involved slight overlap with the Soviet response to the New Left. Echoing such praise, Herbert S. Dinerstein, called it a 'short but valuable study'. See, McNeal, 'The Revival of Soviet Anti-Trotskyism', *Studies in Comparative Communism* 10, Nos. 1 and 2 (Spring/Summer, 1977): 5-17; Dinerstein, 'Moscow and the New Left. By Klaus Mehnert. Translated from the German by Helmut Fischer. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975. xii, 275 \$12.50', *Slavic Review* 36, no. 3 (1977): 512-3.

⁸⁸ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 116-7.

⁸⁹ Rein Taagepera, 'The Impact of the New Left on Estonia', *East European Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (1976): 43-51.

⁹⁰ A recent study by Terje Toomistu has highlighted the existence of hippie groups in Estonia. See Toomistu, 'The Imaginary Elsewhere of Hippies in Soviet Estonia', in *Dropping out of Socialism: Alternative Spheres in the Soviet Bloc*, eds. Juliane Fürst and Josie McLellan (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017), 41-62.

⁹¹ Taagepera, 'The Impact of the New Left on Estonia', 44.

⁹² Taagepera, 44.

⁹³ Taagepera, 47 and 48-50.

were in fact formal experiments with the New Left that went beyond the more small-scale exercises suggested by Taagepera and Menhert, and led to fully-fledged dissidentism.

Similar issues were explored by Kimmo Rentola in his study of the Soviet leadership's experimental embrace with New Left revolutionary theory in bilateral relations with Finland through the auspices of the Soviet International Department.⁹⁴ Rentola points out that the International Department's ideologists were seriously engaged by New Left ideas and their prospects for precipitating a communist revolution in Western Europe and the US. As Rentola says, 'Soviet attention [to New Left protest] represented not only an ideological exercise, but also an attempt to make distinct political gains, particularly in terms of weakening U.S. positions in Europe' by supporting the New Left's revolutionary ambitions.⁹⁵ The Soviet leadership were most of all encouraged 'when student upheaval was accompanied and followed by a huge revival of workers' strikes—a traditional sign of great things to come' according to Marxist theory.⁹⁶

Ultimately revolutions never materialised, but Rentola's findings illustrate that there was significant scope for Soviet engagement with the New Left. More significantly, Rentola's research draws attention to the possibility some Soviet officials in the reformist International Department may have sought a 'two-way' street with the Western radical left, whereby its ideas could be imported to and applied in the USSR.⁹⁷ At the same time, Rentola has illustrated the centrality of conflict between reformers and conservatives in the leadership to shaping the Soviet relationship with the New Left, detailing the importance of pressure from the conservative KGB on the more open-minded International Department to the cancellation of the Finnish project and the need for the Soviet leadership to counter the pro-Mao elements of the New Left in the aftermath of the Sino-Soviet split.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 139-56.

⁹⁵ Rentola, 139.

⁹⁶ Rentola, 140.

⁹⁷ Rentola, 147.

⁹⁸ Rentola, 147-8. The split was a gradual process arising out of the ideological differences between China and the USSR in the aftermath of the Khrushchev Thaw. China and the USSR ultimately became fierce adversaries, with the former accusing the latter of deviation from true Marxism-Leninism. This split had important implications to the relationship between the USSR and the New Left, as large parts of the latter were sympathetic to Maoism, the state ideology of China at the time. See Wang Shiwen, 'The Sino-Soviet split: Cold War in the communist world', *Cold War History* 9, no. 4 (2009): 525.

This thesis explores these tensions between conservatives and reformers further in its study of Soviet outreach to dissidents, highlighting the competing ideological perspectives in the leadership and how they led to different dissidents gaining preference at different times. Conservatives in the leadership asserted the superiority of the traditional, inter-war era Soviet model of modernity, identified by Stephen Kotkin, that revolved around the politics of mass-participation in organised political bodies and traditional socialist ideas about a mass-workers' state that subordinated the importance of the individual's needs to meet those of the masses.⁹⁹ This led them to prefer groups abroad which were compatible with these ideas such as Western trade unionists as examples to be transformed into and presented as dissident figures in the Soviet media, and also to receive diplomatic and sometimes financial support.¹⁰⁰

Yet as scholars have pointed out, this conception of Soviet modernity and socialism was not without its challengers and those which gave a greater role to the individual in political decision making and economic life were also advanced in the USSR.¹⁰¹ This thesis explores how the existence of support for such alternative socialisms is evidenced by the fact that more reformist Soviet officials were enthusiastic about supporting the revisionist New Left, an attraction which brought them into conflict with conservatives' preference for hard-left Western trade unions as the more suitable Western allies. Yet it was also the case that during Gorbachev's attempt to reform socialism in the late 1980s that former allies in traditional Western trade unions, and their Soviet supporters, then came into conflict with the mainstream Soviet leadership, an episode which receives attention in this thesis' final chapter.¹⁰²

The analysis sheds new light on the existence of conflict within the Soviet leadership and rival ideas about socialism, by illustrating how this elite competition between different conceptions of socialism in the Soviet hierarchy ultimately manifested itself in debates over which dissidents ought to receive support depending on their own views on socialism's true form. This analysis forms an important part of this study's investigation, which compares it with debates between political factions in the

⁹⁹ Stephen Kotkin, 'Modern Times: The Soviet Union and the Interwar Conjuncture', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 2, no. 1 (2001): 114-5.

¹⁰⁰ Oleg Gordievsky, interview with Lorraine Hennessey, Channel 4 *Dispatches*, 1991 quoted in Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 279.

¹⁰¹ Anna Krylova, 'Soviet Modernity: Stephen Kotkin and the Bolshevik Predicament', *Contemporary European History* 23, no. 2 (2014): 186; Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 147.

¹⁰² Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 291.

West over which Soviet dissidents were more or less politically suitable and deserving of support, to highlight not just further similarities with the West but also provide new insight into the unique ideological issues which affected the Soviet Union.

By highlighting tensions over whether to support certain Western left-wing radicals as dissidents or not among the Soviet leadership and academic elite, this thesis also extends historians' understanding of how the late USSR was a society beset by paradoxes which played out in every aspect of the Soviet system including its relationship with the Western left.¹⁰³ During this time, as Yurchak argues, Soviet society was perceived by its members as 'eternal' and as a distinct form of modernity.¹⁰⁴ Though this period witnessed growing disillusionment with Soviet ideology, whereby the trappings of participation in the mass-mobilisation project that was the Soviet Union like parades and party meetings were increasingly experienced as empty rituals, the values of the Soviet state continued to have meaning to its citizens and were assumed to be universally applicable by the leadership.¹⁰⁵ Throughout this era, the leadership also enjoyed a high point of stability in Soviet history which eventually led many of them to perceive there to be no need to significantly alter Soviet socialism, assuming it to be unparalleled in its superiority.¹⁰⁶

Yet, with the Soviet Union being a modernising project, this meant that also included as a goal within the state ideology of Soviet socialism, which the Soviet leadership assumed to be unsurpassable, was the creation of the ideal citizen who was 'an enlightened and independent-minded individual, who pursue[d] knowledge and [was] inquisitive and creative'.¹⁰⁷ A problem arose for the leadership, however, when following this model, Soviet citizens had their own personal realisations about the ideal form of society distinct from Soviet socialism. The Soviet Union, as an ideological state, could not allow this individualism if it led a citizen to arrive at a different conception of socialism – or society – to the one supported by the state. This was an essential contradiction inherent to Soviet society and the assumptions that formed this contradiction, the demand for self-enlightenment and

¹⁰³ See Yurchak in *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More*.

¹⁰⁴ Yurchak, 1.

¹⁰⁵ Yurchak, 8.

¹⁰⁶ It should be noted, however, that in an effort to revive the Soviet project in the 1970s, the Soviet leadership also began to experiment with a more consumerist model of society that rewarded loyalty with material benefits, in what represented a compromise with traditional anti-individualism and collectivism. See Krylova, 'Soviet Modernity', 186 and Stephen E. Hanson, 'The Brezhnev era', in *The Cambridge History of Russia. Volume III: The Twentieth Century*, ed. R. Suny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 300.

¹⁰⁷ Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More*, 11.

independent thought in citizens along with the requirement they reach the same conclusion as the state, as well as the Soviet emphasis on mass-mobilisation and party-based politics, had important consequences to and are reflected in the relationship between the Soviet leadership and the dissidents of the New Left.¹⁰⁸

The New Left expressly rejected the politics of the interwar period based around parties and mass-mobilisation along class lines. Following Herbert Marcuse's analysis, the New Left had concluded the working-class could not be relied upon to provide the revolution's foot-soldiers. This formed not only a difference over a specific point of doctrine, but a fundamental clash between different visions of how society ought to be organised. The New Left were youthful, could not be easily controlled, and by definition they refused to conform, basing their ideas around challenging elites and the codes they enforced. Such ideas, despite connecting to Soviet hopes for growing anti-capitalism in the West and self-enlightenment, were dangerous for how they could spread to the Soviet youth and challenge Soviet leaders' power. This anxiety reflected another paradox which Yurchak identifies in Soviet society, whereby it expressed confidence about the universality of its values, and as this thesis shows found evidence of them in the Soviet-West dissidentism which depicted Western radicals as dissidents, but simultaneously felt chronic insecurity about the USSR's future and potential ideological rivals to it emerging in left-wing movements abroad as well as at home.¹⁰⁹

Many in the Soviet leadership were anxious about traditional Marxism-Leninism's growing unpopularity with the USSR's youth and the threat that Western ideas would undermine support for the regime.¹¹⁰ New Left developments in the 1960s were pleasing to the leadership as evidence of capitalism's unpopularity and were considered by some of its more liberalizing members to have marked a turning point in the competition between capitalism and communism in favour of the latter.¹¹¹ However, conservatives felt they could not risk giving the movement wholehearted support in mainstream state-controlled media, for fear that the New Left's ideas would spread to the USSR's young citizens.¹¹² The New Left was often as critical of the USSR as it was of capitalism, and even

¹⁰⁸ Yurchak, 4.

¹⁰⁹ Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More*, 4.

¹¹⁰ Taggepera, 'The Impact of the New Left on Estonia', 43.

¹¹¹ Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 'Some Problems of the Labor Movement in Capitalist Countries', *Sosialismin teoria ja käytäntö*, 3rd April, 1969 quoted in Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 141.

¹¹² Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 119.

where the USSR did give official support to the New Left, such as over Vietnam, when the Soviet youth supported the New Left they did so in spite of the Soviet leadership.¹¹³

The Soviet youth and dissident movement's interest in the New Left is another important aspect of exploring the Soviet Union's relationship to radicals in the West. Some scholars have begun highlighting the existence of a Soviet New Left.¹¹⁴ This has tentatively been identified as a scattered number of groups, mainly made up of Soviet university students and young people, who were attracted by the ideas and culture of the New Left and appropriated them in the Soviet context. Juliane Fürst has notably written a recent monograph on the history of the Soviet Hippies, *Flowers Through Concrete: Explorations in the Soviet Hippieland and Beyond* (2021), which, though not expressly focused on the Soviet New Left, still provides important context to the existence of wider non-conformist social movements of which the Soviet New Left was an important example.¹¹⁵ Natasha Wilson's work highlighting alternative socialist and 'new left' circles at Moscow State University, meanwhile, has also been revealing in a similar way.¹¹⁶ This thesis assesses whether the Soviet New Left ever engaged with the Western original in a manner resembling dissidentism, in doing so also contributing to efforts to highlight the alternative socialisms developed by dissidents and to challenge

¹¹³ Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 515.

¹¹⁴ Juliane Fürst and Stephen V. Bittner, 'The Aging Pioneer: Late Soviet Socialist Society, Its Challenges and Challengers' in Fürst, S. Pons, and M. Selden, eds., *The Cambridge History of Communism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 296-7.

¹¹⁵ Juliane Fürst, *Flowers through Concrete: Explorations in the Soviet Hippieland and Beyond* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Fürst 'We all live in a Yellow Submarine', 197-207; Fürst, 'If You're Going to Moscow, be Sure to Wear some Flowers in your Hair: The Soviet Hippie Sistema and Its Life in, Despite and with Stagnation', in *Reconsidering Stagnation in the Brezhnev Era*, eds. Dina Fainberg and Artemy Kalinovsky, (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), 123-46; Fürst, 'Swinging across the Iron Curtain and Moscow's Summer of Love', in *Transnational Histories of Youth in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Richard Jobs and David Pomfret (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015), 213-36; Fürst, 'Love, Peace and Rock'n Roll on Gorky Street: The 'Emotional Style' of the Soviet Hippie Community', *Contemporary European History* 23, no. 4 (2014): 565-87.

¹¹⁶ Wilson, 'Young and socialist at Moscow State University; Dissident subjectivities in the last Soviet generation', *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 62, no. 1 (2021): 77-102. It should be noted that the phrase 'New Left' has alternative meanings for historians in the context of Soviet dissent. Wilson applies 'new left' to the general revival of reformist socialism among Soviet non-conformists that was inspired by the Western left at large, embracing Eurocommunism (a West European strand of communism that rejected Soviet dogma), hippiedom, as well as the Marcusian New Left. On the other hand, the 'Soviet New Left', as used by this thesis, refers to those Soviet students and oppositionists who were inspired specifically by the ideas of the Western New Left after reading the likes of Marcuse and Maoist infused texts. See Natasha Wilson, 'The generation of Allende and Solidarność: leftist dissidents, reform socialism and the intellectual elite in Moscow during the late Brezhnev era' (PhD diss., University College London, 2021); Wilson, 'Young and socialist at Moscow State University', 77-102; and also Fürst, 'The Aging Pioneer', 296.

the traditional depiction of the Brezhnev era as a monolith of stagnation and disengagement from socialism.¹¹⁷

This thesis builds on the work of Menhert, Taagepera, Roman, Weiss-Wendt and others by addressing the dearth of monograph-length comparative studies of Soviet and Western interactions with dissidents in opposing Cold War blocs by carrying out its own, while also examining groups beyond the New Left, chiefly trade union movements, which have gone unconsidered in the literature as subjects from which the Soviet press sought to create ‘dissident’ media figures in order to provide domestic audiences with evidence of Marxism’s global popularity and universality. It also takes a longer-term focus than previous studies, examining how and why Soviet-West dissidentism evolved and saw different Western radical groups gain and lose Soviet support in the period between Brezhnev’s appointment as General Secretary and the beginning of the Soviet dissident movement in 1964, and the collapse of the USSR in 1991. This choice of timeline allows the thesis to examine the Soviet response to the human rights breakthrough of the 1970s which historians identify as a decisive moment in the globalisation of human rights, a thesis powerfully advanced by Jan Eckel and Samuel Moyn.¹¹⁸

Eckel illustrates how the political and economic pessimism of the 1970s stemming from the failure of the post-war consensus led nations and activists worldwide, particularly in the West, to adopt human rights as a new way of conducting politics and to criticise the USSR for its restrictions on political freedom.¹¹⁹ This presented a significant political challenge to the USSR, which perceived its ideology as a superior guarantor of human rights to liberal-capitalism and this thesis analyses in detail how Soviet leaders and the media apparatus they oversaw responded with their own discourse on human rights conditions as being far worse in the West in which Soviet-West dissidentism played a key role. Overall, this *longue durée* approach allows the thesis to illustrate in fuller detail the complex evolution of Soviet attitudes to dissent in the West across the second half of the twentieth

¹¹⁷ Laqua and Alston, ‘Activism and Dissent under State Socialism’, 295-311; Dina Fainberg and Artemy Kalinovsky, eds., *Reconsidering Stagnation in the Brezhnev Era*; Neringa Klumbyte and Gulnaz Sharafutdinova, eds., *Soviet Society in the Era of Late Socialism, 1964-1985* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013). Also see Donald J. Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers: An Oral History of Russia’s Cold War Generation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹¹⁸ Jan Eckel and Samuel Moyn, eds., *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s* (Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 2015).

¹¹⁹ Eckel, ‘The Rebirth of Politics from the Spirit of Morality’, in *The Breakthrough*, 228.

century while its utilisation of the methodology of dissidentism, not yet applied in similar studies, brings additional clarity and insight.

Re-analysing Davis', and other cases of Western groups who were at times oppressed by Western governments and supported by the USSR, especially the New Left and British miners, through the lens of dissidentism provides a common framework of reference to conduct an in-depth comparative study. Through this comparative approach, this thesis illustrates to fullest extent yet how there were similar interactions between the USSR and Western radicals to those between the Soviet dissidents and their Western supporters by highlighting how Soviet-West dissidentism took place as the Soviet media depicted Western left-wingers as dissidents in order to counter the West's support for the likes of Solzhenitsyn. At the same time, the analysis considers how different dissident groups lost and gained preference as a result of changes in Soviet policy and the international environment. The findings of this thesis illustrate the extent to which the Soviet Union was engaged in creating images of dissidents for international and domestic consumption that proved the validity of Soviet predictions of communism's inevitable global rise.

These findings have important implications for wider methodological trends in the fields of Cold War and Soviet history. Historians increasingly advocate reading the history of the USSR forwards, rather than backwards from the vantage points of 1989 and 1991, and avoiding taking deterministic approaches that take the 'defeat' and collapse of the USSR and the supremacy of Western human rights narratives as inevitable outcomes of the Cold War.¹²⁰ As scholars argue, by reading the history of Cold War dissent forwards from 1964 it is possible to see the full extent to which human rights were contested as a concept by Moscow and how the Soviet Union attempted to create its own narrative of the West as a site of political repression much the same way as Western countries did to the USSR, a view which this thesis provides new evidence to support.¹²¹ The West's narrative has never existed alone or without competitors despite its dominance today.

¹²⁰ Zubok, 'A Cold War endgame or an opportunity missed?', 546; Michael Cox, 'A Cold War endgame or an opportunity missed?', 555-6.

¹²¹ Richardson-Little, 'From Tehran to Helsinki: the International Year of Human Rights 1968 and State Socialist Eastern Europe', 180-201; Richardson-Little, 'The Failure of the Socialist Declaration of Human Rights', 318-41; Kopeček, 'The Socialist Conception of Human Rights and Its Dissident Critique', 261-89.

Scholars also acknowledge the importance of the role played by Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov, and other Soviet dissidents in undermining the Soviet Union's global image and contributing to its downfall.¹²² It is possible to reflect on this fact and draw the conclusion that the USSR was destined to fail in its attempt to overwrite the Western narrative, and that this failure played a role in its defeat in the Cold War and communism's discreditation. Yet what this study illustrates is that this outcome was not a foregone conclusion. Across the entire period from when dissidents and human rights became major features of Cold War international relations, from the mid-1960s onwards, the USSR contested Western attempts to monopolise and 'weaponize' dissidents and human rights, knowing the damage that Western critiques were doing to its international standing, including those by private citizens and NGOs for how they 'could transform the international environment in ways hostile to Soviet-style socialism' and also spread among citizens of the USSR itself.¹²³ The Soviet Union in fact expressed genuine faith in the superiority of its interpretation of human rights. Examining Soviet interpretations of anti-capitalist dissent as proof of Marxism's accuracy and communism's eventual inevitable victory highlights how the Soviet leadership continued to feel confident in its ideological struggle with the West till the 1990s. At the same time, though, the analysis of Soviet-West dissidentism across 1964-1991 demonstrates how Soviet insecurity and the leadership's interpretation of the best form of socialism shifted over time which led to differing levels of support for different targets of Soviet dissidentism in the West. The findings of this thesis ultimately help to illustrate the value of avoiding using deterministic lenses and of reading Soviet and Cold War history forwards, and shine light on an overlooked aspect of Cold War history by illustrating the importance of creating 'dissident' media personalities that supported an alternative socialist narrative on human rights to the Soviet leadership and press, as well as the centrality of human rights as a battleground in the ideological competition of the Cold War and international relations at large.¹²⁴ A multifaceted methodology is key to achieving this.

Comparative approaches

As already stated, dissidentism forms a central part of this thesis' approach. While other studies have examined Soviet propaganda efforts to create and exploit images of dissidents in the West, none have

¹²² Hurst, "“To Build a Castle”", 32.

¹²³ Peterson, 'Wielding the Human Rights Weapon', 331-2, 309, and 34.

¹²⁴ Laqua and Alston, 'Activism and Dissent under State Socialism', 298.

yet applied dissidentism which is one of the most significant innovations in the field of Cold War and contemporary dissent studies.¹²⁵ The use of dissidentism brings greater clarity to the field's understanding of the Soviet Union's relationship with dissent in the West and the Western left. This is complemented by combining dissidentism with a comparative analytical approach, whereby examples of Soviet engagement with radicals in the West are compared with instances of interaction between Western actors and Soviet dissidents which have already been established as dissidentism. The criteria of dissidentism are then broadly assessed to support analysis of case studies of Western radicals' interactions with the USSR and, as part of a wider discussion, used to assist in discussing the extent to which the case represents an instance where Soviet interactions with radicals in the West were similar to Western interactions with Soviet dissidents in which Soviet-West dissidentism took place.

The focus falls on government, political opposition, and press interactions with the targets of dissidentism in each setting. Including the political opposition of the Soviet Union gives the fullest opportunity to assess the possibility of Soviet-West dissidentism, as political opposition groups and parties in the West were a key source of West-Soviet dissidentism as they utilised the dissidents to criticise incumbent government administrations.¹²⁶ 'Soviet-West dissidentism' in this thesis reference to dissidentism between a Western radical and the Soviet Union that saw the former depicted as a dissident, reflecting the direction of international attention in the right-to-left situation of the words, while West-Soviet dissidentism reflect dissidentism between the West and Soviet dissidents. This approach responds to Patrick Major and Rana Mitter's influential call for historians in the field to conduct comparative studies of Cold War history, to place 'Eastern and Western experiences side by side, in an explicitly comparative, transnational, and cross-bloc framework,' so that 'we can identify useful similarities and differences'.¹²⁷ In this case, the utility of comparisons is mainly to reveal the nature and rational of Soviet-West dissidentism, given the motives and nature of Western interest are already well understood, and so the analysis is weighted towards discussing how the Soviet side was similar or dissimilar to the West.

¹²⁵ Jan Olaszek, 'Book review: Kacper Szulecki: Dissidents in Communist Central Europe. Human Rights and the Emergence of New Transnational Actors. Cham 2019: ISBN 978-3-030-22612-1,' *H-Soz-Kult* (December, 2020), www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/reb-29225.

¹²⁶ For an example of the importance of opposition politicians to using Soviet dissidents' profiles, see Jeff Bloodworth, 'Senator Henry Jackson, the Solzhenitsyn Affair, and American Liberalism', 69–77.

¹²⁷ Major and Mitter, 'East is East and West is West?', 6-7.

The turn towards ‘cross-bloc’ comparative studies, especially those which identify the importance of what Major and Mitter have called the ‘nexus between high politics and everyday society’, has been among the most important developments in Cold War history over the past decade and a half.¹²⁸ Mitter and Major have highlighted the worth of the ‘home front’ as important site of research for historians to improve their understanding of the Cold War, whereby they study the cultural aspects of the conflict, its propaganda and public discourse especially.¹²⁹ Scholars can then also, as Michael Hopkins argues they should, outline how these cultural aspects intersected with the grander picture of Cold War geopolitics and integrate studies of culture with those of strategy and politics.¹³⁰

A comparative approach is further necessary, as accounts of the Cold War from the perspective of one nation have the negative potential to reinforce unhelpful ideas about the Cold War which stem from the binary nature of the conflict. A central feature of the Cold War’s ideological conflict was the process of Othering rival societies.¹³¹ A notable example would be the West’s construction of ‘the East’ as the only site of oppression of dissent and censorship in the world, portraying state repression as something that only happened ‘over there’, compared with the West’s own supposedly untainted democratic image.¹³² Of course, there was undeniably far greater freedom in the West, but there were also significant instances of oppression and historians increasingly are comparing whether the powerful conservative cultural norms and stereotypes according to which Western media shaped and discredited left-wing radicals were sometimes comparable *in effect* to state censorship in the USSR.¹³³ Without conducting comparative studies, it is possible to repeat binary myths in the study of Cold War dissent and leave undiscovered the similarities that the West had with its Eastern rivals with regard to its treatment of undesired political elements.

¹²⁸ Major and Mitter, 4. For relevant examples of comparative Cold War history with implications to understanding of the Soviet Union, see Kate Brown, ‘Plutonium Enriched: Making Bombs and Middle-Classes’, in *Soviet Society in the Era of Late Socialism, 1964–1985*, eds. Klumbyte and Sharafutdinova, 15–42; Shorten, ‘The Cold War as comparative political thought’, 385–408.

¹²⁹ Major and Mitter, ‘East is East and West is West?’, 9

¹³⁰ Major and Mitter, 4; Michael F. Hopkins, ‘Continuing Debate and New Approaches in Cold War History’, *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 4 (December, 2007): 913. Shorten has also called for reconciliation between cultural and political studies of the Cold War. See Shorten, ‘The Cold War as comparative political thought’, 385.

¹³¹ Major and Mitter, ‘East is East and West is West?’, 7.

¹³² Roman, “‘Armed and Dangerous’”, 87.

¹³³ Roman, 87. Similarly, historians can comparatively examine the influence of state patronage by Western governments in the arts with the more overt control exercised by the USSR over its media. See Major and Mitter, ‘East is East and West is West?’, 15.

Similarly, comparative studies with an emphasis on ideas and culture can help illustrate the level of West-East and East-West exchange between dissenting movements. Martin Klimke, Jacco Pekelder, and Joachim Scharloth for example, have highlighted the cross-border exchanges that took place between Eastern European dissidents and the New Left across the period 1960-80.¹³⁴ On the other hand, comparative histories have also revealed the significance of those dissenting movements to strengthening the will for détente among both Soviet and Western policy makers, as Jeremi Suri has shown.¹³⁵ Yet the turn towards the transnational in dissent studies has also been of equal significance to highlighting these cross-border exchanges. As Kacper Szulecki has shown, dissident texts and networks crossed international boundaries in Eastern Europe which were previously thought to have been impassable.¹³⁶ This thesis builds upon these ideas with its introduction of the concept of ‘transnational dissident-promoting coalitions’, defined earlier, which captures the strategic cross-border political partnerships formed between the targets of dissidentism and their supporters, specifically highlighting in greater detail the utility of the targets to the supporting party and the power imbalance inherent to these relationships.

Sources

This thesis draws upon a wide range of primary sources. The key source bases used to examine Soviet-West dissidentism were the *East View* archives of Soviet newspapers and journals, principally those of *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), *Izvestiya*, the official press organ of the Soviet government, and *Literaturnaya gazeta*, a leading Soviet academic journal. This thesis also benefitted from access to important Soviet publications in other key academic journals focused on ideological issues, including *Voprosy filosofii* which was permitted in 1969 by the Academy of Sciences to carry out a large-scale ideological study of the New Left, that provide insight into Soviet academic thinking on the New Left and other dissident groups. Supplementary to these sources was the *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* (CDSP), which produced

¹³⁴ Martin Klimke, Jacco Pekelder and Joachim Scharloth, eds., *Between Prague Spring and French May: Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960–1980* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011).

¹³⁵ Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest*. Another important step towards comparative studies of dissent is the work of Barbara Falk, who has comparatively examined dissent in Eastern Europe. See Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe: Citizen Intellectuals and Philosopher Kings* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2003) and Falk, ‘“Resistance and Dissent in Central and Eastern Europe: An Emerging Historiography’, *East European Politics and Societies* 25, no. 2 (2011): 318–60.

¹³⁶ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 4.

weekly editions of translations of key Soviet press and journal articles and facilitated access to a range of other Soviet journals, access to which was provided by *East View* and Northumbria University Library's own holdings of the publication. Soviet leaders' statements on the New Left and Western trade unions were also consulted, including the various editions of the collected speeches of Soviet premiers and the published records of the proceedings of the relevant Congresses of the CPSU.¹³⁷

In assessing the possibility of Soviet-West dissidentism, findings from the above sources were compared with Anglo-American politicians' speeches and press coverage referencing Soviet dissidents. Key in this regard were the Ronald Reagan Library, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, US Congressional Record, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, and UK Parliamentary Hansard, which provide an exhaustive archive of relevant leaders' and politicians' public discourse on Soviet dissidents. Meanwhile, *ProQuest's* archives of the *Guardian*, *Observer*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Times Digital Archive* were used to inform on press coverage.¹³⁸

At the same time, the Hoover Institution and Harvard University Archives, which have extensive holdings of documents relating to Soviet dissidents' political networks and activities in the US and UK, were also an important source in providing points of comparison. In this regard, Soviet-West dissidentism was mainly compared with British and American engagement with the more notable Soviet dissidents, like Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov, as the support they received from the West is well documented and they offer clearer points of comparison given that this thesis aims to draw attention to their equivalents in Soviet propaganda. British and American discourse was the key comparative

¹³⁷ Leonid I. Brezhnev, *Socialism, Democracy, and Human Rights* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980); Konstantin Chernenko, *Soviet-U.S. Relations: The Selected Writings and Speeches of Konstantin U. Chernenko*, ed. Victor Pribytkov (Moscow: Novosti Publishing House/New York: Praeger, 1984); Konstantin Chernenko, *Selected Speeches and Writings* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1984); CPSU, *Documents and Resolutions: XXVth Congress of the CPSU* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1976).

¹³⁸ *East View* and *ProQuest* are searchable databases and key-word searches were employed to bring up relevant results. As regards sampling, when a key word search brought up too large a number of results to analyse, a representative sample was chosen based on *East View* and *ProQuest's* respective relevancy 'score' functions which rank articles by their relevancy to the search terms. In some case studies, though, it was possible to analyse all articles on a particular person or subject as the number of results was more manageable, such as on Scargill and Maurice Jones, but not, for example, searches for 'New Left'.

focus given the significance of these two countries' press and politics to shaping the international discourse of the Cold War.¹³⁹

It would have been advantageous to this study to have gained access to the Moscow-based editorial archives of flagship Soviet publications like *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* (found at the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History and Russian State Archives of Social and Political History), which detail the decision-making behind particular articles and press campaigns that could have supplemented the discussion of Soviet press coverage on dissent in the West; though it has still been possible to gain access to the archived copies of all major Soviet newspaper and journals which often documented journalistic and government policy decisions, including the aforementioned and revealing 1969 Academy of Sciences memorandum for the editors of *Voprosy filosofii*. However, the restrictive research conditions under which this thesis was written, namely the Covid pandemic, the subsequent curbs on travel to archives abroad, and Russia's domestic political crackdown and 2022 invasion of Ukraine, made visiting such archives impossible early on in this thesis' development and throughout its completion. The utilization of other archives, such as Harvard's, was also impacted by the pandemic, with the switch to online delivery of documents in limited batches reducing access to material.

Despite the impact of restrictions, however, other more accessible sources have been able to provide equally useful insight into decision-making on, and Soviet attitudes towards, the New Left and the other Western radicals considered by the Soviet leadership as suitable targets for Soviet-West dissidentism. First of all, the *East View* Soviet press archives provide significant insight into the leadership's thinking, as Soviet papers in the Era of Stagnation (1964-85) ultimately took their orders from the Central Committee of the CPSU which empowered censors to control the output of editors (though in some cases editors were able to exercise their own judgement) and printed articles that conveyed the policies of the party leadership to a national and international audience.¹⁴⁰ At the same time, the memoirs and diaries of key figures in the Soviet leadership were also key sources in understanding the leadership's priorities. Most important in this regard were Anatoly Chernyaev's

¹³⁹ Melody Catherine Watson, 'Anglo-American Discourse About the USSR, 1984-1986', (PhD diss., University of Adelaide, 2017), 26.

¹⁴⁰ Thomas Kent, 'Decoding the Soviet Press' (lecture, Harriman Institute, Columbia University, New York, NY, 23rd March, 2015), 1; Kent, 'Sovetskaya pressa glazami amerikanskogo zhurnalista', *Istoriya otechestvennykh SMI*, Yearbook (February, 2015): 109-19; Simon Huxtable, *News from Moscow: Soviet Journalism and the Limits of Postwar Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 219-20.

diaries written secretly between 1972-1991 while he worked as a senior member of the International Department, responsible for managing the CPSU's relationship with the communist world but also an important source of ideological innovation within the Soviet state.¹⁴¹ Chernyaev was a reform minded individual and eventually became a key adviser to Gorbachev, the experience of which he documented in his diaries and published. His diaries written before working for Gorbachev, meanwhile, made available by the US National Security Archive, provide insight into the leadership's attitudes to developments in the communist and Western world during the pre-Gorbachev period, including the New Left and British miners' strike, as well as his and other reformers' opinions on both movements.

Georgi Arbatov's memoir, *The System*, meanwhile, published immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992, reveals the extent to which Brezhnev remained open-minded about reform during the early years of his premiership as Arbatov and others tried to push for more progressive policies.¹⁴² Arbatov also mentioned in the memoir his own respect for Marcuse and other communist writers, and his revelations about the course of Soviet politics during the 1970s inform this thesis' discussion of the USSR's experimental embrace with the New Left during 1969-72.¹⁴³ Another key source in revealing the scope of the 1969-72 experiments with the New Left were the writings of other reformers (and conservatives) which reveal their attitudes towards the New Left. This thesis looks at the work of Soviet academics and government ideologists with special interests in the New Left, like Aleksandr Brychkov and S. S. Salychev, to explore the scope of Soviet support for and ideological debate over the New Left throughout the 1969-72 experiments.¹⁴⁴

In terms of examining the possibility of dissidentism between the Soviet opposition and Western radicals, specifically the Soviet and Western New Lefts, the journal *A Chronicle of Current Events* was a key source.¹⁴⁵ The *Chronicle* was the leading Soviet dissident publication. Until its destruction

¹⁴¹ Anatoly S. Chernyaev, *The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1985*, ed. Svetlana Savranskaya, trans. Anna Melyakova, (Washington DC: The National Security Archive, 2006).

¹⁴² Georgi Arbatov, *The System: An Insider's Life in Soviet Politics* (New York: Times Books, 1992).

¹⁴³ Arbatov, *The System*, 129 and 353.

¹⁴⁴ Aleksandr Brychkov, *American Youth Today* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973); S. S. Salychev, "Novyye levyye": *s kem i protiv kogo* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya, 1972).

¹⁴⁵ Today *A Chronicle of Current Events* is available in English in several formats. Peter Reddaway published a notable translation of its first eleven volumes in the *Uncensored Russia: The Human Rights Movement in the Soviet Union* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972). However, his book does not reproduce the *Chronicle's* texts exactly, instead integrating them into a thematic narrative. For this study's purposes, it is more useful to the reader to be able to access the original documents so therefore the translations of *Chronicle*

at the hands of the KGB in 1983, the *Chronicle* acted as the voice of the Soviet dissident movement by documenting its persecution and also the beliefs of those persecuted, printing manifestos and statements by dissidents, while typically organising its issues into sections that covered particular trials or groups.¹⁴⁶ Supplementing the *Chronicle*, are a number of existing interviews with members of the Soviet New Left conducted both before and following the collapse of the Soviet Union that provide insight into the relationship between the movement, the West, and the Soviet state.¹⁴⁷

These different sources inform the five chapters and conclusion which make up the structure of this study and cover the years 1964 to 1991. This time frame was chosen to reflect the complex and changing relationship the Soviet Union had with dissidentism in the West under different leaders, beginning with the start of Leonid Brezhnev's premiership, when the New Left was the main dissident partner of the USSR, and ending with the Gorbachev period, which ultimately resulted in the collapse of the USSR, during which the Soviet Union attempted to launch a socialist human rights declaration and before which labour movements had become Moscow's key target for dissidentism.¹⁴⁸

The geographic comparison focuses on the differences and similarities between the USSR and Anglo-American coverage of dissent. However, this does not mean the analysis exclusively focuses on dissent in these contexts even though they predominate in the case studies. Britain, America, and

used here were provided by the *A Chronicle of Current Events* web project, which offers translations of every single published volume of the journal in online or pdf. form with a consistent numbering and navigation system (the website also hosts copies of the Russian originals in pdf. format). Some later issues have not had their content entirely digitized on the website, and instead refer to the Amnesty International reprints made available in pdf. format. Where this is the case, and where Amnesty's versions are otherwise available, page numbers in the Amnesty version are referred to for ease of access. Where not, the *Chronicle's* numbering system is used, where e.g. (3.1) in the title refers to the first section of the third volume of *A Chronicle* as per the website's system. See John Crowfoot and Tanya Lipovskaia, 'About', *A Chronicle of Current Events Website*, last updated 21st December, 2020, <https://chronicle-of-current-events.com/work-in-progress/>.

¹⁴⁶ For example, see Amnesty International, 'The Case of the "Socialists"', *A Chronicle of Current Events* no. 64 (30th June, 1982): 15-16 and 'Sud nad Mikhailom Rivkinym (21-1)', *Vesti iz SSSR (USSR News Brief)*, 15th November, 1983, no. 21, <https://vesti-iz-sssr.com/2016/11/15/sud-nad-mikhailom-rivkinym-1983-21-1/>. *Vesti iz SSSR*, based out of Munich, West Germany and founded and edited by Kronid Lyubarskiy (1934-1996), fulfilled a similar function to *A Chronicle* but had a much shorter run between 1978 and 1991. It also has a rationalised numbering system the same as *A Chronicle's* digitized editions. See 'O sayte', *Vesti iz SSSR Website*, <https://vesti-iz-sssr.com/home/> (accessed 26th September, 2022). For details on Lyubarskiy, see Marjorie Farquharson, 'Obituary: Kronid Lyubarsky', *The Independent*, 17th June, 1996.

¹⁴⁷ For example, see Anders Stephanson and Boris Kagarlitsky, 'Interview with Boris Kagarlitsky', *Social Text*, no. 27 (1990): 147-162; Mikhail Rivkin, Aleksey Pyatovskiy, and Marina Perevozkin, 'Interv'yu Alekseyu Pyatovskomu i Marine Perevozkinoy ot 1990 goda, (S kommentariyami M. Rivkina ot dekabrya 2007 g.)', *Igrunov* (1990), <http://www.igrunov.ru/vin/vchk-vin-dissid/dissidents/rivkin/1200923212.html>.

¹⁴⁸ Richardson-Little, 'The Failure of the Socialist Declaration of Human Rights', 318-41.

the USSR together fought a wider ideological battle during the Cold War between democratic-capitalism and communism respectively. As each looked for proof of their ideologies' superiority and universality, examples of dissent in countries outside the USSR, UK, and US were vitally important. The Prague Spring, and its crushing, was interpreted as evidence of Soviet communism's faltering strength by the US and UK and used to attack Soviet ideology as moribund, while New Left protests in West Germany were taken as proof of Marxist materialism's accuracy and the bankruptcy of the capitalism which the US promoted throughout the world. Contemporary governments and politicians of the Cold War typically viewed the world through this bipolar lens and saw themselves as part of a wider struggle between East and West in which signs of dissent anywhere in the opposing bloc were vitally important in securing victory and fighting the propaganda war.¹⁴⁹

Chapter structure

Chapter one, 'The Emergence of Dissent and Transnational Attention, 1964-68', covers the period during which New Left activism began to grow against the wider backdrop of the US civil rights movement, protests against the Vietnam War, and student activism on university campuses. The analysis looks at early Soviet reactions to the New Left before and during the momentous events of 1968, when mass student protests and workers' strikes broke out in North American and Western European cities. The findings reveal that the USSR's academics and ideological experts were slow to engage with the New Left until after 1968 but that the USSR did at least take its first steps towards dissidentism with the New Left. Soviet commentary on Western protests is compared with Anglo-American press and political coverage of dissent in the USSR and Eastern Europe, focusing on the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial of 1966 and its aftermath, as well as the crushing of the Prague Spring by Soviet armed forces in 1968 and its impact on the dissident movement in the USSR. The chapter ends with an analysis of the significance of these events to the future prospects of Soviet engagement with the New Left following the experience of its control over the communist bloc being challenged in Czechoslovakia, by Maoist China, and at home as intellectuals publicly criticised the Soviet leadership for their repression of the Prague Spring.

¹⁴⁹ Shorten, 'The Cold War as comparative political thought', 387.

Chapter two, 'Détente and the Soviet Experiment with the New Left, 1968-72', explores how despite the challenging events of 1968, the Soviet leadership sanctioned several experiments with the New Left, whereby academics were instructed to study the movement, diplomats were sent to attempt to foment New Left revolutions in Europe, and the KGB assessed the subversive potential of New Left movements as the leadership considered alternative means of influence to détente. Significantly, the chapter highlights Soviet coverage of continued New Left activism during 1968-72 as well as the campaign to support Angela Davis throughout her trial during 1970-72, and illustrating how the latter example represented a case of Soviet-West dissidentism. The chapter illustrates how the period 1968-72 saw the Soviet Union compete with the West on human rights while at the same time covering the tensions which affected the Soviet experiment with the New Left, and how anti-New Left conservatives eventually gained the upper hand and ended the prospect of significant Soviet outreach to the New Left.

Chapter three, 'The USSR in the Shadow of West-Soviet Dissidentism, 1972-79', examines the consequences of the breakdown of the relationship with the New Left against the backdrop of growing Western support for Soviet dissidents. During this period, following the failure of the 1969-72 experiment with the New Left and the latter's embrace of violent revolution, the Soviet Union initially lacked an effective counter-narrative to the loudening chorus of Western voices supporting Soviet dissidents and condemning the USSR as an abuser of human rights. Particularly strong criticism came from opposition Western conservatives who sought an end to the policy of détente. The chapter compares conservatives' engagement with Soviet dissent to the activities of the Soviet New Left, which emerged in the mid-1970s and appropriated the ideas of the Western original, and illustrates why the Soviet incarnation's engagement with the New Left came close to being but ultimately never fully represented an example of Soviet-West dissidentism led by the political opposition which was comparable to the attention given by Western conservatives to Soviet dissidents. Finally, the chapter explores the KGB's persecution of this movement but more importantly how the Soviet state found new examples in the West to build human rights counternarratives from the Native American Sovereignty movement and Western states' abuse of trade unionists' political rights.

Chapter four, 'Labour, Anti-Neoliberal Protest, and the Revival of Soviet-West dissidentism, 1979-85', illustrates how the election of conservative governments in the US and UK led by figures who had supported Soviet dissidents in the 1970s led to an increase in Western criticism of Soviet human rights abuses but simultaneously, as a result of these new governments' neoliberal policies, provided the Soviet Union with new targets for dissidentism in Western trade unions which it could exploit as a counternarrative to Western criticism of its human rights record. The governments of Thatcher and Reagan implemented neoliberal economic reforms which led to significant labour strikes and the chapter analyses the ways in which these strikes received Soviet support, especially the Soviet press' creation of a 'dissident' media personality from the British miners' leader Arthur Scargill, while also showing the significant differences in the extent of the support for strikes to that given to the New Left and the ideological reasons for those differences. The analysis here shows how Scargill was transformed into a dissident personality on the pages of the Soviet dailies, becoming the Soviet answer to the West's lionization of Solzhenitsyn.

Chapter five, 'The "End of History" and Transnational Dissident-Promoting Coalitions, 1985-91', outlines how the rise of the reformist Mikhail Gorbachev to the premiership of the USSR led to a significant de-escalation of Western and Soviet efforts to exploit the issues of anti-communist and anti-capitalist dissent respectively, as both sides sought to improve East-West relations, and saw new, more moderate forms of dissidentism being pursued on both sides. The chapter explores how Gorbachev's alternative conception of Soviet socialism was incompatible with support for the likes of the traditionally socialist British miners and led the Soviet press to attack the trade unionists who had run the strike even long after its end, and instead focused on creating a socialist alternative to the Western human rights concept. Meanwhile, the chapter also compares Soviet trade unions' solidarity with the British miners to Soviet dissidents' partnerships with private individuals and political organisations in the West outside the government in this era, to highlight the different types of transnational dissident coalitions which could exist in the Soviet and Anglo-American contexts. Finally, the chapter explores the re-emergence of the Soviet New Left following its persecution as a force in Soviet political society and whether it influenced Soviet human rights policy and dissidentism, and also reflects on the implications of this thesis' research findings to understandings of present-day relations between the West and Russia.

CHAPTER I: THE EMERGENCE OF DISSENT AND TRANSNATIONAL ATTENTION, 1964-68

These pseudorevolutionaries with their adventurist slogans and their conception of 'violent actions by small groups' do not open up any concrete prospects before the students and merely slow down the mobilization of the student masses.¹

– *Izvestiya* on the New Left riots at the *Sorbonne* University, Paris, 1968

Introduction

While transnational support for dissidents did not become extensive until the 1970s, this later story cannot be understood without outlining the consequential political and social forces set in motion in the period 1964-68.² It was during this time that dissent began to emerge in communist and capitalist societies, in the form of reformist socialism (though right-wing dissent also later emerged) and the New Left respectively, eventually exploding onto the streets in 1968. This ultimately provoked a comprehensive retrenchment by incumbent elites in Moscow, Washington, and across Western Europe, who sought to relieve pressure on themselves by relaxing East-West tensions through détente and suppressing dissident movements at home.³ In turn, this caused dissident opinions to radicalise in both East and West. As dissidents developed their political ideas, they began to attract growing attention from political supporters in the respective opposing Cold War blocs. In the West, conservative opponents of détente and human rights activists became increasingly involved in supporting Soviet dissidents and those from other communist states who they argued the West was abandoning through the policy of détente. Meanwhile, the Soviet government, academic establishment, and opposition eventually became interested in assessing the New Left as a potential ally in the Cold War. Of course, neither Western nor Soviet interest in dissidents and human rights would truly begin to peak until after 1968's revolutions and the subsequent growth of international human rights discourse. However, as Moyn says, 'even if the [1970s] human rights explosion seemed to come out of nowhere, its antecedents in the 1950s and 1960s ... remain important', including in the USSR, and receive due attention here.⁴

This chapter therefore first illustrates the emergence of dissent in the 1960s before the watershed moment of 1968, outlining the different social and economic factors which inspired it, before then

¹ L. Volodin, 'Why the Sorbonne is Closed', *Izvestiya*, 6th May, 1968, 4 in *CDSP* 20, no. 18 (May, 1968): 19-20.

² Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 211.

³ Suri, *Power and Protest*, 1-2 and 164.

⁴ Samuel Moyn, 'The Return of the Prodigal: The 1970s as a Turning Point in Human Rights History', 4.

exploring its ideas and manifestations. The analysis then turns to initial responses to dissent in the US, UK, and USSR during 1964-67, comparing political reactions in each setting, after which the chapter outlines reactions to 1968 itself and the proceeding process of elite retrenchment which took place, and how this would provoke the phenomenon of transnational dissident-promoting coalitions while also considering the impact of 1968 in terms of the growth of international human rights discourse as the UN's year for human rights.⁵

The growth of dissent

Scholars increasingly identify the interconnectedness of the 1960s protest movements in East and West.⁶ This is particularly evident in the actual causes of dissent. A major structural factor was the growth of student populations. In the affluent, post-WWII US, student enrolments grew from 2,812,000 in 1955 to 8,581,000 in 1970, while in the USSR they increased from 1,800,000 to 4,500,000 in the same period.⁷ This growth was driven by both generational and infrastructural changes. The post-1945 baby boom meant that there were more people aged 15-29, while state-mandated expansion of higher education after WWII, as the rival Cold War powers sought to recruit more experts, scientists especially, in pursuit of technological superiority in the arms race, meant that there were more opportunities for these young people to enter university and encounter more radical political ideas.⁸

Thus, while the generation before them had experienced economic depression, war, and military service as their transition from youth to adulthood, the post-WWII generation enjoyed a booming post-war economy and an intellectual experience of maturation.⁹ As a result, they became more politically aware and preoccupied with ameliorating social injustices they encountered.¹⁰ This generation was also shaped by the experiences of state political intervention in society. While the Cold War states may have benefitted many students through their expansion of higher education,

⁵ Tom Buchanan, *Amnesty International and Human Rights Activism in Postwar Britain, 1945–1977* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 153.

⁶ For example, see Martin Klimke et al.'s study *Between Prague Spring and French May: Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960-1980* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011) or Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, eds., *The Socialist Sixties, Crossing Borders in the Second World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

⁷ Suri, *Power and Protest*, 'Table 1. Student enrolments in higher education'.

⁸ Suri, 89. There was also a greater number of graduate students, whose studies lasted long enough for them to form organisations to coordinate campus activism. See Vinen, *The Long '68*, 68-9.

⁹ Suri, *Power and Protest*, 89.

¹⁰ Suri, 92.

they also attempted to exert political control over academia and political thought. America's McCarthyism and purges in the USSR, which were of course far more repressive than McCarthyism, led to powerful 'counter-responses' among students to the various attempts to coerce them, which coalesced around the ideas of the New Left and Soviet dissident movement, respectively.¹¹

These experiences of repression, combined with a rejection of the toleration of injustice, meant students would rebel against their elders and become one of the central demographics driving dissent in East and West.¹² Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), founded in the US in 1960, was one of the key proponents of New Left ideas, while students were of primary concern to the KGB for their political unreliability and support for undesirable ideas.¹³ Students, however, were not the sole agents of dissent. Labour activism was an important source of rebellion against authority and one with which student dissent often intersected, particularly in the West where the ramifications of the end of the post-war boom in the 1960s were felt until the 1980s.¹⁴ Most of all, though, in both East and West, student protest intertwined with that of intellectuals. A new international culture of dissent led by counter-cultural writers and thinkers, from Solzhenitsyn to Herbert Marcuse, gave students the vocabulary to challenge traditional elites in fresh ways and produce their own political programmes for reform and governance.¹⁵ At the heart of protest in the capitalist and communist states was social and political justice. This took on different forms in each setting.

In America, anti-racism was a fundamental part of the New Left's activism. Growing awareness of racial inequality in the South convinced students that America's promises of equal rights were not being lived up to. SDS established the achievement of racial equality as one of its primary goals and refused membership to anyone not in agreement with that objective.¹⁶ This student activism connected with an already developed civil rights movement based upon peaceful civil disobedience.

¹¹ Suri, 93. For a discussion of American anti-communism's impact on the independence of academic thought in the US, see Robert L. Dahlgren and Piotr Mikiewicz (Reviewing Editor), 'Red scare in the sunshine state: Anti-communism and academic freedom in Florida public schools, 1945–1960', *Cogent Education* 3, no. 1 (2016).

¹² 'What the protests have in common', *Guardian*, 11th March, 1968, 8.

¹³ *The Port Huron Statement*, 2nd printing (New York: Students for a Democratic Society, 1964); 'Report Relayed by Andropov to the CPSU Central Committee, "Students and the Events in Czechoslovakia"', 5th November, 1968, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, TsKhSD, F. 5, O60, D. 48, Ll. 120-153. The Wilson Centre, Record ID 115979.

¹⁴ This varied between countries. In the US, for example, the link between trade unions and the 'broader left' had largely been severed by the 1970s as a result of student radicalism. See Vinen, *The Long '68*, 328.

¹⁵ Suri, *Power and Protest*, 94.

¹⁶ Suri, 102.

Through this activism, though civil rights may have in practice been a domestic American affair, the movement was inextricably linked to the ideological competition of the Cold War.¹⁷ As Shorten says, civil rights activists meted out a powerful challenge to Cold War America's claim to be a defender of fully-realised human rights against communist tyranny, by highlighting American aggression abroad and the country's failure at home to protect the human rights of African-Americans, and in doing so acted as a form of dissent seeking to 'reform the Cold War order' and America's place within it.¹⁸ Meanwhile, there later appeared even more ideologically radical responses to racial inequality that emerged as part of the New Left. The Black Power movement advocated 'racial autonomy' and saw armed groups emerge like the Black Panther Party (BPP), which organised around the need to defend African-Americans from White violence.¹⁹ Equally, though, the BPP was concerned with the issue that motivated some of the largest protests during the 1960s and 1970s: opposition to the Vietnam War.²⁰

The Vietnam conflict polarised public opinion like no other issue. The scale of the violence orchestrated by the US military against North Vietnam, the decision to implement the draft, and Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson's (1963-69) consistent support for the war 'alienated' the American left 'from its own government' and led to a strong anti-patriotic turn in the New Left, epitomised by the burning of the American flag and labelling the US 'fascist'.²¹ Vietnam also had a global impact and produced protests not only in the United States but also the countries of Western Europe, with the largest New Left demonstration in Britain being one against the war.²² Vietnam was similarly an important part of New Left protest in West Germany, though there the focal points of activism were often the legacies of a different war, WWII, and the horrors committed by Germans during it.²³

The generational divide that drove the New Left to declare traditional authorities outmoded was particularly pronounced in West Germany, where the '68 generation's parents had been residents

¹⁷ Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 13.

¹⁸ Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 102; Vinen, *The Long '68*, 84-5; Shorten, 'The Cold War as comparative political thought', 406.

¹⁹ Vinen, *The Long '68*, 99-105; Harris, 'Revolutionary Black Nationalism: The Black Panther Party', 162.

²⁰ Vinen, *The Long '68*, 102.

²¹ Vinen, 93.

²² Vinen, 217.

²³ Vinen, 178; Karrin Hanshew, "'Sympathy for the Devil?'" The West German Left and the Challenge of Terrorism', *Contemporary European History* 21, no. 4 (November, 2012): 515.

and sometimes active supporters of the Third Reich.²⁴ Radical students in some cases saw continuity between the Nazi state and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) which had been established after the war, calling the FRG ‘fascist’ for the presence of former Nazis in government and heavy-handed policing of student demonstrations.²⁵ Later, some radicals would turn to violence to prosecute the FRG for its supposed failure to renounce Nazism, forming the Red Army Faction (RAF), an urban-guerrilla terrorist group most notable for the abduction and murder of the prominent German industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer who had once been a member of the SS.²⁶ Schleyer’s murder, however, was not only connected to the German New Left’s revulsion for Nazism, but also their determination to undermine capitalist society, a goal shared by the rest of the New Left.²⁷

The New Left held that consumerism represented an ideology into which the working classes of the capitalist states had been indoctrinated and featured as a primary concern of the Port Huron Statement (1964), the manifesto produced by SDS considered to be one of the New Left’s founding documents.²⁸ The Statement argued that, through ‘hard-sell, soft-sell, lies and semi-true appeals’ modern workers were convinced of the need to never be content with their possessions as they were, and trapped in a consumerist machine that precluded ‘understanding and controlling self and events’.²⁹ People were instead reduced to individual units of an economic structure in which they had little agency to undo their own subjugation nor the growing inequality between them and the capitalist class which reaped the rewards of this exploitative system. This system was also structured to keep afloat the ‘military-industrial complex’, whereby the economy served the interests of the military.³⁰ According to the New Left, the capitalist class used violence to suppress challenges to this system, which some argued legitimated the individual’s use of violence against capitalism in self-defence.³¹

²⁴ Vinen, *The Long '68*, 182.

²⁵ Vinen, 182; One student was shot by police during a demonstration against the visit of the Shah of Iran to West Germany in 1967. See Hanshew, “‘Sympathy for the Devil?’”, 514 and 522.

²⁶ Hanshew, “‘Sympathy for the Devil?’”, 529.

²⁷ Hanshew, 516.

²⁸ For commentary on the Statement see Richard Flacks and Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Port Huron Statement: Sources and Legacies of the New Left's Founding Manifesto* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015). The version used here is *The Port Huron Statement*, 2nd printing (New York: SDS, 1964).

²⁹ *The Port Huron Statement*, 15.

³⁰ *The Port Huron Statement*, 15.

³¹ Hanshew, “‘Sympathy for the Devil?’”, 513.

A similar argument was taken up by one of the most influential New Left thinkers, the German theorist Herbert Marcuse of the Frankfurt School.³² It is important to emphasise that Marcuse is not entirely representative of the New Left or the ideas of the ‘long ’68’, as Richard Vinen has called it.³³ Indeed, scholarship is attempting to draw the focus away from ‘grandfather’ figures like Marcuse, to pay due attention to the people of colour, women, and LGBTQIA+ figures who made significant contributions to New Left debate, but have gone underappreciated in conventional narratives.³⁴ At the same time, however, for the purposes of this thesis it is necessary to focus on the figures who contemporary Soviet propaganda identified as the ideological leaders of the radical protests of ’68 and later. Of them, Marcuse was seen as among the foremost and the Soviet press reserved particular scorn for him, dedicating whole articles to attacking his works.³⁵ Furthermore, Marcuse’s ideas capture the essence of the broad issues which were at the heart of the acts of dissent in question.

Marcuse articulated a position that rejected both orthodox Marxism and capitalism and called for their revolutionary replacement.³⁶ He contended that capitalism entailed social control. Through the machinery of ‘consumerism’, advanced capitalist societies manipulated the masses and tricked workers into supporting their own subjugation.³⁷ Marcuse argued that society had imposed on individuals a ‘false need’ to consume, which then led them to work harder and harder to access more and more goods.³⁸ Because of this, Marcuse was led to doubt the revolutionary potential of the working class and therefore to break from the basic principle of Marxism which places the worker at the forefront of any uprising.

Marcuse argued that the working class had become integrated into the consumerist machine, saying: ‘the workers even show a vested interest in the establishment – a frequently observed effect of

³² The Frankfurt School describes the cohort of radical intellectuals that developed within the Goethe Frankfurt University during the early to mid-20th century.

³³ Vinen, *The Long ’68*, xiv.

³⁴ For example, see Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretative History* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

³⁵ L. Narsky, ‘Among Books: On Philosophical Traditions’, *Pravda*, 21st June, 1971, 2 in *CDSP* 23, no. 25 (20th July 1971): 16; Yuri Zhukov, ‘Werewolves-On The False Prophet Marcuse and his Vociferous Disciples’, *Pravda*, 30th May, 1968, 4 in *CDSP* 20, no. 22 (19th June, 1968): 4-5. For the original Russian language version see Yuri Zhukov, ‘Oborotnii: O lzheproroke Markuze i ego shumlivykh uchenikakh’, *Pravda*, 30th May, 1968, 4.

³⁶ Herbert Marcuse, *The New Left and the 1960s. Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse Volume 3*, ed., Douglas Kellner, (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2005), 5.

³⁷ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge Classics, 2007 [1964]), 53.

³⁸ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 7.

“workers’ participation” in capitalist enterprise’.³⁹ Marcuse therefore sought new values and allies for his cause.⁴⁰ In particular, Marcuse argued that instead of proletarians, the core of the revolutionaries would be an alliance of the intelligentsia and those groups who Marcuse called ‘outsiders’: those who ‘exist[ed] outside the democratic process; their life [was] the most immediate and the most real need for ending intolerable conditions and institutions’, including most of all the US’s persecuted African-American population.⁴¹

This rejection of the revolutionary primacy of the proletariat by Marcuse and his influence on radical left thought, would prove a major ideological sticking point between the majority of the Soviet leadership and the New Left as the former still revered the working-class as the vanguard of communist revolution.⁴² Equally ideologically problematic for Soviet communists was the influence of Mao Zedong on the New Left, whose name would frequently be graffitied on walls by protesting students in the formulation ‘Marx, Mao, and Marcuse’.⁴³ By the mid-1960s, communist China was an ideological (and military) rival of the USSR, and its leader, Mao, espoused a version of non-Soviet communism that emphasised anti-colonialism and the view that ‘communism should be adapted to local, national conditions’, which was highly influential among the radical youth of the West.⁴⁴

Ultimately, it was the failure of the traditional vehicles of social and economic reform – liberal capitalism, electoral politics, mainstream education – to deal with the problems of racism, inequality, and the ethical exercise of foreign policy that convinced the New Left those methods could no longer be trusted to deliver change and that the only alternative was to challenge incumbent elites’ power and revise society’s principles.⁴⁵ Something similar was taking place among the youth and intelligentsia of the USSR during the 1960s with respect to the rule and conduct of the leading communist party.

In some cases, those who would become Soviet dissidents recognised the similarities between the revisionist processes that were taking place in the West and the USSR during the 1960s. Lyudmila

³⁹ Marcuse, 33.

⁴⁰ Kellner, *The New Left and the 1960s*, 7.

⁴¹ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 256-7; Kellner, *The New Left and the 1960s*, 6.

⁴² Zhukov, ‘Werewolves’, *Pravda*, 30th May, 1968, 4.

⁴³ Kellner, *The New Left and the 1960s*, 7.

⁴⁴ Julia Lovell, ‘Maoism marches on: the revolutionary idea that still shapes the world’, *Guardian*, 16th March, 2019.

⁴⁵ Suri, *Power and Protest*, 105.

Alekseyeva saw a direct comparison between the US civil rights movement and the one for human rights in the USSR, describing how ‘[in] both countries citizens began to demand that the provisions of their laws be observed’.⁴⁶ In principle, the goals of the early human rights movement were simply to force the Soviet government to abide by its own laws guaranteeing political freedom. Influenced by Soviet logician Aleksandr Vol’pin, many dissidents practiced ‘radical civil obedience’, which as Nathans says involved ‘engaging in or insisting on practices formally protected by Soviet law – such as freedom of assembly or transparency of judicial proceedings – but frequently subject to the wrath of the regime.’⁴⁷ As Alekseyeva says, making such demands entailed ‘negating the foundations of official ideology’.⁴⁸ In the dissidents’ view, despite the existence of a Soviet legal code as well as a long term commitment to bestowing political rights to citizens as a means of advancing communism, the communist party was the true arbiter of the USSR and enforced an ideology that demanded subjugation to its will, which was above and beyond any legal or moral restraints.⁴⁹ Therefore, the Soviet dissidents, like the New Left, were concerned with challenging what they saw as an outdated and inhumane form of society and governance – the latter with a greater emphasis on revolution in contrast to the dissidents’ focus on reform. Large swathes of the Soviet youth were also alienated from Soviet ideology and students in particular began to engage with alternative ideas.⁵⁰ Their interest, however, would not have been so great had it not been for the leadership of Nikita Khrushchev between 1956 and 1964.

While there were strong similarities in the origins of Soviet and Western dissent, the Soviet context had some unique features. The control of political life was of course much stricter in the USSR due to the dominance of the communist party. Until the reformist Khrushchev gained full power in 1956 (following a period of collective rule after Stalin’s death in 1953), public expressions of individual dissent were uncommon, deterred by the extremely punitive conditions of Stalinism.⁵¹ Nevertheless,

⁴⁶ Lyudmila Alekseyeva, *Soviet Dissent: Contemporary Movements for National, Religious, and Human Rights* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 267.

⁴⁷ Benjamin Nathans, ‘The Dictatorship of Reason: Aleksandr Vol’pin and the Idea of Rights under “Developed Socialism”’, *Slavic Review* 66, no. 4 (Winter, 2007): 630.

⁴⁸ Alekseyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 268.

⁴⁹ Nathans, ‘Soviet Rights-Talk in the Post-Stalin Era’, 182-3.

⁵⁰ ‘Report Relayed by Andropov to the CPSU Central Committee, “Students and the Events in Czechoslovakia”’, 5th November, 1968.

⁵¹ Stalinism describes the form of government and society instituted in the USSR during the leadership of Stalin as General Secretary. Stalinism implied exceptionally close control of political and cultural expression and harsh retaliatory measures for those who fell afoul of the system. Khrushchev gradually assumed the reins of power following Stalin’s death in 1953, taking de-facto control in 1955 and formal

discontent existed beneath the surface and Khrushchev was first to create the conditions for real alternative expression in Soviet society, most of all in the realm of culture, following his denunciation of Stalin in the Secret Speech of 1956.⁵² Khrushchev also implemented an impressive housing program which provided millions of Soviet citizens, the majority of whom had previously lived in communal accommodation, with their first individual apartments with a peak of 2.7 million houses built in 1959 alone.⁵³ The privacy this new personal space afforded meant Soviet citizens not only had new opportunities for private life, but also for the exchange of alternative ideas outside the direct view of the state.⁵⁴ However, the party did try to enforce significant restrictions on the bounds of political and cultural discussion and there was still dissent under Khrushchev.

Against the will of the party, students protested the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956; it was launched to end a process of reform initiated by the Hungarian communist leadership; and Khrushchev authorised a wave of arrests in response.⁵⁵ Yet the initial relaxation of censorship had released the genie from the bottle in way the state could not easily reverse. Having allowed a limited level of freedom to prevail, when before there had been comprehensive censorship, Khrushchev had fostered an insatiable appetite for change among the Soviet intelligentsia and youth. Khrushchev's premiership later became increasingly unstable and in 1964 the Politburo leadership ousted and replaced him with the conservative Leonid Brezhnev.⁵⁶ Following this the state started to enact increasingly punitive measures to re-establish its control of culture and political debate, resulting in the infamous show-trial of the writers Yuli Daniel and Andrei Sinyavsky – for the 'offence' of

control in 1956. See David L. Hoffmann, 'Introduction', in *Stalinism: The Essential Readings*, ed. Hoffman (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002) 1-8.

⁵² 'Khrushchev's Secret Speech, "On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences," Delivered at the Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,' 25th February, 1956, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, From the Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 84th Congress, 2nd Session (22nd May, 1956-11th June, 1956), C11, Part 7 (4th June, 1956), 9389-9403. Wilson Centre, Record ID 115995.

⁵³ Pollack and Wielgohs, *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, 100; Henry W. Morton, 'Housing in the Soviet Union', *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 35, no. 3, The Soviet Union in the 1980s (1984): 78.

⁵⁴ Pollack and Wielgohs, *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, 100.

⁵⁵ William Taubman, 'The Khrushchev period, 1953–1964', in *The Cambridge History of Russia. Volume III*, 277. See Hornsby, *Reform and Repression in the Soviet Union under Nikita Khrushchev*. He presents the argument that there was greater scope for protest under Khrushchev than previously appreciated and that though the regime abandoned terror, it continued to develop measures of repression. Also see Benjamin Tromly, 'Robert Hornsby, Protest, Reform and Repression in Khrushchev's Soviet Union. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013'. 313 \$99.00', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 18, no. 4 (2016): 267–8.

⁵⁶ Joseph Torigian, "'You Don't Know Khrushchev Well": The Ouster of the Soviet Leader as a Challenge to Recent Scholarship on Authoritarian Politics', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 24, no. 1 (2022): 78–115.

publishing anonymously abroad – and accompanying protests in support of them at Pushkin Square in 1965.⁵⁷

These events gave rise to the Soviet dissident movement.⁵⁸ Not only were Daniel and Sinyavsky persecuted by the state authorities, those protesting on their behalf and eventually even the writers' lawyers were subjected to state sanction.⁵⁹ The extent of the party's overreach led to demands from intellectuals not just for cultural freedom, but a broader call that fundamental aspects of the Soviet system be reformed to respect freedom of speech and legality.⁶⁰ Eventually, as Philip Boobbyer says, many 'intellectuals and politicians ... [came] ... to believe that Soviet life was in need of moral regeneration', focused on the notion of conscience, and that through 'belief that in its methods of building communism, the Soviet regime had infringed against some kind of universal moral order'.⁶¹ There were also demands to end the persecution of ethnic minorities such as Soviet Germans, Tatars, and Jews.⁶² Beyond these general points, however, the Soviet dissident movement began to diversify and, though it still coalesced around basic ideas of freedom and lawfulness, several distinct strands of thought began to emerge.

According to commentators and several members of what became the Soviet human rights movement themselves, including Andrei Amalrik and Alekseyeva who both codified the movement, as well as nationally-based movements among the non-Russians of the USSR there were three main categories into which Soviet dissidents could be divided: Marxist-Leninist purists, liberals or 'Westernisers', and Orthodox nationalists.⁶³ The first category applied to those intellectuals who held that the official ideology of the USSR had deviated from the true principles of Marxism-Leninism; the latter two categories would only emerge following the discrediting of the first program by the crushing of the 1968 Prague Spring, as is shortly explained.⁶⁴ Marxist-Leninist purists placed emphasis on restoring

⁵⁷ Pollack and Wielgohs, *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, 101; Alekseyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 269.

⁵⁸ Alekseyeva, 269.

⁵⁹ Pollack and Wielgohs, *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, 102.

⁶⁰ Pollack and Wielgohs, 102.

⁶¹ Philip Boobbyer, *Conscience, Dissent and Reform in Soviet Russia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 1-2.

⁶² Pollack and Wielgohs, 102.

⁶³ The USSR encompassed a diverse number of national groups and nationally based republics, many of whom had experienced statehood before their absorption into the USSR, and dissent in these contexts frequently took on a nationalist dimension. See, for example, Taagerpera, 'The Impact of the New Left on Estonia', 43-4; Marshall S. Shatz, *Soviet Dissent in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 158; Alekseyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 323; Amalrik, *Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?* (New York & Evanston: Harper & Row, 1970), 11.

⁶⁴ Amalrik, 11; Alekseyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 323.

the values of democracy to communism and creating ‘socialism with a human face’ and initially dominated the Soviet dissidents’ ranks.⁶⁵

The best individual representative of this type of thinking was the dissident Soviet historian Roy Medvedev while it found its most prominent expression in the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia, a reform movement aimed at implementing a version of communism that included political, cultural, and economic freedoms.⁶⁶ This effort was led by Alexander Dubček during 1968, head of the Czechoslovak communist party (1968-69).⁶⁷ The experiment was confined to the borders of Czechoslovakia but it had a wide-ranging impact on communists worldwide, especially on dissidents like Medvedev whose ‘hopes for improving the Soviet system hinged on the success of the Czechoslovak experiment’.⁶⁸ This socialist revisionist strand of thought remained the dominant one during the early period of the Soviet dissident movement in the 1960s.⁶⁹ The crushing of the Prague Spring, however, would see new splinters form in the movement that took the discussion away from socialism altogether.

Despite carefully excising foreign policy issues from his plans, Dubček’s reformist drive brought him into conflict with the Soviet leadership.⁷⁰ Led by Brezhnev, the USSR prioritised stability above all else in the Warsaw Pact and the extent of reform in Czechoslovakia threatened the preservation of the ideological orthodoxy Moscow desired for its allies in Eastern Europe.⁷¹ Brezhnev warned Dubček against accelerating his reform program further and of the possible negative consequences

⁶⁵ Alekseyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 389.

⁶⁶ Medvedev – whose twin brother Zhores, a biologist, was also a notable dissident – was an influential Soviet historian who wrote notable biographies of Soviet leaders and histories of the USSR from a critical reformist Marxist perspective, including *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990) originally published in 1969 which led to his expulsion from the CPSU. See Harrison E. Salisbury, ‘Let History Judge’, *New York Times*, 26th December, 1971, Section BR, 1. For discussion of the Prague Spring, see Laura Cashman, ‘Remembering 1948 and 1968: Reflections on Two Pivotal Years in Czech and Slovak History’, *Europe-Asia Studies* 60, no. 10 (December, 2008): 1648; Alexander Dubček, ‘Speech Delivered by Comrade Alexander Dubček at the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on April 1st, 1968’, 5, in *Czechoslovakia’s Blueprint for “Freedom”: Dubček’s Statements – The Original and Official Documents Leading to the Conflict of August, 1968*, ed. Paul Ello (Washington D.C.: Acropolis Books, 1968), 39-80.

⁶⁷ Josef Kalvoda, ‘The Rise and Fall of Alexander Dubček’, *The Nationalities Papers* 8, no. 2 (1980): 211.

⁶⁸ Alekseyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 323.

⁶⁹ Alekseyeva, 323.

⁷⁰ Ello, *Czechoslovakia’s Blueprint for “Freedom”*, 19-27.

⁷¹ Warsaw Pact refers to the military alliance that included the communist states of Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, and the USSR. It was the communist counterpart to NATO in Europe between 1955 and 1991. See Mastny Vojtech, Malcolm Byrne, and Magdalena Klotzbach, eds., *Cardboard Castle?: An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005), 77-9 and 682-4.

which could result.⁷² Dubček, however, persisted with his policies but eventually lost control of the reformist forces he unleashed. Elements of society began to attack the communist party itself – Dubček had not intended to alter the party’s central dominance – while the Czechoslovak leadership could not afford or even rely on using police or military force to settle the agitating parties.⁷³ Eventually, Brezhnev authorised an internationally reviled Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and by April 1969 Dubček was forced from office.⁷⁴

As will be explored in greater detail later, this event transformed the international political landscape and that of the Soviet dissident movement, though these latter effects should be briefly summed up here for the sake of clarity. Most of all, the failure of the Prague Spring and Soviet intransigence convinced many dissidents to abandon the hope that communism could be reformed.⁷⁵ Instead, Westernisers and Orthodox nationalists became increasingly prominent, who grew to be increasingly hostile to one another. The Westernisers supported a transition to a Western style democracy, though often with some place reserved for the retention of select Marxist principles, namely a form of public ownership of the means of production.⁷⁶ One of the foremost representatives of this line of thought was Andrei Sakharov, a Nobel Prize-winning nuclear physicist and designer of the USSR’s hydrogen bomb, who called for a convergence between capitalism and communism as the path to peaceful coexistence between East and West.⁷⁷ Sakharov’s views sharply contrasted with those of the Orthodox nationalists, who advocated an authoritarian Russian state based upon the principles Orthodox Christianity.

Alternatively, this viewpoint expressed a desire for a Slavic revival, with Russia playing a leading role in a broad Slavic alliance and was most famously represented by the 1970 Nobel laureate for literature Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.⁷⁸ The growth of the Orthodox nationalist faction would lead to a

⁷² Suri, *Power and Protest*, 200.

⁷³ Suri, 203; Dubček, ‘Speech Delivered by Comrade Alexander Dubček at the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on April 1st, 1968’, 5.

⁷⁴ Suri, *Power and Protest*, 206; Bulgaria, Poland, and Hungary also participated in the invasion.

⁷⁵ Alekseyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 325.

⁷⁶ Amalrik, *Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?*, 12.

⁷⁷ Alekseyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 325. Sakharov’s vision was captured in his best-selling book *Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom* (London: Penguin, 1968). For Sakharov’s autobiography see Andrei Sakharov, *Memoirs* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990) and for a major historical biography see Jay Bergman, *Meeting the Demands of Reason: The Life and Thought of Andrei Sakharov* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press)

⁷⁸ Amalrik, *Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?*, 11. For Solzhenitsyn’s biographies, see Solzhenitsyn, *The Oak and the Calf* (New York: Harper Row, 1981), *Between Two Millstones, Book 1*.

worsening split within the Soviet dissident movement between them and democrats like Sakharov in the 1970s that became a subject of international debate.⁷⁹ Yet the earlier manifestations of dissent during the 1960s before summer 1968's revolts had a significant international resonance of their own which receives attention here, with the analysis mainly focusing on the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial in the USSR and civil-rights and anti-war activism in the US and Europe. A comparative examination reveals the uneven development of Soviet and Anglo-American interest in Cold War dissent. Finally, analysing the Soviet, British, and American reception of the momentous events of 1968, though a better studied period, can reveal new aspects of the extent to that the early Soviet media was interested in exploiting instances of anti-racist and anti-capitalist Western for Cold War propaganda.

Dissent before 1968 and transnational reactions

To comparatively assess the existence of either Soviet dissidentism directed towards the radical Western left or Anglo-American dissidentism towards Soviet dissidents, the latter is analysed first to provide context and allow similarities and differences to be subsequently drawn between the two and enable contrast – the Western press were ultimately the first to cultivate media personalities of dissidents in the Cold War which the comparative Soviet discourse evolved in response to. Both Anglo-American and Soviet newspapers slowly began to establish a narrative on protest and dissent in communist and capitalist states respectively, with British and American papers taking further strides towards creating dissident media personalities than their Soviet counterparts. The comparative analysis of Anglo-American and Soviet discourse also shows how official government responses to dissent in the opposing Cold War bloc significantly differed between East and West, with London and Washington showing restraint, and Moscow exploiting protests against the Vietnam War and for civil rights. Crucially, the analysis shows how neither the Soviet leadership, academic establishment, or press had any meaningful appreciation of the role of the New Left in Western protest before 1968 and were yet to pick out any key radical Western personalities to create anti-capitalist dissident figures from, instead simply commentating on Western dissent in general terms. Nonetheless, this

Sketches of Exile, 1974–1978 (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2018) and *Between Two Millstones, Book 2. Exile in America, 1978-1994* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2020). For debate on Solzhenitsyn, see John B. Dunlop, Richards S. Haugh, and Michael Nicholson, eds., *Solzhenitsyn in Exile, Critical Essays and Documentary Materials* (Stanford: Hoover Institutions Press, 1985); Kriza, *Alexander Solzhenitsyn*; Daniel J. Mahoney, *The Other Solzhenitsyn: Telling the Truth about a Misunderstood Writer and Thinker* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's, 2014); Michael Scammel, *Solzhenitsyn: A Biography* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2022).

⁷⁹ Alekseyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 325.

period saw the Soviet press gradually establish the beginnings of a narrative of the West as beset by anti-capitalist dissent and protest, into which it could later insert select dissident figures as examples of Marxist politics' popularity in the West after 1968's revolts and the growth of human rights discourse.

By far the most important event in the USSR contributing to Anglo-American and global discussion of dissent, was the aforementioned Sinyavsky-Daniel trial of 1965-66. The defendants, Yuli Daniel and Andrei Sinyavsky, had published two books – under their respective pen names Nikolay Arzhak and Abram Tertz – deemed critical of the Soviet Union in the West between 1959 and 1962.⁸⁰ The books had been satirical in content and only indirectly commented upon the USSR. Daniel, for example, had authored *Govorit Moskva [Moscow Speaking]* (1959), which envisaged a fictional society that included a mandated day on which citizens could freely murder anyone who was not a state official, while Sinyavsky had written *The Trial Begins* (1960), a satire of the late Stalin era Doctors' Plot.⁸¹ Nevertheless, the books were sufficiently offensive to Soviet censors for the KGB begin an investigation as to who the true authors were as early as 1964.⁸² After the KGB identified the real writers to have been Sinyavsky and Daniel, in September 1965 a criminal case was brought against the two men.

The two writers were charged and found guilty of defamation of the USSR in 1966 – under Article 70 of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) Criminal Code – charges against which both writers protested their innocence and defended their right to free expression.⁸³ Their pleas resonated with other intellectuals and free-minded individuals, a group of whom had held a rally at Pushkin Square, Moscow in support of a fair trial on 5th December 1965. Alekseyeva, who took part in the protest, called this event 'the birthday of the [Soviet] human rights movement'.⁸⁴ Though it

⁸⁰ Vasili Mitrokhin, 'The Pathfinders (the Sinyavsky-Daniel show trial. Folder 41. The Chekist Anthology,' June, 2007, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive. Contributed to CWIHP by Vasili Mitrokhin. Wilson Centre, Record ID 110342.

⁸¹ 'Yuli Daniel: Satirist who stood trial for freedom', *Index on Censorship* 18, no. 2 (February, 1989): 42; Yuli Daniel, *This Is Moscow Speaking And Other Stories* (Springfield, OH: Collier Books, 1970); Andrei Sinyavsky, *The Trial Begins and Socialist Realism*, trans. Max Hayward and George Denis (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1982).

⁸² Mitrokhin, 'The Pathfinders (the Sinyavsky-Daniel show trial. Folder 41. The Chekist Anthology'.

⁸³ Nathans, 'The Dictatorship of Reason', 654.

⁸⁴ Alekseyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 269.

was quickly dispersed by police and some participants arrested, the short protest broke ground as the ‘the first demonstration using human rights slogans’ to take place in the USSR.⁸⁵

The Sinyavsky-Daniel trial attracted significant media attention in the West. The trial was unusual for its semi-open nature, as hitherto political trials had been heard in secret. Alekseyeva attributed this change to the influence of international attention to the case and impact the protest at Pushkin Square had on the Soviet authorities’ awareness of the level of anger among senior academics and prominent intellectuals towards the writers’ treatment, which they sought to appease.⁸⁶ Though international journalists were barred from attending and there was an initial dearth of reliable information, a transcript of the proceedings was covertly supplied to *The New York Times* which became one of the main Western papers reporting on the trial.⁸⁷

Studying editorials by major American and British newspapers discussing Daniel and Sinyavsky from the period 1965-66 illustrates how the foundations of a discourse of solidarity with Soviet political prisoners that would transform Soviet dissidents into transnational media figures and representatives of Western values’ universality were established, though only slowly, during the trial.⁸⁸ However, the evidence available also makes clear that though Daniel and Sinyavsky were discussed in terms of Western values, there was no significant linkage between Western foreign policy, namely détente, or Western moral responsibilities and support for Soviet dissidents, and the issue had not yet emerged as a fault line of politics.⁸⁹ Furthermore, human rights discourse was yet to gain global currency and studying discourse on dissidents before 1968, a year which saw profound developments in the USSR’s engagement with human rights, highlights the impact that the later growth of human rights discourse would have on the USSR’s and the West’s relationship with

⁸⁵ Alekseyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 269.

⁸⁶ Alekseyeva, 276.

⁸⁷ Julia Metger, ‘Writing the Papers: How Western Correspondents Reported the First Dissident Trials in Moscow, 1965-1972’, in *Entangled Protest: Transnational Approaches to the History of Dissent in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, ed. Robert Brier (Osnabrück: Fibre, 2013), 93. Metger’s study examines coverage of the trial and is important here, though she has a greater focus on the role of the Western journalists as agents in reporting the trial rather than on the trial’s political significance in the context of Cold War ideological competition over dissidents and human rights.

⁸⁸ The main papers considered include *The Times*, *Guardian*, *New York Times*, and *Washington Post*. These were chosen because of their reputation as high-quality papers of record, representativeness in terms of mainstream political opinion covering centre-left to centre-right positions, and influence on public opinion. See Watson, *Anglo-American Discourse About the USSR, 1984-86*, 28-9.

⁸⁹ As Metger says, as the trial unfolded, it was not yet clear Daniel and Sinyavsky’s persecution represented a ‘watershed moment’. See Metger, ‘Writing the Papers’, 87-8.

dissidentism.⁹⁰ Meanwhile, studying the reactions of the British and American governments to the trial compared to those of the Kremlin to anti-Vietnam War and other Western protests, as takes place later, suggests that the latter was more engaged with exploiting dissent in the opposing camp in this period. This was despite the fact that Soviet analysts did not yet have a fully formed opinion on or awareness of the importance of the New Left in Western protests before 1968's revolts, or for that matter any 'dissident' personalities picked out to support – Soviet papers were simply reporting on increasing Western protests which seemingly corroborated mainstream Marxist predictions that social unrest would continue to grow in the capitalist states.

The New York Times' earliest editorial on the case appeared in October 1965. The piece commented on the irrationality of Sinyavsky and Daniel's persecution, and remarked that an anti-reformist retrenchment was underway in the USSR.⁹¹ A second, slightly lengthier piece appeared the same month, describing a large and growing Soviet 'literary underground' that was under attack by the authorities.⁹² It would not be until the trial was announced in 1966, however, that further papers began to publish editorial pieces on the issue, though *The New York Times* would again be among the first to speak on the topic. An editorial of January 1966 compared pre-trial attacks on the writers in *Izvestiya* to both the Stalinist purges of the 1930s and the McCarthyism of the 1950s in the US.⁹³ As the trial progressed, Western media outlets began to intensify their criticism, and occasionally built into their reports direct appeals to the Soviet leadership. However, though journalists recognised growing conflict between conservatives and reformists within the USSR, the editorials' language still indicated that there was hope that the liberalizing course begun under Khrushchev could be somehow resumed and the writers were not considered 'dissidents'.⁹⁴ A *Washington Post* piece from February 1966 argued that Sinyavsky and Daniel were 'patriots', not opponents of the USSR, who had published abroad in despair at Soviet censorship and in hope of greater freedoms emerging in the Soviet Union.⁹⁵ Similarly, a *Guardian* editorial commented on the damage the USSR was doing

⁹⁰ Richardson-Little, 'From Tehran to Helsinki', 180.

⁹¹ 'Arrest in Moscow', *New York Times*, 21st October, 1965, 46.

⁹² Harry Schwartz, 'The 'Other' Soviet Books' *New York Times*, 24th October, 1965, E4.

⁹³ 'Soviet McCarthyism', *New York Times*, 16th January, 1966, E12.

⁹⁴ Metger, 'Writing the Papers', 99.

⁹⁵ 'The Trial Begins?', *The Washington Post*, 9th February, 1966, A20.

to its own image. Yet the piece also introduced the notion that Sinyavsky and Daniel had a ‘right to publish’.⁹⁶

This argument was not made on the grounds of the content of Soviet law but a more general, universal notion of rights. The piece also referred to Soviet behaviour as ‘medieval’, invoking a sense of civilisational regression.⁹⁷ Such language implying the Kremlin was deviating from a modernising course against the wishes of its people would become more prominent in Anglo-American editorials as the trial advanced and the sense that the USSR was digressing from a modern, Western value system would increasingly be invoked. As Soviet repression later intensified in the 1970s, Western writers, especially conservatives, would adapt this narrative to depict the existence of dissidents as evidence of ‘Western values’, or at least as they were interpreted by conservatives, universality.

In the mid-1960s, this universalist assumption still existed, but was invoked more in the sense that critical writers were attempting to keep the USSR on its liberal course towards reform of its socialist system and had a realistic chance of achieving this, rather than to highlight individual dissidents and the irrecoverable bankruptcy of the Soviet system. Indeed, a London *Times* editorial explicitly invoked this concept, when it expressed its dismay at the damage done by the trial to ‘the view which ha[d] been gaining ground’ of the USSR ‘as a technically and economically advanced power capable of taking an enlightened view of the stirrings within its own society’.⁹⁸ The editorial also made reference to what it saw as the *longue durée* development of intellectual freedom in Russia since the Tsarist era, when literary criticism had been the only method to undo authoritarianism, while also blaming the arrival of illiberal Marxism for the contemporary restrictions on speech, arguing the previous digression from traditional Marxism and Stalinism had been aiding the USSR’s development and world image.⁹⁹

This perspective was also expressed in reactions to the announcement that the trial would be a semi-open one. *The New York Times* wrote that these facts still represented that progress towards legality and enlightenment was possible, while Victor Zorza, a *Guardian* correspondent writing in the *Washington Post* claimed that the ‘struggle’ for legality was ‘already half-won’ for largely the same

⁹⁶ ‘Soviet writers on trial’, *Guardian*, 10th February, 1966, 10.

⁹⁷ ‘Soviet writers on trial’, 10.

⁹⁸ ‘Writers Silenced’, *The Times*, 15th February, 1966, 11.

⁹⁹ ‘Writers Silenced’, 11.

reasons.¹⁰⁰ The Polish-born Zorza, *The Guardian*'s resident Kremlinologist since 1956, had made his way to Britain as a refugee then served in the RAF during WWII.¹⁰¹ One of the most celebrated British commentators on Eastern Europe, Zorza was notable for his faith that the Soviet Union would eventually reform. In 1969, he claimed his own job deciphering opaque Politburo announcements would be made obsolete within 15 years, so considerable was the progress towards political transparency and democracy he envisioned for the Soviet Union.¹⁰² Though Zorza would continue to keep this faith, such optimism about Soviet reform would become much rarer in the 1970s and demonstrates the difference between early and later Anglo-American discourse surrounding Soviet dissidents. Already, though, pessimism about future Soviet reform was growing especially when Daniel and Sinyavsky were sentenced.

The New York Times called the delivery of harsh prison sentences to Daniel and Sinyavsky 'predictable', while the *Washington Post* expected that Soviet repression would continue in earnest, with the Kremlin having to choose between either killing its critics or allowing them freedom.¹⁰³ The *Los Angeles Times*, meanwhile, called the result of the trial '[n]ever [in doubt]' and the *Boston Globe* argued that the delivery of a guilty verdict confirmed that the USSR remained 'a firmly totalitarian state in the post-Stalin era', while also reporting on the growing disillusionment of the Soviet youth with orthodox communism which was being exposed in students' protests against the trial.¹⁰⁴ Major papers also echoed a number of appeals made by Soviet writers and intellectuals to the Kremlin for Daniel and Sinyavsky's collective amnesty, as well as publishing their own pleas to the Soviet leadership.¹⁰⁵

The Guardian called on its readers to enact a letter writing campaign to petition the Soviet government to release the writers. In an editorial, the paper argued that if 'enough people in the West

¹⁰⁰ Victor Zorza, 'Soviet Justice on Trial', *New York Times*, 12th February, 1966, 22; Zorza, 'Gain for Liberalization Seen in Writers' Trial: Not to Be Ignored', *The Washington Post*, 20th February, 1966, A12.

¹⁰¹ Geoffrey Taylor, *Changing Faces: A History of The Guardian 1956-88* (London: Fourth Estate, 1993), 258.

¹⁰² Taylor, *Changing Faces*, 257.

¹⁰³ 'Un-Soviet Activity', *New York Times*, 17th February, 1966, 25; 'The Trial Ends', *The Washington Post*, 17th February, 1966, A20.

¹⁰⁴ 'Artistic Freedom, Communist-Style', *Los Angeles Times*, 15th February, 1966, A4; 'The Still-Closed Society', *Boston Globe*, 15th February, 1966, 14; Roscoe Drummond, 'Strong Protests Sent Party Leaders: Soviet Youth Getting Bold', *Boston Globe*, 29th April, 1966, 12.

¹⁰⁵ 'Plea for Literary Freedom', *New York Times*, 20th November, 1966, E12; 'Writers Appeal', *The Washington Post*, 18th May, 1966, A24. For discussion of how Western journalists built up contacts with Soviet intelligentsia figures during the trial, see Metger, 'Writing the Papers', 95-6.

could be stirred into action on behalf of Sinyavsky and Daniel, the Kremlin might be forced to release them from prison'.¹⁰⁶ This appeal presaged the type of direct-action appeals referencing Western responsibility to support dissidents that would become common in political discourse in the 1970s. However, appeals in this era frequently still contained significant shades of optimism about the future of Soviet reform. *The New York Times* felt that Soviet intellectuals' appeals for amnesty would carry weight and believed that 'dissent [was] no longer a capital offense in the Soviet Union'.¹⁰⁷ Further, calls on Western citizens to take action rarely if at all called on Western governments to also act nor did they question the potential of détente to improve freedoms in the USSR. A crucial factor in explaining this more moderate response lies in the fact that human rights had not yet experienced their 'breakthrough' as they would later in the mid-1970s.

Jan Eckel has illustrated how, against a backdrop of economic slowdown and political change, human rights emerged as a vital issue in international politics in the mid-1970s.¹⁰⁸ The end of the 1960s not only saw radical left-wing politics lose momentum after a series of failed revolutions in 1968, but the end of the decade also coincided with declining prosperity and the realisation that the post-war political and economic order, defined by the Bretton Woods system and continuous growth, was no longer delivering as it had.¹⁰⁹ Thus, a key factor in the popularity of human rights as a mode of politics lay in the fact that they seemed to offer a solution to the failure of the old order and a new way of conducting politics.¹¹⁰ However, a series of international political developments would also have a significant influence on the spread of human rights discourse and ideas. Coups in Latin America saw the continent's governments fall to military dictatorships that local activists resisted while adopting the language of human rights and garnering support globally; the violent overthrow of popularly elected Chilean President Salvador Allende was one of the most dramatic of these coups and significantly 'helped expand the resonance of human rights'.¹¹¹ Meanwhile, the signing of the Helsinki Accords in 1975, the end result of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), committed both NATO and Warsaw Pact states to upholding human rights and created a

¹⁰⁶ 'An appeal to the Kremlin', *Guardian*, 21st November, 1967, 8.

¹⁰⁷ 'Plea for Literary Freedom', E12.

¹⁰⁸ Eckel, 'The Rebirth of Politics from the Spirit of Morality', in *The Breakthrough*, 227.

¹⁰⁹ Eckel, 'The Rebirth of Politics from the Spirit of Morality', 226.

¹¹⁰ Eckel, 228.

¹¹¹ Eckel, 229; Christopher Moores, 'Solidarity for Chile, transnational activism and the evolution of human rights', *Moving the Social* 57 (2017): 115.

formalised framework through which nations and activists could monitor and scrutinise states for human rights violations.¹¹²

At the same time, structural factors played a key role. For one, decolonization throughout 1960s allowed former imperial European powers to engage positively with human rights when before they had been used by Third World and socialist states to attack the former colonists for discriminatory practices in their old imperial territories.¹¹³ Simultaneously, new energy was injected into human rights discourse by the emergence of mass media which broadcast images of human rights abuses globally, as well as the adoption of human rights as a primary cause of the radical left stemming from their disillusionment with traditional Marxist politics as communist states' crimes were exposed by the growing East European dissident movement and human rights NGOs.¹¹⁴

Détente, meanwhile, played a complex role. After its gradual adoption by both East and West in the 1960s, in the mid-1970s the policy created greater political space for activists to engage with 'issues reaching beyond the clash between Western democracy and Eastern European socialism' as both the communist and Western states committed themselves further to diplomatic rapprochement and eventually paved the way for the Helsinki Act in 1975.¹¹⁵ In this regard, détente's role in facilitating a breakthrough in human rights norms can appear decisive when seen from the perspective of the immediate post-war period. This is particularly the case if one follows Tom Buchanan's argument that before the 1960s, 'a combination of Realpolitik and the apparently irreconcilable conceptions of human rights across the Cold War divide ensured that no further progress could be made internationally towards creating a regime to safeguard' the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of 1948.¹¹⁶ Simultaneously, though, détente constrained Western governments' ability to criticise socialist states' ongoing abuses out of fear of damaging improving relations while the Western signatories remained divided on whether they felt support for human rights and détente were in the long run compatible.¹¹⁷ The policy eventually failed and ultimately a crucial moment in extending human rights' global reach in the late 1970s was the gradual abandonment of détente and

¹¹² Eckel, 230-1.

¹¹³ Eckel, 'The Rebirth of Politics from the Spirit of Morality', 242.

¹¹⁴ Eckel, 245-52.

¹¹⁵ Eckel, 243.

¹¹⁶ Tom Buchanan, 'Human Rights, the Memory of War and the Making of a "European" Identity, 1945-75', in *Europeanization in the Twentieth Century: Historical Approaches*, Martin Conway and Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 157 and 166.

¹¹⁷ Eckel, 244.

the adoption of a more aggressive human rights policy by the United States under President Jimmy Carter (1977-81) who established human rights as a cornerstone of his approach to international affairs and paved the way for the more forceful use of human rights as a political tool by the Reagan (1981-89) and Thatcher (1979-90) administrations in the US and UK respectively.

However, in the 1960s, détente and non-intervention on Soviet internal affairs were the order of the day in both British and American foreign policy towards the USSR.¹¹⁸ President Lyndon B. Johnson and Prime Minister Harold Wilson (1964-70; 1974-76) generally stayed quiet on issues like the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial. Similarly, there was only very limited criticism of this approach, nor many suggestions in the press that a harder line ought to be pursued though these are worth exploring to appreciate the overall development of the Western discourse surrounding Soviet dissidents. Exceptions included British Soviet expert Leonard Schapiro's letter addressing Soviet premier Kosygin printed in the *Washington Post*. Schapiro, a fierce critic of communist ideology and co-founder of the human rights organisation Keston College it should be noted, characterised Wilson as weak, mentioning how it was unlikely that the PM would have had the bravery to make Kosygin aware of the damage done to Moscow's reputation by the Sinyavsky-Daniel case on his recent visit to the USSR.¹¹⁹ Similarly, a British MP, Desmond Donnelly, made suggestions to a government minister that a BBC television play had been postponed on the orders of the Foreign Office following its receipt of a request from the Soviet government.¹²⁰ This the government denied, but another MP still argued that the play had been overly sensitive to Soviet sensibilities.¹²¹

A more direct linkage between the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial and East-West relations was made by Robert F. Kennedy in a speech to the US Senate from March 1966. Kennedy reminded the Kremlin of the importance of a strong record on rights and freedoms to bolstering détente and international contacts between the USSR and the West. However, Kennedy's tone was more one of hope than warning, and his emphasis was on encouraging Soviet leadership to reform, rather than criticising

¹¹⁸ Duncan Wilson, 'Anglo-Soviet Relations: The Effect of Ideas on Reality', *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs) 50, no. 3 (July 1974): 380-93; Frank Costigliola, 'US foreign policy from Kennedy to Johnson', in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume II: Crises and Détente*, eds., Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 125.

¹¹⁹ S. E. Finer, 'Leonard Schapiro', *Government and Opposition* 19, no. 1 (1984): 3-4; Michael Bourdeaux, 'Obituary: Professor Leonard Schapiro', *Religion in Communist Lands* 12, no. 1 (1984): 118-9; Leonard Schapiro, 'A Friendly Letter to Premier Kosygin: Kremlinologist Refuses to...', *The Washington Post*, 10th July 1966, E1.

¹²⁰ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 750 (1966-67), cols. 997-8, 13th July 1967.

¹²¹ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 750 (1966-67), cols. 997-8, 13th July 1967.

détente while also speaking to a domestic political audience.¹²² The only major critical reaction to the Sinyavsky-Daniel case from the US government itself came in March 1968, when the US ambassador to the United Nations, Arthur Goldberg (1965-68), publicly rebuked the USSR for the writers' treatment. This, however, as allies and the press recognised at the time, marked an unexpected departure from a generally conciliatory US policy towards the Soviet Union, and the ambassador himself stressed that the Johnson administration was in no way seeking to make 'cold war [*sic*] propaganda' through its intervention.¹²³

The main facet of Anglo-American discourse about Soviet dissidents that the Sinyavsky-Daniel episode established, was growing but limited recognition of expressions of resistance among Soviet writers and intellectuals. The press was also beginning to single out individual figures of dissent to valorise and building up their talents as thinkers. Sinyavsky and Daniel's role as defendants of their own work in their highly publicised trial naturally afforded them great status. Yet others, most notably Solzhenitsyn for his well-received books and unsuccessful but very public call on the Soviet writers' union to end censorship, were also beginning to gain the prominent status many other dissidents would later acquire.¹²⁴

A *New York Times* article in fact discussed the growing fame of the Soviet dissidents and recognised that this fame could afford them security, by persuading the Soviet authorities against persecuting them for fear of the international outcry that might ensue.¹²⁵ The press, however, only had a limited sense of the beginnings of a recognisable dissident movement, with the closest journalists coming to see one being along the lines of the description of the independently-minded Soviet literary journal *Novy Mir* by Victor Zorza as the 'unofficial opposition'.¹²⁶ Further, as Mark Hurst points out, despite their growing fame, Soviet dissenters were not universally recognised in the West, with some commentators on Soviet affairs even doubting their existence before developments from the early 1970s onwards made this impossible.¹²⁷ There was also no sense of dissidents' profiles' being

¹²² Robert F. Kennedy, 'The 23d Communist Party Congress and the Problems of Soviet Jews', *Congressional Record – Senate*, 89th Congress, 2nd Session Vol. 112, Part 6, 1st April, 1966, 7445.

¹²³ Drew Middleton, 'U.S. Scores Trials of Soviet Writers: Goldberg, at U.N., Deplores the...', *New York Times*, 7th March, 1968, 1.

¹²⁴ Henry Kamm, 'Soviet Union: To Dissent, You'd Better Be Famous', *New York Times*, 24th December, 1967, 111.

¹²⁵ Kamm, 'Soviet Union', 111.

¹²⁶ Victor Zorza, 'A literary magazine the unofficial opposition in Russia: The Communist World', *Guardian*, 24th May, 1967, 9.

¹²⁷ Hurst, "'To Build a Castle'", 1.

weaponised for anti-communist propaganda purposes as there later would be or even extensive use of the word dissident. The dissident movement was still at a very early stage of development while the global discourse of human rights would not truly arrive until the 1970s which proved vital in creating a common cause with allies in the West.

Soviet dissidents in this period were mainly discussed as writers attempting to exercise their right to speak freely. Though this was frequently discussed in terms of Western values, dissidents were not yet regularly being depicted as lonely representatives of the universality of Western values and their inevitable rise in a closed society, but more as part of a wider liberalising trend begun under Khrushchev which Soviet conservatives were attempting to reverse. Nor were human rights organisations yet as involved with promoting their cause, which, as Hurst outlines, was crucial to the growth of dissidents' international profiles, especially the work of Amnesty International.¹²⁸ Finally, though *samizdat* was in limited circulation, the most important self-published dissident journals which would prove vital to the dissemination of information about dissidents' persecution, most of all *A Chronicle of Current Events* which Amnesty would publish translations of, were yet to be set up.¹²⁹

Around the same time as the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial in 1965, the US was seeing its first protests against the Vietnam War take place and the USSR's media was experimenting with how best to exploit them for anti-capitalist propaganda and to counter global criticism of its increasingly punitive treatment of dissenters like Daniel and Sinyavsky. SDS played a leading role in organising the demonstrations. Activists held teach-ins on campuses to spread knowledge about the true nature of US involvement in Vietnam while the first protest that SDS held in April 1965 attracted an unexpected 20,000 participants.¹³⁰ As US military involvement in Vietnam escalated across 1966-67, such protests were able to attract even greater numbers and 'a milestone was reached when 500,000 demonstrated against the war in New York' in April 1967.¹³¹ The New Left activists behind such demonstrations had gained their experience during the civil rights campaigns of the 1950s and early 1960s. As Vinen says, the 'American radicalism of the 1960s was partly rooted in the civil

¹²⁸ Hurst, 8.

¹²⁹ Hurst, 8.

¹³⁰ Bill Zimmerman, 'The Four Stages of the Antiwar Movement', *New York Times*, 24th October, 2017.

¹³¹ Zimmerman, 'The Four Stages of the Antiwar Movement'.

rights movement' as student radicals became involved with attempts to desegregate the South, attempts which received significant resistance from pro-segregationists.¹³²

Though less centrally organised than in the USSR the suppression of civil rights activism could still be violent, with White segregationist groups forming to attack and deter activists, while the police assaulted and imprisoned many demonstrators.¹³³ Meanwhile, the civil rights movement also intersected with the anti-war message, with Martin Luther King eventually calling for US military withdrawal in 1967.¹³⁴ Beyond the era of civil rights, however, anti-racist activism would continue to be a significant feature of New Left dissent, taking on more radical and internationalist forms while still maintaining a focus on Vietnam, and would attract significant attention from the USSR in the 1970s.¹³⁵ Comparatively, in the mid-1960s, though Soviet reactions to anti-war and anti-racist activism were extensive – the level of Soviet coverage was in fact noticed by American newspapers, with the *Chicago Tribune* reporting on *Izvestiya* and *Pravda*'s exploitation of the anti-war protests – their focus was on generally exploiting dissent to depict the US as crisis-ridden and corrupt, with Soviet awareness and understanding of the New Left being very limited, and little interest in creating dissident media personalities.¹³⁶

Soviet coverage of civil rights built upon a long-established tradition in Soviet propaganda, whereby examples of American racism were used to contrast with supposed Soviet racial tolerance and highlight communism's superiority over capitalism.¹³⁷ The Soviet press had offered solidarity to the defendants in the 1931-32 Scottsboro Trial, while the USSR's media created Soviet celebrities out of Robert Nathaniel Robinson and Paul Robeson; the former was an African-American man who moved to work in the USSR in the 1930s, while the latter was a famous musician and critic of US policy who offered powerful propaganda value.¹³⁸ Soviet engagement with civil rights, meanwhile,

¹³² Vinen, *The Long '68*, 80.

¹³³ Vinen, *The Long '68*, 81.

¹³⁴ Vinen, 101.

¹³⁵ Vinen, 100.

¹³⁶ James Sullivan, 'Soviet Press Gloats Over U.S. Protests: Johnson Told to Yield to Viet War Foes', *Chicago Tribune*, 24th Oct 24, 1965, 4; Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 18.

¹³⁷ Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 514-5.

¹³⁸ The Scottsboro trial saw nine African-American men wrongly charged with the rapes of two White women, in a judicial process that represented a racially motivated miscarriage of justice; Barbara Keys, 'An African-American Worker in Stalin's Soviet Union', 31-54; Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 514-5.

began in the 1940s as American racism emerged as a major theme of Cold War international discourse.¹³⁹

Following the Second World War, the US had established itself as the global leader of democracy and freedom. As Mary Dudziak skilfully outlines in her book *Cold War Civil Rights*, Washington postured as a defender of justice and human rights following its defeat of Nazi Germany and continued this narrative as it entered ideological competition with the USSR which the US portrayed as undemocratic and repressive.¹⁴⁰ Yet this American narrative of moral superiority had a fundamental weakness which its opponents could readily exploit: Washington's promise of international justice did not apply to its own African-American citizens, who remained disenfranchised from the democracy that American leaders extolled as the birth right of all citizens of the world.¹⁴¹ The Soviet Union thus 'capitalised' on the issue of race as one of its central propaganda techniques.¹⁴²

For example, in 1946, the Soviet publication *Trud [Work]* published an account of the murders of George and Mae Murray Dorsey and Roger and Dorothy Malcolm by a group of armed White men in Georgia that year.¹⁴³ Washington took note of its vulnerability in such cases and attempted to mitigate the effects in the 1940s, with the Harry Truman administration (1945-53) pushing pro-civil rights policies.¹⁴⁴ But action towards changing US society was often viewed as un-American, meaning the scope for reform was significantly constrained. As a result, despite such measures as the desegregation of military units, change was slow to come during the 1940s and the US still had a significant ideological and propaganda blind spot which the Soviet Union could exploit.¹⁴⁵ As Dudziak illustrates, Soviet criticism would only intensify throughout the decade and in 1949 the US embassy in Moscow considered race to be one of the foundational themes of Soviet propaganda, while petitions brought to the UN by civil rights activists would receive official support from the

¹³⁹ Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 13.

¹⁴⁰ Dudziak, 15.

¹⁴¹ Dudziak, 12.

¹⁴² Dudziak, 12.

¹⁴³ Dudziak, 18.

¹⁴⁴ Dudziak, 15.

¹⁴⁵ Dudziak, 26.

Soviet delegation.¹⁴⁶ As civil rights activism intensified throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Soviet papers would continue to make use of the issue of racism for propaganda.

Eventually, as well as building on existing narratives, later Soviet press stories about anti-war, civil rights, and other dissenting activity in the US and Europe introduced new narratives which reflected the Soviet leadership's shifting priorities in the late 1960s and 1970s.¹⁴⁷ This period saw growing international criticism of Soviet human rights abuses, as well as Soviet antisemitism, and increasing Western interest in portraying the personalities of the burgeoning Soviet dissident movement as indicating the decline of Soviet communism in its competition with democracy. This created the need to highlight specific comparable and contemporary high profile victims of political repression in the West which could also serve as evidence of the inevitability of the triumph of communism in the US and Europe at a time when the Soviet leadership believed that signs of dissent in the West indicated coming revolutions.¹⁴⁸ The foundations of this strategy, though, were already visible in the early coverage of the civil rights and anti-war movements in the early-to-mid 1960s. Soviet propaganda, however, often appropriated rather than amplified anti-racist messages coming from civil rights activists, with press reports couching speeches given by key leaders like Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) chairman John Lewis (1963-66) and Martin Luther King in communist jargon.¹⁴⁹

Izvestiya's coverage of the August 1963 'March on Washington', which was attended by 200,000 people and became a watershed moment in civil rights history featuring King's famous 'I Have A Dream' speech, was exemplary of the dual narrative the Soviet press pursued when seeking to exploit civil rights activism. The paper at once expressed solidarity with the movement but simultaneously changed civil rights leaders' messages to suit Soviet needs. In a front-page editorial, *Izvestiya* spoke of the march as part of a 'movement [which] [was] revolutionary by nature'.¹⁵⁰ The paper also gave voice to the civil rights leadership and quoted Lewis' speech, one of the speakers that day. However, the editorial emphasised his ideas which seemed to most complement Soviet aims, quoting him on his unpublished statement that '[w]e are on the threshold of a revolution, and we must free ourselves

¹⁴⁶ Dudziak, 38 and 45.

¹⁴⁷ Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 518.

¹⁴⁸ Roman, 518; Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 141.

¹⁴⁹ 'Shame to Racism in the USA', *Izvestiya*, 31st August, 1963, 1 in CDSP 15, no. 35 (25th September, 1963): 32-32.

¹⁵⁰ 'Shame to Racism in the USA', 1.

from the chains of political and economic slavery’, without acknowledging that this line did not feature in Lewis’ delivered address, which instead emphasised ‘social revolution’, and would have clashed with the more ‘moderate tone of the March’ overall.¹⁵¹ Lewis did espouse radical views throughout his life, especially early on in his career.¹⁵² In fact, the general leadership of the civil rights movement had radical views which are often inaccurately downplayed and Soviet attention towards them serves as evidence of such ideas’ circulation.¹⁵³

Regardless, however, *Izvestiya*’s emphasis on portraying civil rights activism as a part of a revolutionary movement in the typically communist sense, rather than Lewis’ emphasis on ‘social revolution’ as he described it in his speech, reflected the Soviet press’ determination to report on civil rights activism in a way which first and foremost suited Moscow’s needs.¹⁵⁴ Further along in the same editorial, *Izvestiya* made sure to shift the focus away from racism and towards the relevance of communist theory to the civil rights movement. The editorial explained that racism was ‘but one aspect, one manifestation of American imperialism’ and how ‘[u]nemployment in the U.S.A. [was] not a “prerogative” of African-Americans, before elaborating on how ‘the present movement of solidarity in their support [was] developing in a world where a system of socialism exist[ed] and at a time when the national-liberation movement of peoples ha[d] struck a mortal blow at colonialism’, thus tying the civil rights movement to anti-colonialism and giving credit to the international communist movement for its support of civil rights.¹⁵⁵ In doing so, once again, the Soviet press inserted communism’s achievements over those of the civil rights movement. Similarly, despite the powerful anti-American propaganda potential offered by the civil rights movement, the ideological differences between the movement’s leaders and the USSR led Soviet writers to in fact critique the ideas of Martin Luther King and argue he ought to take a more communist line if he wished to achieve greater political success.

¹⁵¹ ‘Shame to Racism in the USA’, 1; John Lewis, “‘Speech at the March on Washington’ (28 August, 1963)”, ed. Garth E. Pauley, *Voices of Democracy* 5 (2010): 24-5.

¹⁵² Katharine Q. Seelye, ‘John Lewis, Towering Figure of Civil Rights Era, Dies at 80’, *New York Times*, 17th July, 2020.

¹⁵³ Seelye, ‘John Lewis’.

¹⁵⁴ John Lewis, “‘Speech at the March on Washington’”, 24-5.

¹⁵⁵ ‘Shame to Racism in the USA’, 1.

In a lengthy 1965 piece for *Voprosy filosofii* [*Questions of Philosophy*], Lev Mitrokhin analysed what he called the ‘the Social Philosophy of Martin Luther King’.¹⁵⁶ While praise was reserved for King’s anti-racist campaigning and his strength of character, Mitrokhin ultimately found it hard to offer an endorsement of the leader’s ideas, the religious content of which was ‘unsuited for adequate explanation of racism’s essence’.¹⁵⁷ The piece also took umbrage with King’s criticism of Marxist materialism, which in the author’s view was unsound and based on a ‘vulgar’ interpretation of communist theory.¹⁵⁸ In Mitrokhin’s view, only a ‘deep understanding of the economic and political roots of racism’ predicated on a ‘materialist interpretation of history’ offered a successful program to defeat racism.¹⁵⁹ Mitrokhin condescendingly ended by suggesting that King’s ideas had not yet reached full maturity and that he would continue along ‘the thorny path of working out a sober social philosophy in conditions where unscientific religious conceptions prevail[ed]’, until he reached a Marxist conclusion.¹⁶⁰

In Mitrokhin’s analysis of King’s philosophy, a feature of Soviet coverage of US radicalism emerged that would persist in all officially approved engagement with anti-racist protest and New Left activism: the primacy of Soviet ideology. Despite King’s influence and the potential he offered as a powerful voice of criticism against the US government, the presence of religion in his political program led Soviet writers to limit their support for him. Furthermore, Mitrokhin’s condescending assumption that King was only partway through his ideological development, was emblematic of how the Soviet press would assert the universality of Marxism and in the future rationalise the failure of the New Left to accept the primacy of the proletariat to revolution, by arguing that the naivety of youth and Western education initially deprived them of this essential insight.¹⁶¹ In general, Soviet support for civil rights was predicated on its use to Moscow’s Cold War objectives and falsely represented Western dissenters as evidence of Soviet ideology’s universality.¹⁶² This continued apace in the 1970s when new and more radical forms of anti-racism took shape such as the Black Power

¹⁵⁶ Lev N. Mitrokhin, ‘The Social Philosophy of Martin Luther King’, *Voprosy filosofii*, 1965, no. 7: 114-25 in *CDSP* 17, no. 35 (22nd September, 1965): 7-11.

¹⁵⁷ Mitrokhin, ‘The Social Philosophy of Martin Luther King’, in *CDSP* 17, no. 35, 11.

¹⁵⁸ Mitrokhin, in *CDSP* 17, no. 35: 10.

¹⁵⁹ Mitrokhin, in *CDSP* 17, no. 35: 11.

¹⁶⁰ Mitrokhin, in *CDSP* 17, no. 35: 11.

¹⁶¹ For example, see N. Molchanov, ‘Students Rebel in the West: The Meaning, Causes and Goals’, *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 1968 no. 45: 13 in *CDSP* 20, no. 47 (December, 1968): 17-19.

¹⁶² Roman, ‘Soviet “renegades”’, 518.

movement, most of which did not seek friendship with Moscow but which the USSR nonetheless sought to co-opt, exploit, and control, seeking to counteract increasing Western attacks on Soviet repression against dissidents as KGB operations against the Soviet human rights movement intensified.¹⁶³

In some cases, most of all during the 1970-72 trial of the US communist and Black Power activist Angela Davis, Soviet support was welcomed. However, it should not be suggested that Soviet solidarity was without ulterior motives, nor forgotten the agency of the individuals receiving support; as Roman makes clear, Davis' receipt of Soviet support, though she and her family were thankful for it, was a decision made for her own survival and Davis never acted as the mouthpiece for Soviet propaganda as many of her conservative opponents asserted.¹⁶⁴ Soviet support for the Black Power movement, desired or not, would also bleed into a broader strand of Soviet propaganda that insisted the US was guilty of perpetrating genocide against Black Americans, a charge the USSR would also make against the US with regard to its historic treatment of Native Americans and bombing in Vietnam during the 1970s.¹⁶⁵ Already, though, in the 1960s, the Soviet press was seeking to exploit the Vietnam War, most of all the growing US protests against the conflict.

The importance of supporting the anti-war movement in the US was publicly recognised and eventually asserted at the very top of the Soviet leadership in March 1968, when General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev stated the need for Soviet propaganda to broadcast worldwide Moscow's support for the anti-war protestors at the April plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU.¹⁶⁶ However, though the Soviet press both extensively supported the protest movement and recognised the centrality of students to it before summer 1968, after which major New Left revolts would take place in Europe, America, and beyond, it did not initially connect student participation to a wider New Left ideological phenomenon, of which Soviet analysts were largely unaware.¹⁶⁷

The extent of Soviet interest in the anti-war movement was noted by American papers. The aforementioned *Chicago Tribune* analysis of Soviet press coverage of Vietnam protests dated from

¹⁶³ Roman, 518.

¹⁶⁴ Roman, "Armed and Dangerous", 91.

¹⁶⁵ Weiss-Wendt, 'Moscow Taps the New Left', 102.

¹⁶⁶ Brezhnev speech to Plenum of Central Committee of CPSU, 9th April 1968 quoted in Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 171.

¹⁶⁷ Sullivan, 'Soviet Press Gloats Over U.S. Protests', 4.

the very first protests held in 1965. James Sullivan, the *Tribune* writer but also a former Harvard Soviet specialist, reported that from April 1965 onwards the Soviet leadership had directed its press and the US Communist Party to expand their coverage of the protests.¹⁶⁸ Sullivan quoted *Pravda*'s descriptions of the protests in which the Soviet paper emphasised their scale as well as their penetration of university campuses, which *Pravda* assumed were 'citadels of conservatism'.¹⁶⁹ By December 1965, however, *Pravda* was beginning to recognise that it was natural for universities to be at the centre of the protest movement.

In an intriguing piece on anti-war activism, *Pravda* published a letter it apparently received from an American citizen opposed to the Vietnam War who nonetheless questioned the accuracy of Soviet reporting on protests, accusing the paper of exaggerating the level of opposition to the war among the American public.¹⁷⁰ The choice to publish criticism of Soviet reportage by *Pravda* was an interesting one given the usual sensitivity of the Soviet press, but the reply given by the newspaper clearly demonstrates that the purpose of the exercise was to undermine attempts to downplay anti-war opposition in the US and assert the superior accuracy of Soviet journalism. In a response that essentially corrected, in *Pravda*'s view, the error of the author of the original letter, one Baird Stevens, the paper argued that opposition to the war was growing throughout American society across all demographics. In particular, *Pravda* mentioned the role of students, rhetorically asking 'is it not indicative' of the anti-war movement's righteousness that it 'was conceived in the university milieu?'¹⁷¹ *Pravda* argued that since students and academics were among the brightest of Americans and quickest to take action when a cause was necessary, their participation in the Vietnam protests exemplified the war's moral and intellectual bankruptcy.

However, though the Soviet press was aware of the centrality of students to anti-war activism, its writers, editors, and the Kremlin leadership were yet to specifically recognise the New Left phenomenon as playing a central role in protests in the US. Even though *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* noticed the key influence of politically active young people on growing dissent in the US, there was not yet any recognition of student protest as part of a wider intellectual New Left movement. As Menhert

¹⁶⁸ Sullivan, 'Soviet Press Gloats Over U.S. Protests', 4.

¹⁶⁹ Sullivan, 4.

¹⁷⁰ 'Americans and the War in Vietnam', *Izvestiya*, 19th December, 1965, 4 in *CDSP* 17, no. 51 (12th January, 1966): 21-2.

¹⁷¹ 'Americans and the War in Vietnam', 4.

points out, even the youth-oriented journals only made sporadic mentions of the New Left and the above examples from the main dailies show students being discussed in only very general terms.¹⁷² Though Soviet analysts were building a picture of growing student activism in the West, it would take the ‘shock of Paris’ and the widespread revolts of summer 1968 for the USSR’s leadership to recognise the New Left and form views on the potential of New Left dissent for propaganda and its suitability as an ideological ally.¹⁷³ Furthermore, the Soviet press had not yet identified any key dissenting figures from the civil rights and anti-war movements who it could depict as dissidents or political prisoners and portray as evidence of Marxism-Leninism’s universality, so dissidentism was far from being achieved. It would require the further post-1968 radicalisation of the New Left, increased state repression in the West against activists, and growing Western criticism of the Soviet Union’s human rights record for Moscow’s press to begin seeking out suitable figures to valorise as anti-capitalist dissidents.

Soviet and Anglo-American discourse before 1968 compared

Overall, the general picture which emerged of the USSR’s interaction with and commentary on Western dissent and protest before 1968, showed that the press was engaged with exploiting images of anti-war and civil rights activism for anti-capitalist propaganda but with no awareness of the role of the New Left in these movements. Furthermore, there was no sense the Soviet press were at the stage of creating identifiable dissident figures who received Moscow’s ideological support, compared to the West which had taken some steps in this direction throughout the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial. A contributing factor to this disparity may have been the form that dissent took at this time in each setting. The mass character of Vietnam and civil rights activism and its highly public nature did not lend itself to the creation of individual figures of dissent in the same way that the trials in the USSR did. Further, human rights discourse was still only emerging from the margins of international politics while Western criticism of Soviet human rights abuse still had some way to go before it began to reach its peak during the 1970s, which would then provoke the USSR to embark on depicting left-wingers in the West as repressed dissident personalities and forcefully promote its own

¹⁷² Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 14-15 and 25.

¹⁷³ Menhert, 18.

socially-constructed conception of human rights.¹⁷⁴ Yet other more political factors still had a role to play in shaping discourse around dissent at this time. The radicalisation of New Left activism had not yet progressed to attract extensive persecution by the Western security services in the way it would during 1968 and after. Furthermore, as discussed, there were no identifiable ideologically suitable targets for Soviet -West dissidentism as there would emerge in the 1970s; the Soviet press installed significant ideological caveats to their support for Martin Luther King, for example, who was critiqued for the religious content of his political program.

However, compared to the Anglo-American governments, even though there may have been limits to the Soviet leadership's ideological agreement with Western dissenters at this time and no Soviet-West dissidentism, it is apparent from the scale of the coverage of anti-war and anti-racist protest in the Soviet press that the Soviet government was more willing to exploit general images of dissent in Western society at this time than either the British or American governments. While there were some exceptions, such as the Johnson administration's criticism of the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial at the UN, before 1968's revolutions Anglo-American diplomacy prioritised good relations with the Soviet Union and refrained from commentating on Soviet internal affairs. Furthermore, Anglo-American government statements that did discuss dissent only referred to Western values in very general terms, and there were no explicit references to dissidents as representatives of the inevitable triumph of liberal democracy in the USSR or calls for hard-line foreign policies vis-à-vis Moscow. Furthermore, even conservatives who later went on to become fierce critics of détente, such as Robert Conquest, an anti-communist historian and advisor to both Reagan and Thatcher, still held out some faith in détente right up until the crushing of the Prague Spring.¹⁷⁵ By contrast, the extent to which Soviet papers were permitted to discuss and exploit the anti-Vietnam war protests, for example, shows that the Soviet government were sometimes more prepared than their Western counterparts to surpass the limits of détente with regard to exploiting dissent abroad, a difference that would continue into the 1970s.

Ultimately, no individual Western left-wing dissident figures were being created by the USSR and there was consensus within the leadership and academic establishment between 1964 and the start of

¹⁷⁴ Nathans, 'Soviet-Rights Talk in the Post-Stalin Era', 182-3; Buchanan, *Amnesty International and Human Rights Activism in Postwar Britain, 1945-1977*, 154.

¹⁷⁵ Robert Conquest, 'The Limits of Détente', *Foreign Affairs* 46, no. 4 (July, 1968): 733-42.

the 1968 revolutions on the issue of the New Left, of which they were largely unaware, and supporting Western dissenters. However, the foundations of a narrative on the West as perennially rocked by dissent and protest were established which the impact of 1968's revolts would then eventually transform and lead to cases of dissidentism between the USSR and New Left and later to divisions over the suitability of the New Left within the Soviet leadership.

'The shock' of '68¹⁷⁶

Political leaders in East and West inadvertently facilitated the mass dissent of 1968 by raising expectations beyond what they could deliver. In the USSR, upon his ousting in 1964, Khrushchev had left a legacy of unachievable promises, including that communism would be achieved by 1980, which the sixties generation (*shestidesyatniki*) that came of age during his leadership sought to realise, while the ongoing Prague Spring offered continued hope for a reformed socialism to take hold in the communist world.¹⁷⁷ Western leaders too, though standards of living had continually risen throughout the 1950s and 1960s, had created expectations of levels of prosperity and justice which they could not achieve.¹⁷⁸

The explosion of protest and dissent that occurred during the single year of 1968 was a watershed moment for Cold War leaders and dissidents alike in both East and West. It was a year of volatile revolutions and radical protest in cities across Europe, North America, and Asia. Yet the most lasting legacies of this breakthrough year stem from the fact that the revolutions begun during it largely failed, as well as from the extensive backlash they produced among incumbent elites.¹⁷⁹ The scale of the challenge posed to communist and capitalist government elites during 1968 persuaded them to relax their attacks on one another as they sought to reconsolidate their positions domestically. At the same time, the failure of 1968 and elite retrenchment would persuade activists to try and lead more radicalised forms of dissent that took shape in the 1970s.

The Vietnam War, continued racial inequality in the US despite the passage of civil rights legislation, Western economic slowdown, and a burgeoning student population angry at their elders made for a

¹⁷⁶ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 18.

¹⁷⁷ Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gilburd, eds., *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture During the 1950s and 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 42.

¹⁷⁸ Suri, *Power and Protest*, 165.

¹⁷⁹ Suri, 164.

powerful cocktail for dissent, which dramatically manifested itself in large protests across Europe and the US throughout 1968.¹⁸⁰ University campuses in particular provided a key stage for protest. Berkeley in the US and the Sorbonne in Paris became focal points for activism. At the former, it was Vietnam above all else that drove students to interrupt their studies and gather to demonstrate. The expansion of the draft during the mid-1960s produced protests of increasing size as well as a flourishing independent press scene that was scathingly critical of US military actions in South-East Asia.¹⁸¹ These expressions of anger and discontent unnerved both university rectors and elites within America's political and security establishments.

Meanwhile, in Paris, after clashes between left-wing students demanding greater freedoms and police throughout early 1968, the Sorbonne was barricaded by the radicals of the campus to separate themselves from the reach of the French state.¹⁸² After riot police charged the students, the latter called for a national strike in May in which they were joined by large swathes of factory labourers bringing the capital to a halt.¹⁸³ Though incumbent president Charles de Gaulle survived fresh elections in June within a year he had resigned, shocked by his inability to control his own people.¹⁸⁴ Similarly, American leaders would be rattled by their impotence in the face of popular discontent and anger following the assassination of Martin Luther King.

After the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, King had continued to campaign against racism, poverty, and on Vietnam throughout the mid-1960s.¹⁸⁵ As he did so, however, King found his authority within the civil rights movement challenged by the radicalism of the new Black Panther Party, as well as struggling with a fierce White backlash in the South against the achievements of his earlier campaigns.¹⁸⁶ On 4th April 1968, King was fatally shot by James Earl Ray while standing on his hotel balcony in Memphis. To this shocking but not unexpected event – there were many who threatened King's life – large numbers of Black Americans expressed their grief and anger on the streets.¹⁸⁷ Washington DC, which had a large African-American community, was brought to a standstill as riots gripped the city in the immediate aftermath of King's killing. Temporarily losing

¹⁸⁰ Suri, *Power and Protest*, 164.

¹⁸¹ Suri, 169.

¹⁸² Suri, 190.

¹⁸³ Suri, 192; Vinen, *The Long '68*, 143.

¹⁸⁴ Vinen, 159; Suri, *Power and Protest*, 194.

¹⁸⁵ 'The Civil Rights Act of 1964', *Harvard Law Review* 78, no. 3 (January, 1965): 684-96.

¹⁸⁶ Suri, *Power and Protest*, 181.

¹⁸⁷ Suri, 184.

control over the nation's capital disturbed American leaders and convinced them that they would have to act to circumvent the growing anger in universities and urban centres and find ways to relieve external pressures from abroad as they sought to reconsolidate at home.¹⁸⁸ The events of 1968 would also prove to be decisive to the USSR's future direction, leading to increased state repression and in turn to a radicalised and split dissident movement.

The dissident movement which had been founded in 1965 had continued to grow in the face of increasing state sanctions throughout the years leading up to 1968. In a notable case, dissenters Yuri Galanskov, Vera Lashkova, Alexei Dobrovolsky, and Alexander Ginzburg were all sent to prison camps in January 1968, leading to an outcry among the intelligentsia.¹⁸⁹ That year also saw the publication of Andrei Sakharov's influential *Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom*, which articulated a radical vision of convergence between capitalism and communism and presented a major strand of dissident thought to an international audience for the first time.¹⁹⁰ However, it was the events in Prague during that year that had greatest importance to the future history of dissent and the Soviet state's response.

As discussed earlier, Czechoslovak Party General Secretary Dubček began accelerating his reform programme throughout the spring of 1968, a liberalising period forever after known as the Prague Spring. Dubček relaxed censorship and introduced reforms to the economy in an attempt to revitalise Czechoslovak society. These top-down measures proved inspirational to millions of citizens who took advantage of the new freedoms to publish and formulate new ideas. Yet criticism of the communist party, most of all its leading political role, would stretch beyond what Dubček had intended and what the Soviet leadership would tolerate.¹⁹¹ As Dubček lost control of the situation, the USSR progressively pressured him to revert to a Soviet course until the Kremlin suddenly initiated a massive invasion of Czechoslovakia in August that extinguished future hopes of a liberalised communist government.

¹⁸⁸ Suri, 186.

¹⁸⁹ 'Galanskov, Ginzburg, Dobrovolsky and Lashkova Trial (1.1)', *A Chronicle of Current Events* no. 1 (30th April, 1968), https://chronicle-of-current-events.com/2017/02/14/1-1-the-trial-of-galanskov-ginzburg-dobrovolsky-and-lashkova-2/#_ftn1; 'Protests about the Galanskov-Ginzburg Trial (1.2) Dec. 1967 to March 1968', *A Chronicle of Current Events* no. 1 (30th April, 1968), <https://chronicle-of-current-events.com/2013/09/25/1-2-protests-about-the-trial/>.

¹⁹⁰ Sakharov, *Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom*. For discussion, see Bergman, *Meeting the Demands of Reason*, 135-152.

¹⁹¹ Suri, *Power and Protest*, 200.

The Kremlin's ruthlessness in Prague had a transformative effect on the Soviet dissident movement. As previously outlined, it discredited the reformist socialist school of thought and precipitated a split within the movement between liberals and Orthodox nationalists. The Prague Spring's crushing also provoked an immediate reaction from the human rights movement, leading to protests in Moscow and beyond. Even before the invasion was carried out, Soviet citizens and dissenters had taken part in acts of protest against Soviet attempts to pressure Dubček. Irina Belogrodskaya was sent to prison for circulating a letter defending Anatoly Marchenko, a serial dissenter who had been sentenced to deprivation of liberty for addressing a letter to several newspapers decrying the anti-Czechoslovak propaganda which Moscow was producing.¹⁹² Most famously of all, Konstantin Babitsky, Larissa Bogoraz, Vadim Delaunay, Vladimir Dremlyuga, Victor Fainberg, Natalya Gorbanevskaya, and Pavel Litvinov staged a peaceful and law-abiding protest in October 1968 at Moscow's Red Square, from which only Gorbanevskaya escaped arrest (she was later arrested and sent to a psychiatric prison).¹⁹³ The swift punishment of these demonstrators on top of the invasion indicated that a conservative entrenchment was well underway in the USSR. As with the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial, Western press outlets could not fail to take note of these events. Yet the scale of the dissent and repression this time, would see Western politicians enter the discourse around Soviet dissidents in a way they had not previously. Similarly, the cataclysmic events that shook Paris and Washington in 1968 caught the attention of the Soviet press, leadership, and intelligentsia more seriously than any similar events before.

Transnational responses to '68

The overwhelming response to the Prague Spring by the Anglo-American press was one of hope that Eastern Europe's socialist republics could evolve into reformed regimes. An earlier *Guardian* editorial of 1967 spoke of how 'liberalism ke[pt] breaking through' in the socialist world and Prague served as the best hope for achieving this.¹⁹⁴ As Dubček's reforms progressed, papers like *The New York Times* celebrated his achievements, while as Soviet pressure mounted on him to change course

¹⁹² 'Responses in Moscow to events in Czechoslovakia, July-August 1968 (3.1)', *A Chronicle of Current Events* no. 3 (30th August, 1968), <https://chronicle-of-current-events.com/1968/10/15/3-1-responses-to-events-in-czechoslovakia/>.

¹⁹³ 'The trial of the Red Square demonstrators, 9-11 October 1968 (4.1)', *A Chronicle of Current Events* no. 4 (31st October, 1968), <https://chronicle-of-current-events.com/1968/12/15/4-1-the-trial-of-the-demonstrators-on-red-square/>; Douglas Martin, 'Natalya Gorbanevskaya, Soviet Dissident and Poet, Dies at 77', *New York Times*, 1st December 2013.

¹⁹⁴ 'Liberalism keeps breaking through', *Guardian*, 24th May, 1967, 8.

the *Observer* praised the Slovak's 'admirable steadfastness'.¹⁹⁵ Once the invasion took place, the tone shifted to one of outrage and despair. *The Guardian* described the 'light [as] going out in Prague' following the arrival of Soviet troops, the London *Times* called Moscow's action 'barbarous', while *The New York Times* portrayed the invasion as the USSR's 'squalid business'.¹⁹⁶

The Anglo-American press also gave their support to the acts of protest in Moscow that followed the invasion, such as the Red Square demonstrations and Anatoly Marchenko's letter condemning Soviet policy.¹⁹⁷ Noticeable in the coverage of these protests, was the consistency with which the demonstrators were described as 'dissidents' rather than dissenters, and how they were considered to be part of a distinct phenomenon separate from the large Soviet establishment intelligentsia.¹⁹⁸ Anglo-American newspapers had been increasingly calling participants in acts of dissent 'dissidents' after the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial and in the aftermath of Prague this intensified, exemplified by *The New York Times*' profile of Marchenko as a 'dissident ashamed for [his] country' whose letter condemning Soviet behaviour *The New York Times* described as an 'eloquent example of the opposition inside the Soviet Union to the Kremlin's policy of reimposing orthodox Communism in Czechoslovakia'.¹⁹⁹ In another instance, the defendants in the trial of the Red Square protestors were called 'dissidents' in *The New York Times*' special report on their court case.²⁰⁰ Such examples indicated how the term 'dissident' had acquired newly significant weight by 1968, being used to describe a figure in direct opposition to the Kremlin.

The US and UK governments, meanwhile, though they registered their unhappiness at Soviet actions, remained convinced of the prudence of détente as a strategy despite the events in Prague and

¹⁹⁵ Harry Schwartz, 'Prague's Revolution Within the Revolution: Prague's Revolution', *New York Times*, 31st March, 1968, SM28; 'What The Observer, thinks: Prague: suspense', *Observer*, 28th July, 1968, 6.

¹⁹⁶ 'What we can still do to help', *Guardian*, 31st August, 1968, 6; 'Russia's ACT Of Aggression', *The Times*, 22nd August, 1968, 9; James Reston, 'Tanks and Ideas: Moscow's Fatal Weakness', *New York Times*, 23rd August, 1968, 38.

¹⁹⁷ 'A Letter from Anatoly Marchenko', 17th April, 1968, *A Chronicle of Current Events* 2 (June, 1968), <https://chronicle-of-current-events.com/2013/09/21/2-6-a-letter-by-anatoly-marchenko/>; 'Yurii Andropov, Nikolai Shchelokov, and Mikhail Malyarov to the CPSU CC', 5th September, 1968, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, RGANI, F. 80, Op. 1, D. 513, Ll. 56-57. Obtained and translated by Mark Kramer, Wilson Centre, Record ID 188128.

¹⁹⁸ For further discussion of the appearance of 'dissident' in Western coverage of Soviet dissent see Metger, 'Writing the Papers', 99.

¹⁹⁹ George Melly, 'Dissidents in Russia', *Observer*, 19th November, 1967, 25; Peter Grose, 'Soviet Dissident Ashamed for Country: A Dissident Voices Shame for Soviet', *New York Times*, 14th October, 1968, 1.

²⁰⁰ 'Moscow Rejects Dissidents' Plea: Red Square Demonstrators Must Serve Sentences', *New York Times*, 20th Nov 1968, 3.

Moscow. The NATO states purposely refrained from giving any direct expressions of support for Dubček and as Geraint Hughes says, at this stage ‘no Western power was prepared to undermine détente by offering unsolicited pledges to assist Prague’.²⁰¹ However, the scale of Soviet aggression against Prague meant that there would not be political consensus over détente as there had been during the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial. The invasion came during the crucial stages of the 1968 presidential election in the US, and immediately provided ammunition for opponents of President Johnson’s foreign policy. Liberal Democrats attacked Johnson’s realpolitik and neglect of Czechoslovakia, while Republican candidate Richard Nixon, though his presidency would later become synonymous with détente, stood to benefit as a conservative by calling for a hard-line policy vis-à-vis Moscow.²⁰² In Britain, the opposition Conservatives, while not opposing the principle of détente, used the Czechoslovak events to argue for a stronger defence policy.²⁰³

Outside of high-level party politics, other conservatives were making a much cleaner break with the policy of détente as it had been practiced up until 1968. The anti-communist historian Robert Conquest had written just before the invasion that though Soviet leaders did not accept the principle of constant cooperation, détente may have been able to ‘eventually develop into a genuine world peace’.²⁰⁴ Yet immediately following the invasion, Conquest wrote that ‘illusions’ about the objectives of the Soviet leadership had facilitated the Prague invasion and that, for their lack of resolve in the face of preliminary Soviet pressure against Dubček, ‘Britons and Americans who then relaxed their standards...are to this extent unwitting accomplices in this year’s crime’.²⁰⁵

The conservative Democratic senator Henry M. ‘Scoop’ Jackson, who later became a strong supporter of Solzhenitsyn and the Jewish *refuseniks*, meanwhile, called the invasion a ‘sobering experience’ and argued that NATO needed to make a stronger commitment in Europe to deter further Soviet aggression.²⁰⁶ In general, for many conservatives any optimism they had had about the original détente policy gave way to pessimism. For some future conservatives, the experience of the invasion

²⁰¹ Geraint Hughes, ‘British policy towards Eastern Europe and the impact of the “Prague Spring”, 1964–68’, *Cold War History* 4, no. 2 (2004): 133.

²⁰² Richard V. Allen, ‘Richard Nixon, LBJ, and the Invasion of Czechoslovakia’, *The Hoover Digest*, no. 1 (January, 1999).

²⁰³ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 769 (1968-69), cols. 1284-92, 26th August, 1968.

²⁰⁴ Conquest, ‘The Limits of Détente’, 742.

²⁰⁵ Robert Conquest, ‘Frightened Red Rulers Had No Choice but to Crush Czechoslovakian ...’, *Los Angeles Times*, 27th October, 1968, K1.

²⁰⁶ Henry M. Jackson, ‘Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia and its Impact on NATO: Does the Leopard Change his Spots’, *Cornell International Law Journal* 2, no. 1 (Spring, 1969): 108.

was a formative one. Eric Pickles, a British Conservative government minister in the 2010s, was the grandson of a co-founder of the Independent Labour Party.²⁰⁷ Unlike many others in the British left, who had already diverged from communism following Khrushchev's Secret Speech and later the violent suppression of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, events that 'pushed thousands of communists over the precipice into what became the [New Left]', Pickles remained a communist sympathiser until 1968.²⁰⁸ On witnessing the crushing of the Prague Spring, however, Pickles made the surprising volte-face of abandoning radicalism and at once joining the Conservative Party, in protest against and 'outraged by the British Labour government's inaction'.²⁰⁹

Yet far from heeding such criticisms and cooling East-West relations, the British and American governments invested in détente further. Having faced significant rebellions of their own in the form of New Left inspired and other activism over Vietnam, racism, and capitalism, Washington and London were persuaded to seek further relaxation of tensions between themselves and Moscow to relieve pressure exerted from abroad and to consolidate their domestic positions.²¹⁰ In doing so, the US and UK governments agreed to more strictly limit their criticism of Soviet human rights abuses. Whitehall and US intransigence over détente and Soviet dissidents would lead conservatives to reach for the human rights issue more and more as the 1960s gave way to the 1970s and as Soviet repression against dissidents intensified.

The Soviet response to '68 and the currents of activism it unleashed, meanwhile, was more uncertain and complex. Soviet officials had mixed feelings over the events in Paris and beyond and whether they should support them. On the one hand strikes and revolts were in line with Marxist expectations that capitalism would become increasingly unstable. On the other, having largely overlooked it until 1968, Soviet analysts lacked enough information about the New Left, and therefore so did the leadership and ideological establishment, to be able to decide to what extent the movement was influenced by Maoism, how threatening as an ideology it was for how it could appeal to the Soviet youth, and whether the New Left represented a rival that in fact therefore needed to be discredited.²¹¹ Within the leadership and among ideological experts, the conservative elements were determined to

²⁰⁷ Andy Beckett, 'Eric Pickles: Public enemy number one?', *Guardian*, 12th February, 2011.

²⁰⁸ Beckett, 'Eric Pickles'; Ian Black, 'How Soviet tanks crushed dreams of British communists', *Guardian*, 21st October, 2006.

²⁰⁹ Beckett, 'Eric Pickles'.

²¹⁰ Suri, *Power and Protest*, 213.

²¹¹ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 13.

maintain the status quo and hostile to Soviet efforts to embrace the New Left, but others were more positive, like Anatoly Chernyaev, a deputy at the Soviet International Department, who in Rentola's words welcomed the events of 1968 'as finally bringing an end to the postwar period and opening up a new stage'.²¹² Brezhnev even eventually gave a speech in which he suggested the Soviet Union needed to channel the rebellious spirit of 1968, though with an emphasis on directing the students towards Soviet communism.²¹³ It thus took until 1969 for the party line to begin to form, so Soviet writers hedged their bets either staying silent or offering critiques of the New Left's more radical elements during 1968's revolts themselves.²¹⁴

Eventually the leadership would direct Soviet academia and the intelligentsia to study the New Left and assess its worth as a potential Cold War ally and make a decision, but only from 1969 onwards, an episode explored in the next chapter as part of a wider examination of the Soviet reaction to the New Left.²¹⁵ Elements of the Soviet youth and dissidents, on the other hand, became attracted to the New Left, but this happened even later than the intelligentsia's study in the mid-1970s. Ultimately, as the events of '68 actually unfolded there was only a positive response to the mass strikes but significant reservations about the New Left, though again this stemmed from a lack of information about the movement rather than an actual directive from the leadership.²¹⁶

Menhert cites a lack of access to Western 'sociological data' as among the factors which left Moscow unaware of the significance of the New Left; to most Soviet analysts, there was nothing new in the increasing student protests through 1960-67 given that this seemed to correlate with orthodox Marxist expectations that capitalism's crisis would continually worsen and provoke protest by the youth.²¹⁷ When protest reached its fever pitch in mid-to-late 1968 and took an unfamiliar form in the New Left, the lack of understanding developed up to that point meant the Soviet press was shocked by what was taking place and had a gut reaction that this new, unpredictable left-wing force could not

²¹² Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 141.

²¹³ Leonid I. Brezhnev, *Lenin's Cause Lives On and Triumphs* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1970), 54-5; Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 142. As well as developments in Western Europe and North America, Brezhnev also noted a rise in anti-capitalist sentiment in Japan.

²¹⁴ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 23.

²¹⁵ Menhert, 115-6.

²¹⁶ Menhert, 12.

²¹⁷ Menhert, 13.

be trusted as an ally against capitalism.²¹⁸ Workers' strikes, and student solidarity with them, though, were supported.

The major dailies mainly focused on protests by students and workers in Paris.²¹⁹ *Pravda* gave its support to the strikes which unfolded, but with more emphasis on the role of the workers than the students and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, one of the student leaders, was attacked as 'extremist' and 'anti-Communist'.²²⁰ Moscow feared what the radicalism of the rioting students might do to the electoral popularity of the large French Communist Party.²²¹ When De Gaulle won an overwhelming majority in the 1968 elections, the students were blamed for turning public opinion over to him and condemnation of the New Left intensified.²²² Yet by this time an editorial in *Pravda* had already characterised followers of Marcuse as 'Werewolves' – implying they postured as communist but would eventually transform into enemies of communism.²²³ However, it was not just the electorally damaging (in terms of fraternal parties) radicalism of the students that led the Soviet press to denigrate the New Left. The latter's displacement of the working class as the vanguard of revolution was in contradiction to the tenets of Marxism-Leninism as the Soviet state interpreted the doctrine. Further, the influence of Maoism on the New Left was key to drawing the ire of the Soviet press.

Following the establishment of the communist regime after WWII, China formed an alliance with the USSR which stood as the 'symbol of the power and appeal of socialism worldwide'.²²⁴ However, the emergence of Khrushchev, with his reformist policies, led to a disastrous ideological rift. Mao considered Khrushchev's revisionism an unacceptable deviation from Marxism, tantamount to the 'restoration of capitalism in the USSR'.²²⁵ At the same time, competing national interests further complicated their relationship. As Khrushchev attempted to improve the economic standing of the USSR, he sold military equipment to India, with whom China would go to war in 1962 after the two had already clashed in 1959 during which Khrushchev had 'tacitly supported' the Indian side.²²⁶ In addition, Khrushchev pursued the policy of peaceful co-existence with the West, something which

²¹⁸ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 18 and 28.

²¹⁹ Menhert, 18.

²²⁰ Menhert, 19.

²²¹ Menhert, 20.

²²² Menhert, 20.

²²³ Menhert, 21; Zhukov, 'Werewolves', *Pravda*, 30th May, 1968, 4.

²²⁴ Radchenko, 'The Sino-Soviet Split', 349.

²²⁵ Radchenko, 353.

²²⁶ Radchenko, 354.

appalled the highly orthodox Mao.²²⁷ Eventually, relations totally broke down; in 1969 there was even a fatal border clash between Soviet and Chinese troops.²²⁸ From this point onward the Chinese government considered the Soviet Union the foremost threat to its national security.²²⁹ It was on the basis of these fraught relations that the Soviet dissident Amalrik predicted there would be an all-out Sino-Soviet war which would precipitate a Soviet collapse before 1984's end.²³⁰

This division of the communist world made it of paramount importance that the Soviet leadership preserve an image of unity in its own East European bloc, and to assert that the USSR represented the true manifestation of communism. This was reflected in the response to the Western radical left in 1968, many of whom responded to the ideological tenets of Mao and were particularly inspired by his Cultural Revolution.²³¹ This made it important for the Soviet press to frame certain radical left protests as belonging outside 'true' Marxism-Leninism. *Izvestiya* called Maoist student protestors at the Sorbonne 'ultraleftists' and 'pseudorevolutionaries' to emphasise their separateness from true communism, while characterising their actions in clashes with police as those of 'brawlers' who were scorned by their fellow more moderate student peers.²³²

Clearly the potential of the New Left to alienate Western voters from socialist and communist parties concerned Soviet analysts deeply at this point, with *Literaturnaya gazeta* suggesting the student riots might have been deliberately provoked by capitalists to draw out the radicals and help damage communists' image in general.²³³ Furthermore, the Soviet leadership did not desire the disruption of the international order of détente by the establishment of an anti-Soviet independent New Left regime in France, or anywhere else for that matter.²³⁴ Having nearly lost control over Czechoslovakia, the USSR did not want to risk creating another potential competitor for the leadership of the international communist movement, and therefore Moscow refused to give full support to the students in Paris.

²²⁷ Radchenko, 'The Sino-Soviet Split', 356.

²²⁸ Radchenko, 369.

²²⁹ Radchenko, 369.

²³⁰ Amalrik, *Will the Soviet Union Survive until 1984?*, 48-65.

²³¹ Vinen, *The Long '68*, 11.

²³² L. Volodin, 'Why the Sorbonne is Closed', *Izvestiya*, 6th May, 1968, 4.

²³³ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 23; N. Molchanov, 'Plata za strakh', *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 1968, no. 27: 14.

²³⁴ See Maud Bracke, *Which socialism, whose détente? West European Communism and the Czechoslovak Crisis of 1968* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007), 133-96.

Instead of depicting the New Left as victims of Western repression, in 1968 the main human rights interest for the Soviet leadership was capitalising on the UN's declaration of the International Year of Human Rights. This declaration called on states to recognise and act against the abuse of human rights across the globe. Typically, the Soviet delegation to the UN had been relatively uninterested in engaging with human rights discourse with criticism frequently levelled against Moscow for its restrictions on freedom. However, the 1968 UN initiative focused on abuses in 'South Africa, Rhodesia, Israel, and fascist Spain, not the Eastern Bloc states'.²³⁵ With this being the case, the Soviet leadership saw an opportunity to engage with the UN enterprise in a way that would allow them to highlight the West's failings on human rights and contrast them with a newly formulated socialist discourse of human rights compared to which the West's own was deemed inferior. As Richardson-Little says,

Only as a result of the International Year did it [human rights] become a discourse employed across the Eastern Bloc by state socialist elites, who claimed to stand for a superior kind of 'socialist human rights' at home where capitalist exploitation had been abolished.²³⁶

The Soviet leadership realised that by taking on the human rights mission as the USSR's own, it could push a narrative that it was their more effective defender and that rights were more fully realised under socialism than capitalism. The formulation and adoption of this alternative human rights concept would enable the Soviet Union to compete with the West on the front of human rights and would eventually be combined with a later narrative that depicted select representatives of the New Left – and later trade unionists – as examples of how capitalist states denied left-wing activists their human rights.²³⁷

This was facilitated by the fact that, despite the uncertainty surrounding the New Left, 1968's revolutions had revealed to the Soviet leadership the scale of anti-capitalist unrest that existed in the West, which the Soviet press would later depict as evidence of capitalism's unpopularity at large despite any ideological disagreements with the New Left. Furthermore, the leadership finally became aware of the importance of the New Left as specifically responsible for the largest outbreaks of dissent in the West and recognised that it might be worth assessing whether the movement could

²³⁵ Richardson-Little, 'From Tehran to Helsinki', 183.

²³⁶ Richardson-Little, 182.

²³⁷ The normalisation of human rights in state socialist discourse and ideology following the Soviet bloc's embrace of 'The Year of Human Rights' would pave the way to Moscow becoming a signatory to the Helsinki Accords. See Richardson-Little, 'From Tehran to Helsinki', 200.

become a useful ally in the Cold War, or at least exploit images of New Leftists as dissidents for propaganda.²³⁸ Of course, in 1968 there were no ideologically ideal candidates for Soviet support. Events in that year would, however, lead to the growth of a movement which the Soviet hierarchy would later come to value: Black Power.

Martin Luther King's murder in 1968 was used by *Pravda* to attack American society, which it argued bore direct responsibility for King's killing. The paper honoured King as a 'fighter' and 'humanitarian'.²³⁹ The Soviet press were also more able to support 1968's student activism against racism than they were of the type of activism occurring in Paris, fitting in as it did with the long-term strategy of pledging support for anti-racism, with *Pravda* decrying the arrest of students at Columbia University who were protesting 'militarism and racism'.²⁴⁰ Yet this activism would take on more radical forms following King's killing, with his assassination giving momentum to the burgeoning Black Power movement led by the Black Panther Party (BPP).

Eldridge Cleaver, an early BPP leader, reflected on King's death in his 'Requiem for Nonviolence', in which he called for more militant action to secure rights and prosperity for African-Americans; instances of much more extreme radicalisation took place in West Germany and Italy, where the failure of 1968 convinced many radicals of the need to violently resist capitalism, embodied by the formation of the Red Army Faction (RAF) and Red Brigades (RB) respectively.²⁴¹ The Soviet leadership reacted to the BPP with uncertainty, but the Black Power movement would eventually provide the most suitable candidate for Soviet-New Left dissidentism in the form of Angela Davis. Yet another major legacy of 1968 to Soviet-New Left dissidentism was that the experience of mass protest during that year led the FBI to clamp down fiercely on expressions of New Left dissent, especially by the Black Power movement.²⁴² This, in turn, would allow the Soviet press to depict the US as a site of political repression and counter criticisms made of Moscow's treatment of dissidents, by pointing to examples such as Davis following her arrest by the FBI in 1970 and subsequent trial.²⁴³

²³⁸ Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 139.

²³⁹ Sergei Vishnevsky, 'Commentators' column: Freedom to Kill', *Pravda*, 6th April, 1968, 5 in *CDS* 20, no. 14 (April, 1968): 29.

²⁴⁰ 'Police Brutality Against Students', *Pravda*, 2nd May, 1968, 5 in *CDS* 20, no. 18 (May, 1968): 20.

²⁴¹ Eldridge Cleaver, 'Requiem for Nonviolence' (6th April, 1968).

²⁴² Harris, 'Revolutionary Black Nationalism: The Black Panther Party', 169.

²⁴³ Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 518.

Meanwhile, just as the New Left was undergoing fragmentation and radicalisation, so too was the Soviet dissident movement. The split set in motion by the Prague Spring's crushing between Westernisers like Sakharov and Orthodox nationalists like Solzhenitsyn would only grow more entrenched.²⁴⁴ Sakharov offered the following summary of the latter's position: 'Solzhenitsyn [wrote] that perhaps [the USSR had] not matured to the point of democratizing the system, and that when accompanied by respect for law and by Orthodoxy the authoritarian system was not all that bad, since under that system Russia preserved its national health until the twentieth century', while Sakharov countered that he considered 'the democratic path of development the only possible one for any country'.²⁴⁵ Solzhenitsyn's thought also contained a significant belligerent realist streak, that called on the West to actively resist the USSR's expansion of influence, something which appealed to conservatives in the West. Some other Soviet non-conformists, meanwhile, as the Western media looked East, were themselves looking Westwards.

Though small in number, a cohort of Soviet dissidents and non-conformists were inspired by the ideas of the New Left that were put on show in 1968, including the growing hippy culture. A Soviet hippy, Aksel Lampmann, described 1968 as the formative year in his adoption of New Left culture, having been introduced to it during an encounter with Czechoslovak students at an international summer camp he attended that year, though most Soviet New Leftists would encounter the ideology much later in the mid-1970s by reading about it.²⁴⁶ Some of those young people who adopted New Left ideas insisted they were separate from the dissident movement, such as Andrei Reznikov, and simply enjoyed the idealistic and anarchist principles that New Left thought entailed, while also responding to Maoism and forming hippy communes.²⁴⁷ Nevertheless, others were more political and followers of New Left ideas were subject to the same repressive measures reserved by the Soviet state for dissidents, while the appeal of the New Left among young people undoubtedly provided further impetus for the Soviet conservatives to continue to attack New Left ideas throughout the 1970s.

²⁴⁴ Alekseyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 324.

²⁴⁵ Andrei Sakharov, 'In Answer to Solzhenitsyn', tr. Guy Daniels, *The New York Review of Books*, 13th June, 1974; Alekseyeva, *Soviet Dissent*, 326.

²⁴⁶ Luke Harding, 'Life in the "hairy underground": the lost history of Soviet hippies', *Guardian*, 23rd October, 2019.

²⁴⁷ Dmitrii Rublëv and Andrei Reznikov, 'Novye levye v SSSR', *Alternativy*, no. 2 (2012): 141–55, <http://www.intelros.ru/readroom/alternativi/a2-2012/15622-novye-levye-v-sssr.html>; Juliane Fürst and Stephen V. Bittner, 'The Aging Pioneer', 296.

Yet, as well as 1968's events precipitating ideological divergence within Soviet dissident circles, the year also saw the growth of the dissident movement's *samizdat* publishing. Most crucially, *A Chronicle of Current Events* was founded. The journal recorded the persecution of dissidents, detailing the proceeds of trials and served as a vital tool for sharing information about dissent between dissidents and with Western media outlets.²⁴⁸ However, 1968 also proved decisive in terms of restricting the available space for protest even further in the Soviet Union. Disturbed by their momentary loss of control over Czechoslovakia and the subsequent protests in the USSR, the Soviet leadership determined to clamp down on all forms of dissent.²⁴⁹ *A Chronicle* would become one of the key targets of the KGB in an intense and long-lasting campaign of repressive measures that would reach its apex in 1972-73 and witness the escalation of the misuse of psychiatry to silence Soviet dissidents.²⁵⁰ The increase in the levels of oppression in the USSR and the activities of journals like *Chronicle*, would in turn generate more interest in Soviet dissidents in the West. It was particularly Soviet regime's cruel abuse of psychiatry against dissidents, and its successful exposure by Vladimir Bukovsky in the tranche of Soviet diagnostic reports he smuggled to the West showing how dissidents were falsely diagnosed with mental health conditions and forcibly administered drugs, that provided the impetus to both the likes of Amnesty and conservative politicians to support Soviet dissidents.²⁵¹ As Buchanan argues, Amnesty conducted an investigation of states' use torture worldwide, of which Soviet psychiatric abuse served as one of the most egregious examples, which led to an effective relaunch of 'human rights campaigning more generally.'²⁵²

Soviet and Anglo-American discourse during '68 compared

Official Soviet support for New Left inspired protest still remained restricted, as did Washington and London's support for Soviet dissidents, though the reasons were different in each case. London and Washington both committed further to détente and therefore continued to avoid expressing support for Soviet dissidents in spite of the impact of the Soviet crushing of the Prague Spring. The Kremlin, meanwhile, viewed the situation differently. Certainly, it only supported anti-racist and labour-based actions during 1968 and remained suspicious of the New Left, with a relatively small amount of

²⁴⁸ Detlef and Wielgoths, *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, 102.

²⁴⁹ Hanson. 'The Brezhnev Era', 296.

²⁵⁰ Detlef and Wielgoths, *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, 103.

²⁵¹ Buchanan, *Amnesty International and Human Rights Activism in Postwar Britain, 1945–1977*, 197-8.

²⁵² Buchanan, 202.

coverage of the movement compared to that given to civil rights anti-war protests; the need to prevent a new rival which it did not understand yet from usurping Soviet communism's mantle, whether in the form of Maoist China or a left-wing but anti-Soviet regime established in France, meant Moscow initially preferred the failure of 1968's revolutions if it could not control them.

Nevertheless, Soviet leaders recognised the potential of the New Left to cause disruption within Western society and their disappointment with 1968 would not lead them to turn their backs on the movement. The fact at this stage was not that the USSR's limited ideological support meant the leadership had rejected the New Left outright, but that its ideological experts did not yet fully understand the movement and its true suitability to Soviet ideology. This was significant, because Soviet leaders were also suspicious as to the West's intentions in its offer of further détente, fearing some kind of trick lay behind it, and were therefore open to other means of exercising influence in the West, such as through supporting disruptive, anti-capitalist movements like the New Left.²⁵³ The need to find comparable examples of anti-capitalist dissidents also became increasingly necessary after 1968, as consensus over détente in Anglo-American politics began to crack following the invasion of Czechoslovakia and subsequent crackdown in the USSR, leading conservative opponents of détente to call on London and Washington to reverse the policy and support the Soviet dissident movement. This ultimately precipitated a transnational dissident-promoting coalition forming between Soviet dissidents and Western conservatives.

Therefore, responding to this combination of factors, Soviet experts under the direction of the leadership would carry out a wide-ranging experiment with New Left ideology and assess its potential suitability as a Cold War ally during 1969-72, leading to an increase in Soviet engagement with the New Left, and eventually dissidentism, as the following chapter explores. Meanwhile, within the USSR, the dissident movement further fractured as many became entirely disillusioned with reform socialism following the Prague Spring's failure, adopting liberal and Orthodox nationalist stances instead. Some other dissidents and young non-conformists, meanwhile, however, would eventually become optimistic about socialism once again but rather than advocating a revised East

²⁵³ Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 142.

European model instead turned to the ideas of the New Left in search of alternatives to the stagnant reality of Soviet communism.

Thus, in terms of comparing the overall shape of the discourse surrounding dissidents in both the Soviet and Anglo-American contexts during 1968, the latter had seen the furthest strides taken by the press and politicians towards resembling dissidentism. Soviet nonconformists were consistently identified as ‘dissidents’, and while dissidents were not yet being as extensively used in political debates as they would be later this had at least become slightly more common.²⁵⁴ The Soviet press, meanwhile, were still to identify key figures of dissent writers could use along the lines of dissidentism. The conditions of dissidentism, ‘open, legal, and non-violent action under a repressive sanction (dissidence), Western attention, as well as domestic recognition’ and ‘infamy’, were comparatively further from being fulfilled between the USSR and the New Left.²⁵⁵ Soviet attention was only limited, and the ‘repressive sanction’ against the New Left would only become significantly present in the coming years. Of particular significance was that the FBI’s persecution of the New Left and associated organisations was yet to peak, which would occur after they were added to the COINTELPRO – the FBI’s Counter Intelligence Program that targeted the US’s perceived far-left and far-right enemies – target list in summer 1968.²⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Soviet papers and leaders had still taken further steps towards dissidentism with the New Left in their support for select acts of dissent in the West emanating from the movement, namely strikes, and crucially finally taken note of the significance of the New Left as an ideological force in the West as well as begun to formally engage with the discourse of human rights through support of the UN year of human rights initiative.

Conclusion

Throughout the period 1964-68, dissidentism did not occur between the Soviet Union and any potential New Left allies in the West. Yet, the seeds that would contribute to dissidentism becoming a serious feature of Soviet and Anglo-American political discourse and international relations in the

²⁵⁴ Metger, ‘Writing the Papers’, 99.

²⁵⁵ Publicly condemning dissidents served to help the state define what values it stood for, by defining itself against what dissidents stood for depicting them as dangerous outliers and provocateurs. Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 3, 30-1 and 209. Also See appendix 1 for Szulecki’s diagram of the ‘dissident triangle’. Szulecki, 208.

²⁵⁶ Cunningham, *There’s Something Happening Here*, 123, 253, and 2; Cunningham, ‘The Patterning of Repression: FBI Counterintelligence and the New Left’, *Social Forces* 82, no. 1 (September, 2003): 209-40

1970s were sown. The British, American, and Soviet governments all remained relatively restrained in their direct political support for dissenters, however, in the case of the latter this was only because Moscow had not yet been able to form a party line on the New Left and the state-controlled Soviet press did extensively cover non-New Left protests in the West. Ultimately, the Soviet leadership and editors took a middle-ground approach, seeking to exploit the images of protests without giving specific support to the New Left, about which they were ill-informed, as ideological allies in the Cold War. Soviet leaders simply did not yet have a fully formed picture of how suitable the New Left could be as allies.

On the other hand, in both the Soviet and Anglo-American contexts, intellectuals and opposition figures grew increasingly interested in dissidents from the opposing Cold War camp and their ideas. British and American conservatives' attitudes to Cold War international relations were hardened against détente by the experience of the Prague Spring's crushing and Western governments' inaction and were adopting the combative mindset that would see them latch on to human rights as a part of their political programs. Meanwhile, Soviet dissidents, disillusioned with reformist socialism's viability, increasingly began to turn to either liberalism or conservatism but also in small numbers to the New Left, leading to increasing persecution by the Soviet state which would increase their appeal with conservatives and liberals in the West whose support the dissidents courted. Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink use the 'boomerang pattern' to describe this transnational process of how local activist movements, in this case the Soviet dissidents, 'may mobilize international allies who then lobby their own government to put pressure on the target state', here the Soviet Union.²⁵⁷ This saw growing pressure placed on the USSR throughout the 1970s via the Western press and would lead the Soviet leadership to seek out its own, ideologically suitable dissidents to counter claims of Soviet brutality. This process was made easier for Moscow by the parallel (although less severe) intensification of political repression in the West, especially by the FBI in the US, as is explored in the next chapter which examines how the USSR responded to the pressure created by the Soviet dissidents' boomerang pattern relationship with the West. Eventually, as the dust began to settle

²⁵⁷ Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 12-13; Christina Kiel, 'How Transnational Advocacy Networks Mobilize: Applying the Literature on Interest Groups to International Action', *Josef Korbel Journal of Advanced International Studies* 3 (Summer 2011): 80.

following 1968's revolutionary events, Soviet academic and foreign policy experts were ordered to assess whether the New Left could become a useful ally in the Cold War for Moscow.

CHAPTER II: DÉTENTE AND THE SOVIET EXPERIMENT WITH THE NEW LEFT, 1968-1972

We need to become more actively involved in the ideological struggle taking place... In this struggle, our philosophers will have to act on equal principles, just like our athletes.¹

– Pytor Kapitsa on the New Left at the Presidium of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, 1969

Introduction

Despite 1968's revolutionary events coming as a shock to the USSR and ending in disappointment, Soviet interest in the New Left increased rather than decreased in the immediately following years. In fact, for a three-year period between 1969 and 1972, the USSR's leadership, foreign policy, and ideological experts continually assessed the suitability of the New Left and its various offspring as potential allies in the Cold War. This chapter examines the different aspects of this experiment with the New Left, whereby officials were commissioned to study and in some cases tried to form tactical transnational dissident-promoting coalitions with the New Left. Out of this experiment, which occurred in three parts – propaganda, foreign policy, and academic study, each of which is taken in turn in this chapter – emerged the first identifiable case of dissidentism between the New Left and USSR in the form of the Soviet press campaign to support Angela Davis during her highly politicised trial of 1970-72. This chapter presents new evidence on and a fresh interpretation of Soviet engagement with Davis' trial through its use of dissidentism, while showing that it was comparatively harder for dissidentism to take place between the USSR and the wider New Left.

At the same time, the chapter also outlines the different tensions within the Soviet government which affected dissidentism and relations with the New Left. The analysis explores the conflict between reformers, especially from the International Department responsible for managing the CPSU's relations with the global communist movement but also a centre of reformist thought, and conservatives in the Politburo and KGB over the appropriateness of engaging with the often anti-Soviet New Left, and how this conflict led to the experiment's failure and the end of major dissidentism with the New Left.

¹ M. Gapochka, 'Obsuzhdeniye na Prezidiume AN SSSR zadach i perspektiv raboty zhurnala Voprosy filosofii [Discussion in the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences of Tasks and Prospects for the Work of the Journal Voprosy filosofii]', *Voprosy filosofii*, 1969, no. 5: 147-8.

The Soviet establishment evaluates the New Left

Some explanation is needed first for why these experiments with the New Left were sanctioned, particularly given that they seem to contradict the generally accepted narrative that after 1968, in step with the Western powers, the USSR sought détente and relaxed ideological attacks on the West while the state focused on asserting its domestic authority. According to this argument, most notably put forward by Jeremi Suri, the experience of 1968, which had seen the domestic authority of both Western and Soviet bloc governments severely undermined, led governing elites on both sides of the Cold War to seek to relax international tensions so as to be able to focus on reinforcing their positions at home.² While this argument continues to provide a powerful explanation for the phenomenon of détente in the 1970s, scholars, including Rentola, are finding increasing evidence that there may be limits to its applicability, at least in the Soviet case, where, out of mistrust of Western intentions, governing elites were initially reluctant to embrace détente compared to their Anglo-American counterparts who quickly invested in it after 1968.³

Seeing the potential benefits in terms of increased trade and international stability, Washington and London sought a more cooperative relationship with the Soviet Union. For this to arise, however, Western governments would have to relax their attacks on communism as a threat to global peace and ‘avoid condemnations of the Soviet government’s abuse of its citizens’ human rights’, doing so with the expectation for ‘the Soviet Union to show similar restraint in avoiding bombastic criticism of the American political and social system’ and those of other Western states.⁴ However, as Rentola has explained, at least through 1969 to mid-1970, détente failed to fully convince Soviet leaders to begin with as they feared ‘that they would end up being duped’ by the West.⁵ So, the leadership remained open to more hostile means of exerting influence internationally including through disruptive transnational coalitions with the New Left in the West which to many Soviet observers in 1969, and even in 1971, seemed to still have real revolutionary potential.⁶ At the same time, partnering with the New Left was at not at the time seen as incompatible with détente which they

² Suri, *Power and Protest*, 2.

³ Rentola, ‘The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party’, 142; Suri, 2.

⁴ Robert D. Schulzinger, ‘Détente in the Nixon–Ford years, 1969–1976’, in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume II: Crises and Détente*, 376.

⁵ Rentola, ‘The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party’, 142.

⁶ Rentola, 141; S. S. Salychev, “Novyye levyye”, 93.

thought ‘would strengthen the effects of 1968’ while experimenting with the New Left was also a way to test the limits of détente while the leadership remained uncertain of it.⁷

Yet, there is a further factor which may explain the sanctioning of the experiment with the New Left, which is the relative open-mindedness of the then-General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev to reformist proposals at the time. Though typically associated with stagnation, in the early years of his premiership the Soviet leader was willing to consider a range of ideas. Leading Soviet ideologist, Georgi Arbatov of the International Department, has said that, partly as a result of his fear of being manipulated, Brezhnev made himself open to other opinions beyond those of the dominant conservative lobby who championed neo-Stalinism, prioritised stability, and enjoyed close personal relations with the General Secretary.⁸ That said, it must be noted how heavily influenced Brezhnev and conservatives had been by the unsettling experience of the Prague Spring, which the hardliners used to their advantage to push the Soviet leader to more conservative positions.⁹

Nevertheless, according to Arbatov, at least until 1974, the conservatives had to compete with reformers for the ear of the General Secretary.¹⁰ Though, of course, pressure from conservatives to conform to more traditional Marxism and increasing censorship would remain a constant brake on any outreach to the New Left, those interested in supporting the New Left and other Western forms of Marxism were the beneficiaries of Brezhnev’s initial open-mindedness. The General Secretary in fact made several speeches indicating approval for conducting some form of experiment with the New Left despite its threat as a potential rival to Soviet communism, which signalled the intention of the state to formally assess whether to take the New Left seriously as a potential partner in the Cold War.

On the earliest occasion, in July 1968, during a speech honouring the leader of the Hungarian Communist Party Janos Kadar, Brezhnev paid homage to the revolutions of that year noting ‘the recent events [which] attest[ed] that the capitalist system ha[d] entered a new period of serious upheavals’.¹¹ The General Secretary described the ‘social conflicts, economic contradictions and

⁷ Rentola, ‘The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party’, 142.

⁸ Arbatov, *The System*, 129; Rentola, ‘The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party’, 148.

⁹ Arbatov, *The System*, 136-7 and 139-140.

¹⁰ Arbatov, 136-7.

¹¹ Leonid I. Brezhnev, ‘Speech by Comrade L. I. Brezhnev [at rally in Kremlin Palace of Congresses on July 3 honouring Janos Kadar, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party, and delegation]’, *Pravda*, 4th July, 1968, 1-2 in *CDSP* 20, no. 27 (July, 1968): 5-8, 5.

political battles shaking the capitalist world [as] a manifestation of the general crisis of capitalist society', before going on to list numerous revolutionary developments in the US, West Germany, France, and Great Britain.¹² Brezhnev did so with an emphasis on celebrating the achievements of the working classes throughout 1968, rather than focusing on student revolt, while his focus in the US case was on the civil rights movement; he also took the time to express Soviet solidarity with national liberation movements in the Third World, another key pillar of Soviet foreign policy.¹³

These events were interpreted as further evidence of the wheel of history turning in communism's favour. Ultimately, Brezhnev's perception of anti-racist and labour-led acts as the most significant outcomes of 1968's protests reflected a degree of conservatism, as this narrative was in line with the type of dissent in the West that the USSR had supported throughout its entire history. Nevertheless, the Soviet leader did not single out the New Left for criticism and ended the section of the speech focused on 1968 in the West by declaring the CPSU's 'fraternal solidarity with ... all the working people in the capitalist countries', while wishing his 'brothers and friends fresh success and victories in their just struggle'.¹⁴ Again, the clause reflected a preference for activism led by the labour movement but Brezhnev's expression of good wishes for future success also implied an expectation that revolutionary currents unleashed in the 1968 protests would continue to gather momentum rather than lose it, meaning scope existed for further interactions with the New Left.

At a similar time, Soviet authors and academics had been getting to grips with the New Left after their slow start to analysing the new movement which had appeared in the West during the 1960s and caught them by surprise during the summer of 1968.¹⁵ Though many articles were highly critical of the New Left, in several cases, Soviet writers recognised the contribution of students to 1968's revolutions and gradually became more sympathetic, though again with a caveat in that the students needed to learn to cooperate more closely with the workers in order to achieve further success. N. Molchanov, writing in *Literaturnaya gazeta* in November 1968, after that year's major upheavals had ended, compared the contemporary Western 'students' movement' with that of Russian students in the nineteenth century.¹⁶ In the half century before the revolutions of 1917, Russia had seen various

¹² Brezhnev, 'Speech by Comrade L. I. Brezhnev', 6.

¹³ Brezhnev, 6.

¹⁴ Brezhnev, 6.

¹⁵ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 18.

¹⁶ Molchanov, 'Students Rebel in the West', 13.

forms of student activism based on different types of radical politics, ranging from anarchism to socialism. Molchanov remarked that during this time, Russian students had pinned their hopes on false idols of modernity, such as models of revolution that used dictatorial methods and discounted the potential of the masses, until they *correctly* arrived the type of communism approved by Marx and Engels. Molchanov reflected: ‘How many blunders, mistakes, twists and turns marked the painful process that ended in Russia’s students arriving at revolutionary Marxism!’¹⁷

Turning to the New Left, Molchanov argued that the Western students were going through a similar, painful process, comparing the 1960s in the West to Russia’s ‘old’ ‘revolutionary days’.¹⁸ Molchanov called the ‘ideological fog in students’ heads somewhat natural’ as it was inevitable that in the process of developing revolutionary consciousness students should occasionally have arrived at inaccurate conclusions, such as ‘utopianism’ and anarchism.¹⁹ Molchanov concluded that the students were beginning to recognise the need to cooperate with the working class and would only be successful revolutionaries if they recognised the workers’ primacy in the revolutionary process.²⁰ A similar argument had been made a month earlier by T. Shmeleva in *Pravda*. Shmeleva praised the growth of anti-imperialist activism among students but cited the need for Lenin’s instructions to the student movement as to their secondary role within the revolutionary process to be heeded.²¹ Only through students’ interaction and cooperation with the workers could any revolt succeed. Furthermore, contact with the working class, who were the primary revolutionary class, was necessary training for students in order for them to develop ‘a healthy revolutionary instinct’.²²

While these two authors’ accounts of the New Left concluded the Western students had a significant ideological distance to close before they became true revolutionaries, it is possible to see in their analyses how, despite these faults, sympathy could emerge among Soviet authors for the New Left. Others, especially reformists in the Soviet hierarchy, would be more sympathetic to the New Left and some, like Yuri Krasin of the International Department, even hoped that orthodox communists

¹⁷ Molchanov, ‘Students Rebel in the West’, 13.

¹⁸ Molchanov, 13.

¹⁹ Molchanov, 13.

²⁰ Molchanov, 13.

²¹ T. Shmeleva, ‘The Idea of the Unity of Democratic Forces.-On the 65th Anniversary of V. I. Lenin's work “The Tasks of Revolutionary Youth” and the 60th Anniversary of His Article “The Student Movement and the Contemporary Political Situation”’, *Pravda*, 3rd October, 1968, 3 in *CDSF* 20, no. 40 (October, 1968), 18-19.

²² Shmeleva, ‘The Idea of the Unity of Democratic Forces’, 3.

might learn something from the New Left.²³ The window of opportunity for this to happen was opened by the Soviet Academy of Sciences in February 1969, when, following a session of the Academy's Presidium, it approved the journal *Voprosy filosofii*'s request to engage in a wide-ranging study of the New Left.²⁴

The journal's board of editors had proposed engaging in a wider ideological competition with Western alternatives to Soviet communism. Several members of the Academy agreed that a key task would have to be engaging with the New Left. The respected physicist Pytor Kapitsa argued that Soviet ideologists were out of the loop with the New Left and that Soviet academics would need to engage with the New Left's ideas about the organisation of socialist society on equal terms in order to influence their trajectory, assessing and debating the movement's ideological foundations, saying:

We must not be afraid to admit that now our ideologists are isolated from this revolutionary process, and their influence is practically absent... How can we most effectively include ourselves in these revolutionary processes taking place in capitalist society? Now, in order to keep up with the development of modern thought and take into account the consequences of the scientific and technical revolution taking place in the world, we must raise the level of our social sciences... we need to become more actively involved in the ideological struggle taking place [in the West]. In this struggle, our philosophers will have to act on equal principles, just like our athletes... Therefore, I propose to the Presidium...to devote more time to the consideration of philosophical issues concerning the ideological foundation of socialist society.²⁵

Though this argument was made with the goal of seeking to influence the development of the New Left to a more pro-Soviet position, Kapitsa's remarks were striking for their admission that the USSR had fallen behind developments in socialist thought and implied recognition of the significance of the New Left as an ideological force in the world at that time. Furthermore, though, the real importance of Kapitsa's proposal, which persuaded the Academy to adopt *Voprosy filosofii*'s call for a wider ideological debate, was that it helped open the way to a 'more intense and less narrow discussion of the New Left' and thus created the possibility of dissidentism between the movement's activists and the USSR.²⁶ Soviet academic debate on the New Left would peak during 1970-71.²⁷ Before then, however, the Soviet Union had already been making moves on the foreign policy front to assess the suitability of the New Leftists as dissident coalition partners in the Cold War.²⁸

²³ As relayed to Rentola in an interview, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 147.

²⁴ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 31-2.

²⁵ Gapochka, 'Obsuzhdeniye na Prezidiume AN SSSR zadach i perspektiv raboty zhurnala Voprosy filosofii', 147-148.

²⁶ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 154-5.

²⁷ Menhert, 115.

²⁸ Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 147.

The New Left and Soviet foreign policy

Finland was the site of the first major act of Soviet outreach to the New Left. Finland, for a Western country, had a uniquely close relationship with the USSR throughout most of the Cold War. Having previously been invaded by the Red Army during WWII, the small Nordic nation had to strike a careful balance between European integration and respecting the desire of its powerful eastern neighbour that Helsinki should never definitively stray beyond Moscow's reach. Finland thus adopted a neutral position while forming close political, economic, and cultural links with the USSR.²⁹ This relationship afforded the Soviet Union significant political influence in Finland and made the country a good choice to experiment with fomenting New Left revolts abroad. Soviet ideological experts anticipated that the wave of activism unleashed during 1968 could be channelled in a way that brought about pro-Soviet governments in Western countries. But rather than Moscow having to involve itself directly in the takeover, Soviet ideologists, including the reform-minded Anatoly Chernyaev, a senior figure in the International Department, envisioned that exploitable political crises would envelop Western democracies.³⁰ From the competing parties in these crises, the Soviet leadership would only need to support and cajole the right one to ensure a pro-Soviet successor government.³¹

This approach had approval from the very top of the Soviet hierarchy, with Brezhnev, as already mentioned, arguing in his speech on the occasion of Lenin's 100th birth anniversary in 1970 that the wave of activism witnessed since 1968 needed to be correctly channelled to achieve a pro-Soviet revolutionary outcome.³² Soviet leaders were concerned with defending Moscow's claim to still represent the true legacy of the October Revolution and needed to re-assert Soviet socialism's claims to represent modernity and radicalism. Moscow thus pressured senior Finnish communists to welcome youth activism as a way to gain momentum for a general left-ward shift. Again, this was more about electoral politics, but it was notable that Soviet leaders were willing to overlook their

²⁹ The term 'Finlandization' was coined to describe this phenomenon and used to refer to similar situations in international relations. For further detail see Efraim Karsh, 'Finland: Adaptation and Conflict', *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs), 62, no. 2 (1986): 265-78.

³⁰ Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 141.

³¹ Rentola, 141.

³² Brezhnev, *Lenin's Cause Lives On and Triumphs*, 54-5; Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 142.

deep ideological differences with the New Left, though they also still assumed that in time students would correct their views in line with Soviet communism.³³

To aid this effort Moscow appointed a new ambassador to Finland, Aleksei S. Belyakov of the International Department who was more sympathetic to Khrushchevite rather than Brezhnevite socialism, and attempted to influence the local communist party.³⁴ Belyakov most of all tried to encourage a more radical stance within the local communist leadership.³⁵ Meanwhile, it was also hoped that Finnish social democrats could be radicalised as political agitation grew among students and workers.³⁶ This was a significant ideological innovation for Soviet thinking. Mainstream Soviet thought about revolution placed the working class and an organised communist party at the vanguard of any revolution and subordinated the role of the intelligentsia and students.³⁷ Yet in 1969-70, members of the CPSU's International Department were proposing that this model was not the only route to revolution, with senior ideologists accepting that broader alliances with different left-wing elements, not just those led by the communist party, could achieve revolutionary results.³⁸ As Rentola has said, 'this was fresh thinking indeed, even if the novelties were packed in old molds'.³⁹

There were even more significant consequences arising from this rethinking of how a socialist society could be achieved if Soviet ideologists applied a similar analysis to Soviet society, as is explored later in this chapter. Though this line of thinking was being considered in terms of foreign policy and creating a socialist society in another country, applying the same logic to the Soviet system raised serious questions about the organisation of Soviet society, particularly about the supremacy of the party bureaucracy and the subordination of the intelligentsia. However, this idea as applied in Finland brought no concrete results and the Soviet experiment to bring about a revolution there quickly failed. Youth and labour strike action, though it grew, never precipitated the kind of crisis envisioned by Soviet ideologues. Further, rather than a new radical left-wing politics emerging, the more moderate 'Nordic reformism' gained influence.⁴⁰

³³ Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 145.

³⁴ Rentola, 145.

³⁵ Rentola, 145-6

³⁶ Rentola, 146.

³⁷ Yuri Frantsev, 'Marx and the Present Day', *Pravda*, 5th May, 1968, 2 in *CDSP* 20, no. 18 (May, 1968): 8.

³⁸ Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 141.

³⁹ Rentola, 141.

⁴⁰ Rentola, 148.

The cause of the Soviet failure was not only a misreading of the political situation, but a lack of consensus in Moscow. Brezhnev, though he may publicly have approved efforts to channel the political currents of 1968 and been somewhat aware of the strategy in Finland, was only indirectly involved.⁴¹ The mission in Finland was led by the International Department which was a more open-minded but also less powerful branch of government. As a result, the more conservative KGB, which preferred to keep the status quo, was able to inhibit Belyakov's activities. By the middle of 1970, any hope of influencing Finnish politics using the New Left collapsed, as did any of Belyakov's private hopes of possibly influencing Soviet communism through contact with Western radicals.⁴²

Despite the failure of the Finnish experiment, however, Moscow did not lose interest in the New Left. In fact, Soviet enthusiasm for certain elements of the New Left increased in the following years. Signs of a continued interest in transnational coalitions with the New Left were visible in Brezhnev's address to the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1971, when the Soviet leader noted with optimism recent events in France and Italy since the previous 23rd Congress in 1966, as well as the activism of young people in the United States against the Vietnam war and the struggle for racial justice.⁴³ By this time, the Black Power movement had become increasingly influential in the struggle for African-Americans' rights and its most influential organised manifestation, the BPP, came to the notice of the KGB who sought to exploit the group.

Historians increasingly recognise that the BPP had far more complex goals than the image of the party as a group of 'antiwhite terrorists' promoted by journalists in collaboration with the FBI.⁴⁴ Notably, Roman has highlighted the BPP's emphasis on the promotion of human rights.⁴⁵ From the KGB's perspective, however, the value of the BPP lay in Soviet intelligence's view that, as KGB chairman Yuri Andropov attempted to persuade the Soviet leadership of in 1970, the party posed 'a serious threat to America's ruling classes' and could be utilised to influence 'public opinion in the

⁴¹ Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 148.

⁴² Rentola, 147.

⁴³ Leonid Brezhnev, 'The International Position of the USSR. The CPSU's Foreign Policy Activity' in CPSU, *Documents: 24th Congress of the CPSU* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1971), 23.

⁴⁴ Peniel E. Joseph identifies the field of study 'Black Power Studies' which encompasses recent new research into the topic. See Peniel E. Joseph, 'Historians and the Black Power Movement', *OAH Magazine of History* 22, no. 3, *Black Power* (July, 2008): 8-15 and Peniel E. Joseph, 'The Black Power Movement: A State of the Field', *The Journal of American History* 96, no. 3 (December, 2009): 751-76; Roman, "'Armed and Dangerous'", 90.

⁴⁵ Meredith Roman, 'The Black Panther Party and the Struggle for Human Rights', *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men* 5, no. 1, *The Black Panther Party* (Fall 2016): 7-32.

US'.⁴⁶ As with other radical Western groups, however, the KGB's emphasis was on seeking to control the BPP through the local Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) rather than truly supporting it. Andropov appears to have been optimistic about the prospects of achieving this and reported that the BPP was cooperating more and more with the CPUSA.⁴⁷ Yet, though for a time there was a 'mutually beneficial' relationship between the two groups, the KGB's attempt to influence the BPP was ultimately ill-fated as most in the Black Power movement did not welcome Soviet support and the CPUSA and BPP would split ideologically in 1972.⁴⁸ However, the Black Power movement did provide the Soviet authorities with an ideal dissident personality in form of Angela Davis and with her the opportunity to replicate Western-style dissidentism.

Soviet-New Left dissidentism and Angela Davis

Davis had been a professor of philosophy at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) until her dismissal in 1969 by the State of California, on the orders of then-Governor Ronald Reagan, for remaining a member of the communist party.⁴⁹ Davis attempted to legally challenge her politically motivated sacking but the state's persecution of her escalated in 1970 when it charged her with murder and kidnapping in connection with a fatal failed prison break that took place that year.⁵⁰ Captured by the FBI, Davis faced sixteen months imprisonment while facing trial and the proceedings immediately became a focal point of Cold War ideological competition.⁵¹

Davis' allies, family, and legal team argued that the charges she faced were politically and racially motivated and that her destruction would be used to ward off future criticism of the US political system.⁵² American leaders, on the other hand, insisted that Davis could not be a political prisoner as they only existed in states like the Soviet Union, and defended the United States as democratic

⁴⁶ Yuri Andropov to the Central Committee of the CPSU (Russian), 28th April, 1970, Moscow, Archives of the Central Committee of the CPSU reproduced by *The Bukovsky Archives*, Document 1128-A.

⁴⁷ Yuri Andropov to the Central Committee of the CPSU, 28th April, 1970.

⁴⁸ Weiss-Wendt, 'Moscow Taps the New Left', 110 and 113; Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 518; Weiss-Wendt, 'Moscow Taps the New Left', 110 and 113. For an earlier contemporary discussion of Soviet debate over the Black Power movement see Richard M. Mills, *As Moscow Sees Us: American Politics and Society in the Soviet Mindset* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 111-2.

⁴⁹ Yana Skorobogatov, 'Our Friend Angela: Soviet Schoolchildren, a Letter-Writing Campaign, and the Legend of Angela Davis', *The Drift*, 2020, no. 2, <https://www.thedriftmag.com/our-friend-angela/>; Roman, "'Armed and Dangerous'", 88.

⁵⁰ The man who had attempted to escape was Jonathan Jackson whose brother, George, Davis was campaigning on behalf of in order to prevent his execution by the State of California. George was wrongly accused of having been involved in the murder of a White prison guard. For a full description of the circumstances surrounding Davis' arrest, see Roman, "'Armed and Dangerous'", 87-9.

⁵¹ Roman, "Soviet "renegades"', 518.

⁵² Roman, "'Armed and Dangerous'", 89.

and racially tolerant bolstered by their belief that the civil rights legislation of the 1960s had solved America's racial inequalities.⁵³ US-based defence committees and protests in support of Davis subsequently sprang up nationally and internationally and Davis became a cause-célèbre for radicals worldwide.⁵⁴ For the Soviet Union, meanwhile, the trial of Angela Davis provided the leadership with an ideal vehicle of youthful and radical protest to which they could attach the Soviet Union's name, as the Kremlin sought to defend the USSR's status as the global leader of socialist revolution and radicalism.

The Soviet leadership's choice to support Davis represented a significant departure from the rules of détente and is an important example of Soviet engagement with the New Left to examine. It also directly contrasted with the Anglo-American position at the time. Though disruptive activities directed towards supporting Soviet dissidents were in some cases permitted, such as the CIA's assistance with the distribution and broadcast of Soviet dissidents' texts, political leaders refrained from publicly offering vocal support to Soviet dissidents.⁵⁵ The White House's lack of enthusiasm for dissidents in this period was captured in a conversation between Henry Kissinger and Nixon in the build-up to the May 1972 summit with the USSR, when the former warned the latter against commenting on the dissident issue, saying 'I don't think it is proper for you to start lecturing them about freedom of speech', with which Nixon wholeheartedly agreed no doubt recognising how the US's continued involvement in Vietnam deprived it of a true moral high ground.⁵⁶

⁵³ Roman, "Armed and Dangerous", 89; Roman, "Soviet "renegades"", 506.

⁵⁴ Roman, "Armed and Dangerous", 89.

⁵⁵ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XII, Soviet Union, January 1969–October 1970*, eds. Erin R. Mahan and Edward C. Keefer (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2006) Documents 103, 106, 114, 147, 149; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XV, Soviet Union, June 1972–August 1974*, eds. Douglas E. Selva, Melissa Jane Taylor and Edward C. Keefer (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2011), Document 118; Nixon Approves Continuation of Radio Liberty, December 29, 1969, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Obtained and contributed to CWIHP by A. Ross Johnson. Cited Ch8 n25 in his book *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, CIA mandatory declassification review, Wilson Centre, Record ID C01441044. Published as document 23, FRUS, 1969-76, XXIX; CIA Ends All Involvement with Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, 19th September, 1972, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Obtained and contributed to CWIHP by A. Ross Johnson. Cited Ch8 n56 in his book *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, CIA mandatory declassification review, Wilson Centre, Record ID C01441052.

⁵⁶ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, XIV, Soviet Union, October 1971–May 1972*, eds. David C. Geyer, Nina D. Howland and Kent Sieg (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 238; Robert D. Schulzinger, 'Détente in the Nixon–Ford years, 1969–1976', 380.

Later, in 1974, Kissinger would more explicitly state the case for avoiding public rebukes of Soviet policies towards dissidents.⁵⁷ He argued that when not under public pressure, the Soviet government was able to successfully reform itself citing the relaxation of restrictions on Jewish emigration which had taken place; in the 1980s the Soviet state's hindrance of Jewish emigration from the USSR would become an important issue of concern for conservative and Christian human rights activists. Kissinger also criticised the passage of recent legislation sponsored by Senator Henry Jackson, the Jackson-Vanik amendment, that made the award of Most Favoured Nation status to the USSR dependent on Soviet respect for human rights, saying the act imposed terms on the Soviet Union which the US would never accept for itself nor expect to be accepted by a close ally like Israel.⁵⁸

The Secretary of State went on to argue that making demands about the treatment of dissidents to Soviet ministers was inappropriate and counterproductive to détente, saying that he 'would not put up with it if Dobrynin [Soviet Ambassador to the US, 1962-86] came in here and made demands about Angela Davis. No Secretary of State would'.⁵⁹ Kissinger was totally committed to détente and Soviet dissidents would not be able to compete for his attention, nor that of either of the presidents he served, over good relations with Moscow. The latter, meanwhile, regardless of whether or not its officials raised Davis' case in closed-door meetings, would pay a great deal of attention to the issue of dissent in the US and initiated a vocal campaign to support Davis during her 1970-72 trial.

This campaign came to represent the first example of Soviet-West dissidentism, however, it is important to recognise Davis' own approach to the campaign sponsored by Moscow on her behalf and highlight her agency within it. Though Davis and her family welcomed the support provided by the Soviet Union, Davis did not behave as a spokesperson for Soviet propaganda as her conservative detractors claimed. Though she praised certain aspects of the Soviet system, namely its nationality policies, Davis did not offer the full-throated endorsement of the Soviet Union her US critics

⁵⁷ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVI, Soviet Union, August 1974–December 1976*, eds. David C. Geyer and Edward C. Keefer (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2012), Document 102.

⁵⁸ Most Favoured Nation status entails favourable terms of trade with the United States for a foreign country.

⁵⁹ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVI*, Document 102.

suggested she did.⁶⁰ Davis would in fact later go on to support Mikhail Gorbachev's reform policies, illustrating that she considered parts of the Soviet system as it was in the 1970s to be flawed.⁶¹

Furthermore, Davis' and her family's decision to accept Soviet support was a strategic one, whereby, as Roman says, they 'skillfully [*sic*] exploited the Cold War stage to save Davis' life and to garner global attention to the plight of other political prisoners in the United States, whose existence leaders in Washington—supported by the mainstream press—denied'.⁶² Furthermore, though they aided Davis, Soviet leaders had equally pragmatic goals and were concerned with restoring the USSR's image as a progressive and radical state following the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia and persecution of its own dissidents which had undermined the USSR's moral standing.⁶³ The subsequent Soviet 'Free Angela' campaign took on a number of different forms.

At one point Davis' sister, Fania, paid a visit to the USSR in 1971 to garner support for the Davis family's cause.⁶⁴ The government also initiated a letter-writing campaign, whereby school children were encouraged to write letters of support to Davis.⁶⁵ The Soviet press, meanwhile, depicted Davis as a political prisoner and reported on police brutality against the Black Power movement's activists. Soviet newspapers chose to give Davis the title of 'patriot' for her refusal to leave the communist party while a professor at UCLA and emphasised her 'dedication to advancing the interests of the American people'.⁶⁶ This mirrored the language being used in the Western press to frame the Soviet dissidents' struggle, whereby the likes of Solzhenitsyn were upheld as champions of those Soviet citizens seeking reform and patriots merely seeking a better way of life for themselves and compatriots.⁶⁷ In a similar tone, Pyotr Kapitsa, the member of the Academy of Sciences who had called on the Soviet intellectual establishment to pay greater attention to the New Left, co-authored

⁶⁰ Roman, "Armed and Dangerous", 103.

⁶¹ Martin Walker, 'US comrades dump 60s icon', *Guardian*, 30th December, 1991, 1.

⁶² Roman, "Armed and Dangerous", 91-2.

⁶³ Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 518.

⁶⁴ Roman, "Armed and Dangerous", 91.

⁶⁵ Skorobogatov, 'Our Friend Angela'.

⁶⁶ Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 514.

⁶⁷ 'Solzhenitsyn Speaks', *New York Times*, 4th April, 1972, 42; 'The courage to criticise', *Guardian*, 10th March, 1972, 12; Hurst, "To Build a Castle", 32.

a letter by a number of respected Soviet intellectuals to Nixon, calling on the President to ‘safeguard’ Davis’ life and allow her to continue her work as an academic freely.⁶⁸

Simultaneously, the Soviet interest in Davis also aimed to counter the growing international profile of the Soviet dissident movement which was gaining more and more attention and harming the USSR’s international reputation. Building upon the long-used narrative of the US as a site of racial persecution and the USSR as one of racial equality, the Soviet press emphasised the denial of ‘social and economic rights’, which in the Soviet view were more important, in America to depict the US as a more unjust society.⁶⁹ Soviet coverage also exploited Davis’ ‘status as a young African-American female communist’ in an effort to ‘[reinforce] Soviet reports that US state repression was broad sweeping’.⁷⁰ Roman argues that this contrasted with Western coverage of Soviet dissidents, in which ‘the face of Soviet political repression ... was overwhelmingly male’.⁷¹

The question of gender might be expected to reveal differences when comparing Anglo-American and Soviet discourse on dissent, given that the former’s coverage focused on male dissidents.⁷² However, beyond the case of Davis, there is little evidence to suggest that Soviet coverage significantly differed from unequal British and American representations of women’s involvement in dissent. Nor did Soviet writers seriously engage with New Left feminism or sexual emancipation. On the first point, it is notable that while Davis, a major figure in radical feminism, received enormous press attention, she was not treated as a notable intellectual figure in the same way as Marcuse despite her status as an academic and writer.⁷³ On the second point, meanwhile, the sexual revolution of the 1960s was largely viewed unfavourably by Soviet writers, with a few exceptions, who preferred traditional sexual values.⁷⁴ Generally, the Soviet leadership took the view that the establishment of a socialist state had solved the question of how to achieve women’s equality and were reluctant to embrace more radical forms of feminism, even though Soviet women were still

⁶⁸ CIA, ‘Soviet manipulation of the Angela Davis case’, in *CA Propaganda Perspectives*, 1st March, 1971, General CIA Records, Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room (FOIA ERR), Document no. CIA-RDP79-01194A000300130001-9, 1. At the same time, however, Kapitsa had also criticised the USSR’s repression of ‘liberal’ thinkers and scientists at home, exhibiting how Davis’ case could resonate with critics of the CPSU within the Soviet Union itself.

⁶⁹ Metger, ‘Writing the Papers’, 105; Roman, ‘Soviet “renegades”’, 505.

⁷⁰ Roman, 507.

⁷¹ Roman, 507. Also see Szuelcki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 155-8.

⁷² Szuelcki, 155-8.

⁷³ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 55.

⁷⁴ Menhert, 85.

expected to fulfil gendered roles as child bearers, mothers, and house-keepers, with legislation introduced to encourage birth rates in the Brezhnev era – this was known as the ‘double burden’.⁷⁵ It was more the case that Davis’ sex was simply exploited to depict her oppressors as ruthless and that the US state was willing to persecute anyone who dissented against capitalism. Nevertheless, though Soviet media outlets were certainly making cynical propaganda use of Davis’ case, her case had genuine resonance with the Soviet public.

‘Angelamania’ gripped Soviet readers and news of Davis’ struggle penetrated all corners of the Soviet Union, as well as resonating with citizens of other Warsaw Pact states.⁷⁶ Travelling through the USSR in 1972, *New York Times* journalist Hedrick Smith reported that as far away as Siberia people were moved by Davis’ plight and expressed solidarity with her with some even naming children after Davis.⁷⁷ Occasionally, however, though ‘Soviet officials called on citizens to protest (for nearly a two-year period) the potential execution of an African-American comrade’, public engagement with Davis’ case could produce political expressions which were undesirable to them, whereby Soviet citizens were led to criticise their own government’s persecution of political opponents.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the Soviet media remained committed to supporting Davis. Analysing statistics compiled by the CIA on the content of Soviet radio broadcasts and print media provides a further sense of the size of the campaign supported by Moscow.

The Agency compiled regular reports on what official Soviet and Chinese media referenced and advised concerned operatives as to how to understand and respond to Soviet attention towards

⁷⁵ Barbara Alpern Engel, ‘Women and the state’, in *The Cambridge History of Russia. Volume III*, 481.

⁷⁶ Roman, “‘Armed and Dangerous’”, 100.

⁷⁷ Skorobogatov, ‘Our Friend Angela’. For the original report see Hedrick Smith, ‘In Siberia, From Bratsk to Novosibirsk, U.S. Rock Groups Are Big, Nixon Isn’t’, *New York Times*, 30th March, 1972, 5.

⁷⁸ Roman, ‘Soviet “renegades”’, 514; Roman, “‘Armed and Dangerous’”, 100. In a later development that no doubt also concerned the Soviet authorities Jiří Pelikán, a prominent Czechoslovakian communist who had been persecuted following the Soviet invasion of 1968, wrote a highly publicised open letter to Davis following her release. Pelikán expressed his desire for solidarity between political prisoners either side of the Iron Curtain and called on Davis to condemn human rights abuses in the Soviet Bloc – the crushing of Prague Spring had divided leftists in the US, with the usually dogmatic leader of the CPUSA, of which Davis was a member, Gus Hall expressing support for both the Kremlin’s ‘right to intervene’ and the Czechoslovak reformers. An earlier letter had reached Davis from a group of Czechoslovak dissidents on behalf of their comrades facing trial, who called on her to ‘use her authority with the present rulers of Czechoslovakia’ and attend the proceedings, after the UK, French, and Italian communist parties had criticised the trials – Davis did not offer her support and suggested legal proceedings against dissenters were in some cases justified though the incident still caused ‘embarrassment’ for the hardliners in Prague and Moscow. See Jiří Pelikán, ‘A letter’, *New York Review of Books*, 31st August, 1972; Flora Lewis, ‘Prague Trials Provoking Rising Criticism in France’, *New York Times*, 30th July, 1972, 2; ‘Gus Hall’, *The Economist*, 28th October, 2000, Obituary section; Jonathan Steele, ‘13 Face Subversion Charges in Prague Political Trials’, *Guardian*, 18th July, 1972; Steele, ‘Husak brings hope to heel: Jonathan Steele on yesterday’s Prague verdicts’, *Guardian*, 22nd July, 1972, 11; Steele, ‘Angela would go back’, *Guardian*, 23rd September, 1972, 3.

sensitive issues. The data shows Angela Davis' trial to have frequently taken up significant amounts of airtime on Soviet stations and space in Soviet papers. During the period 7th-20th December, over which time Davis battled against her extradition to California, coverage of her case increased from 0.2% of all media on the 7th, to comprise 2% on the 13th, then again rising to 4% by the 20th.⁷⁹ Davis' persecution continued to be a major theme in Soviet media into the new year, with a low of 1% and high of 5% of all news items devoted to her case in the week of the 4th to the 10th of January 1971 (see figure 1).⁸⁰ On this occasion Davis' case received greater coverage than the visit of the Polish General Secretary to the USSR.⁸¹

This period saw some important developments in the trial, with an influx of Soviet appeals for Davis' clemency being submitted to the White House and the invitation of twelve Soviet observers to courtroom proceedings.⁸² Though Nixon considered Davis a 'terrorist', he was prepared to make use of her trial to pressure Moscow into allowing Western observers to Soviet trials of dissidents.⁸³ Kissinger had met with a group of Jewish leaders, who received the idea positively, during which Kissinger inadvertently described Davis' situation as similar to that of Soviet dissidents when making the argument the invitation of Soviet observers would 'pressure [the] Soviets to permit Americans to observe any subsequent Soviet trials of this nature', and for the second time directly compared Davis to Soviet dissidents.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ After initially succeeded in obtaining a delay to her extradition, to allow her defence to prepare, a further appeal was rejected on 21st December. See Barbara Campbell, 'Miss Davis Loses Extradition Plea: Supreme Court Refuses to Hear Her Appeal', *New York Times*, 22nd December, 1970, 17; Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), *Trends in Communist Propaganda* 21, no. 50 (16th December, 1970), General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. 1 CIA-RDP85T00875R000300030055-2, i; FBIS, *Trends in Communist Propaganda* 21, no. 51 (23rd December, 1970), General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. CIA-RDP85T00875R000300030056-1, i.

⁸⁰ FBIS, *Trends in Communist Propaganda* 22, no. 2 (13th January, 1971), General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. CIA-RDP85T00875R000300040002-9, i.

⁸¹ FBIS, *Trends in Communist Propaganda* 22, no. 2 (13th January, 1971): i. Edward Gierek's visit featured in only 2% of news items.

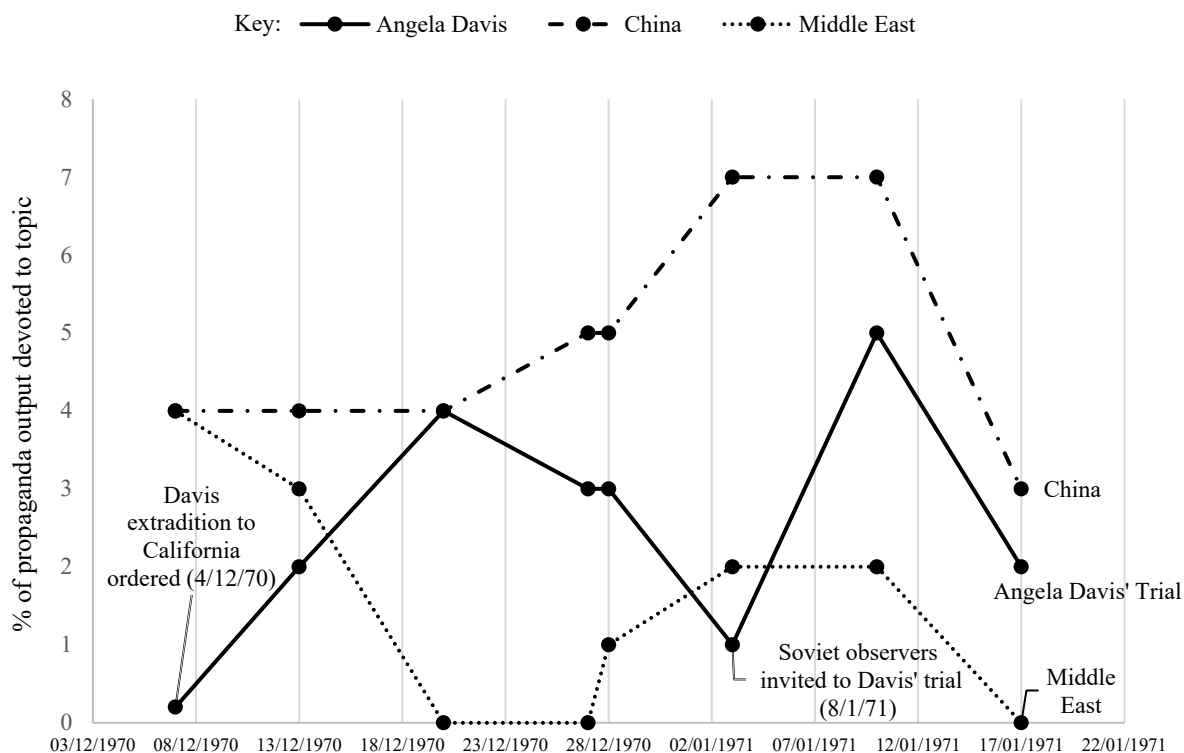
⁸² Frank J. Prial, 'More Russians Send Plea To Nixon on Angela Davis', *New York Times*, 7th January, 1971, 3; 'Invitation to a Trial', *New York Times*, 8th January, 1971, 30.

⁸³ Roman, "'Armed and Dangerous'", 89.

⁸⁴ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970-October 1971*, eds. David C. Geyer and Edward C. Keefer (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2011), Document 82.

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Figure 1. Proportion of coverage received by Angela Davis' trial in Soviet propaganda plotted against some major themes in foreign policy propaganda (7/12/70-17/1/71)



Notes: A summary of CIA statistical analysis on Soviet propaganda always appeared on the first page of the preface to the weekly *Trends in Communist Propaganda* series produced by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) under the heading 'Topics and Events Given Major Attention'. This covered the full range of key topics discussed in Soviet media from major political and foreign policy issues to public holidays and the Soviet space program.

Source: FBIS, 'Topics and Events Given Major Attention', *Trends in Communist Propaganda* 21, no. 50-2 (1970): i and 22, no. 1-2 (1971): i. CIA FOIA ERR.

Graph: © James P. Brown

During the rest of 1971, mentions of Davis declined in the Soviet media as the proceedings of the trial were repeatedly delayed while Davis' defence team tried to secure fairer conditions for her.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, her name still carried significant traction in Soviet media when notable incidents occurred, such as a bomb threat being made in March, with reports on the trial comprising 2% of all news reports at the end of the weeks of 8th-14th and 15th-22nd March 1971.⁸⁶ Soviet media also covered the death of George Jackson, one of the men arrested following the lethal prison break attempt that Davis was accused of facilitating. Jackson died at the hands of wardens allegedly following a failed escape attempt from jail.⁸⁷ When Davis was acquitted of all charges in June 1972, *The New York Times* reported that TASS (the official Soviet News Agency) celebrated the verdict as a victory for 'progressive America'.⁸⁸ Later that year Davis made a visit of her own to the USSR to thank those who had supported her, which received extensive coverage in Soviet media, with Davis' tour featuring in 3% of all news reports at the end of the week lasting from the 28th August until the 3rd September.⁸⁹

The CIA's estimates show the scale of the Soviet campaign to free Angela Davis in a new light. That her trial was able to outrank the visit of senior communist leaders for media coverage is testament to the political value attached to her case by Soviet editors, and the leadership directing them, and how they sought to answer Western criticisms. Yet what is equally revealing about this monitoring by the CIA, rather than just providing a greater sense of the scale of the Soviet campaign, is the CIA's commentary on Soviet reportage on Davis' trial separate from the statistical analysis. Roman argues that Davis' treatment in the US press, which deliberately used racist, sexist, and anti-communist

⁸⁵ Philip Hager, 'Angela Davis' Move to Disqualify Judge Fails', *Los Angeles Times*, 22nd April, 1971, 27. Hager, 'Angela Davis Case Makes No Advance in Four Months', *Los Angeles Times*, 17th May, 1971, 3; 'Davis Trial Delayed By Plea to Exclude Letters to Jackson', *New York Times*, 2nd November, 1971, 43; FBIS, *Trends in Communist Propaganda* 22, no. 25 (23rd June, 1971), General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. CIA-RDP85T00875R000300040026-6, i.

⁸⁶ Hager, '2 Bomb Threats Delay Angela Davis Hearing', *Los Angeles Times*, 17th March, 1971, 28; FBIS, *Trends in Communist Propaganda* 22, no. 11 (17th March, 1971), General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. CIA-RDP85T00875R000300040012-8, i; FBIS, *Trends in Communist Propaganda* 22, no. 12 (24th March, 1971), General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. CIA-RDP85T00875R000300040013-7, i.

⁸⁷ FBIS, *Trends in Communist Propaganda* 22, no. 35 (1st September, 1971), General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. CIA-RDP85T00875R000300040036-2, i.

⁸⁸ Theodore Shabad, 'Russians Hail Davis Acquittal as a "Victory for the Progressive American"', *New York Times*, 6th June, 1972, 21.

⁸⁹ FBIS, *Trends in Communist Propaganda* 23, no. 36 (7th September, 1972), General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. CIA-RDP85T00875R000300050036-1, i. For Davis' account of her visit, which was part of a tour that saw her travel to a number of other socialist states in the Warsaw Pact as well as Cuba and Chile. see Angela Davis, *An Autobiography* (New York: Random House, 1974), 398.

tropes to discredit her, and the US government's persecution of her exposes the Cold War narrative propagated by Washington of America's 'innocence' in the Cold War to be a 'myth'.⁹⁰ That is to say, the United States, contrary to its leaders' claims to be a superior democratic country where political prisoners, trials, and monitoring did not exist, was sometimes not so different, in its treatment of political opponents, from the constructed Soviet 'other' which American leaders depicted as paranoid and exceptional. The CIA's close monitoring of the Soviet coverage of the Davis trial could be interpreted as further evidence of in support of this argument. More important for this thesis, though, is that the CIA commentary, along with the actions directed against Davis and the Black Power movement by the FBI, provides the necessary evidence to show that the 'infamy', 'Soviet attention', and 'repressive sanction' aspects of dissidentism's requirements were fulfilled respectively in the case of Soviet support for Davis and that therefore Soviet commentary was comparable to Western-Soviet cases of dissidentism.

Regarding 'infamy' and 'Soviet attention', in a 1971 report on the current themes observed by CIA analysts in Soviet propaganda, reportage on Davis' trial was classed under 'subversion and aggression', with Soviet commentary on the case described as 'manipulation'.⁹¹ Further reports indicated the Agency's growing concern over the increasing scale of the international campaign to save Davis. Analysis from March 1971 considered that the campaign was 'developing into a rallying point for a Soviet-manipulated international anti-U.S. campaign reminiscent of the orchestrated Communist propaganda efforts made on behalf of the atomic spies, Ethel and Julius Rosenberg'.⁹² The report concluded by stating that, to the Agency's alarm, '[w]orldwide orchestration of the Angela Davis case [was] well under way'.⁹³ Numerous other CIA reports contained similar analysis regarding Davis and the USSR's support for her.⁹⁴ The office of Vice-President Spiro Agnew (1969-

⁹⁰ Roman, "Armed and Dangerous", 87.

⁹¹ CIA, 'Index to Perspectives, January-August 1971', in *CA Propaganda Perspectives*, 1st September, 1971, General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. CIA-RDP79-01194A000300050001-8, 2.

⁹² CIA, 'Soviet manipulation of the Angela Davis case', 1.

⁹³ CIA, 'Soviet manipulation of the Angela Davis case', 2.

⁹⁴ CIA, 'Scope and Themes of Communist Propaganda: Notes and Nuggets Relating to the Question of RFE and Radio Liberty', 10th March, 1972, General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. CIA-RDP80B01439R000500120014-1, 7; Chief DDI Executive Staff memo 'Bloc Propaganda Attitudes Toward the Administration' to Assistant to the Vice President Kent B. Crane, 30th March, 1971, General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. CIA-RDP80B01495R001400070007-2, 2; CIA, 'Soviet Repression: The Victims', in *CA Propaganda Perspectives Special: Soviet Repression: A Breach of International Treaties*, 21st August, 1971, General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. CIA-RDP79-01194A000200130001-0, 7.

73) received reports that included a briefing on Soviet ‘exploitation’ of the Davis case.⁹⁵ Of course, the CIA was not the only branch of US intelligence interested in the Davis case. The FBI extensively targeted Davis, and the wider Black Power movement, fulfilling the ‘repressive sanction’ criteria.

The Bureau targeted Black Power activists within the framework of its COINTELPRO program. COINTELPRO referred to the FBI’s covert operations primarily designed to hinder the activities of the Ku Klux Klan and the New Left.⁹⁶ As part of this, the Bureau ‘collaborated with journalists and local police departments across the country to neutralize and destroy what the FBI deliberately misrepresented as “‘Black Nationalist Hate Groups’”.⁹⁷ During her trial, racist and sexist stereotypes of African American women were used by journalists reporting on the trial in an effort to discredit Davis’ defence.⁹⁸ It was also the FBI who captured Davis, following a two-month woman-hunt during which time she was placed on the FBI’s Most Wanted list.⁹⁹

Having established that Davis was the victim of political repression in the United States, it is possible to address the question as to whether the relationship between her and the Soviet Union can be called dissidentism. The existence of political repression described above fulfils one of the conditions established by Szulecki to define dissidentism: ‘open, legal, and non-violent action under a repressive sanction (dissidence), Western attention, as well as domestic recognition’ and as well as ‘infamy’.¹⁰⁰ According to this model, though Szulecki argues that Soviet-West dissidentism would have been impossible, if ‘Western attention’ is replaced with ‘Soviet attention’ and applied to the Angela Davis trial, there is in fact a strong case to suggest Soviet dissidentism with Davis.¹⁰¹

It must be said first, however, that the political conditions in the US were, of course, far freer than the USSR and the type of repression suffered by Davis differed from that endured by the Soviet dissidents as she was ultimately found not guilty; the legal system in the US was independent and delivered outcomes that Soviet dissidents could not expect in their courts. Further, though there do remain some comparisons between Davis’ treatment and those of the Soviet dissidents in the security

⁹⁵ Chief DDI Executive Staff memo ‘Bloc Propaganda Attitudes Toward the Administration’ to Assistant to the Vice President Kent B. Crane, 2.

⁹⁶ Cunningham, *There’s Something Happening Here*, 110 and 93.

⁹⁷ Roman, “‘Armed and Dangerous’”, 90.

⁹⁸ Roman, “‘Armed and Dangerous’”, 90.

⁹⁹ Roman, 93.

¹⁰⁰ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 3 and 210.

¹⁰¹ Szulecki, 3.

services' determination to persecute her, most important for this thesis is that the use of dissidentism means comparisons can be drawn between Davis' treatment in the Soviet press and those of Soviet dissidents. Dissidentism is used to describe the process whereby a media profile of a dissident figure is constructed for consumption by domestic and international audiences in a way that advances the cause of the party creating this image. Taking Szulecki's three-part criteria one-by-one, the case for dissidentism between Davis and the Soviet Union becomes clear.

On the question of 'open, legal, and non-violent action under a repressive sanction (dissidence)', Davis meets all criteria.¹⁰² Her cause was an open and legal one, that is attaining social justice for African Americans, while her own defence in her trial was expressly legal. Though accused of participating in violence, the charges were proven false. Regarding 'repressive sanction', Davis was persecuted in her capacity as an academic when sacked from UCLA by the State of California for her membership of the communist party and held on politically motivated charges during her trial. She was also heavily targeted by the FBI.

Most important for the purposes of this thesis, however, is that the existence of 'Soviet attention' is clear, as recognised by the CIA, and this attention came from both the Soviet state and its citizens. The USSR supported a massive campaign in support of Davis. Of course, this was designed with Soviet needs in mind. Support for Davis was intended to undermine the United States' global image and bolster that of the USSR. Yet this was equally the case with Western dissidentism with Soviet dissidents. The purpose of using dissidentism as an analytical tool is not to draw parallels between the state of political freedoms in the West and USSR during the Cold War even if this case study shows that the US sometimes failed to live up to its own ideals. Rather, the aim is to show that they both sought to highlight the existence of dissident figures, real or invented, in the opposing Cold War bloc for ideological purposes.

Finally, domestic recognition and infamy were both features of Davis' case. As already discussed, the US press and authorities deliberately sought to portray Davis as a danger to American society. Dissidentism therefore existed between the USSR and Angela Davis during her struggle for survival throughout her trial and following it, as did a transnational dissident-promoting coalition. Davis'

¹⁰² Szulecki, 3.

receipt of Soviet support was, though, of course tactical whereby she sought to exploit the ideological competition between the US and Soviet Union to manufacture her own release.¹⁰³ She was not in complete alignment with Soviet policy. Davis also discussed her general valorisation in a 1972 interview with the Reverend Cecil Williams and said she wished not to be seen as any kind of hero but rather as just one of the many other ‘thousands and thousands who [we]re in America’s prisons’.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the Soviet media was mobilised to portray Davis as a heroized dissident, whose radical ideas and persecution served as confirmation of Soviet values’ universality and the inferiority of Western capitalism. Furthermore, the fact that Davis’ views diverged from those of the Soviet leadership but nevertheless received significant attention from them, is further evidence of the existence of dissidentism.

The image built by this process of dissidentism did not accurately correspond to the actual character or beliefs of Davis; the process rarely leads to this. Rather, targets for dissidentism are instead depicted as a generalised figure who represents and confirms the accuracy of the views of the depicter, in this case the Soviet Union and its value system. It still stands, though, that the extent to which Davis was supported as a specifically New Left figure remains in severe doubt. She was primarily depicted as an anti-racist and anti-capitalist activist, while Davis herself, though an important New Left leader, was unique for her tolerance of the Soviet Union and role within the more orthodox CPUSA, both of which the majority of the New Left criticised as defunct. The campaign supporting her also corresponded to traditional Soviet propaganda strategies based around anti-racism and labour activism, which made Davis acceptable to the conservatives who dominated the Soviet leadership and whose approval was needed for the sanctioning of such a large campaign.

Therefore, Davis’ case, while revealing in highlighting the potential for Soviet-West dissidentism and helping to positively answer the first of this thesis’ key research questions, cannot provide further insight into whether there was Soviet dissidentism with or propaganda exploitation of the broader New Left. Nor can it significantly help inform the second line of enquiry as to what tensions affected Soviet-West dissidentism, and which dissidents were preferred in the USSR as a result, without

¹⁰³ Davis felt that the ‘international campaign had...exerted serious pressure on the [US] government’ and considered the ‘socialist community of nations’ to have been played a central role in the campaign. See Davis, *An Autobiography*, 398.

¹⁰⁴ Cecil Williams and Angela Davis, ‘A Conversation with Angela’, *The Black Scholar* 3, no. 7/8 (1972): 48.

comparing Soviet discourse on the more ideologically compatible Davis to that on the other more ideologically problematic figures of the New Left. Other examples of Soviet commentary, especially debate among academics, on the Black Power movement and other New Left movements, however, can be of use in answering these queries.

The great Soviet debate with the New Left

The February 1969 meeting of the Presidium of the Academy Sciences opened the way for a robust discussion on the New Left in *Voprosy filosofii* and other journals and newspapers. Soviet academics and ideological experts engaged with and debated the various merits and demerits of New Left theories. The result was a field of discussion that ranged from outright attacks on the New Left and character assassinations of its leading theorists, to sober academic analyses, expressions of sympathy, and narratives that depicted New Leftists as victims of Western political repression. These contrasting outcomes support Yurchak's notion of late Soviet socialism as being beset by several paradoxes, chief among them being the conflict between Soviet ideology's need to create able, intelligent citizens who became politically conscious and the overriding demand for conformity to Soviet socialism.¹⁰⁵ The relationship between the Soviet state and the New Left perfectly exhibited this paradoxical character with Soviet academics and officials at once welcoming the anti-capitalist realisation of millions of young Westerners that took place throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, but becoming frustrated with the New Left's lack of conformity to Soviet values. There is also an important point of comparison with the Anglo-American approach to Soviet dissidents in Soviet debate over the New Left, and the tensions it revealed towards the movement's suitability as an ally in the Cold War.

Western engagement with Soviet dissidents also became highly politically contested, with the press, political parties, and even figures within governments producing contrasting opinions on whether and how to engage with the dissident movement in the USSR. Similarly, the breakthrough in human rights in the 1970s produced contrasting responses both at the national and international level of politics as to what form human rights activism and policy should take, as highlighted by Chris Moores in his case study of the British response to the Pinochet regime in Chile.¹⁰⁶ This would,

¹⁰⁵ Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More*, 11.

¹⁰⁶ Moores, 'Solidarity for Chile, transnational activism and the evolution of human rights', 115-36.

however, become more pronounced slightly later than the Soviet experiment with the New Left, though it had already begun, reaching a highpoint around the mid-1970s when Soviet repression against dissidents intensified notably leading to the expulsion of Solzhenitsyn to the West.¹⁰⁷ In this era, the pro-détente US and UK governments were heavily criticised by conservative opponents, though some on the left also opposed détente, for their perceived deference on the increasing abuse of human rights in the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁸ To its opponents, détente appeared to betray Western values of freedom of speech by allowing the persecution of Soviet dissidents to persist unchecked by Western governments.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, though, the suitability of particular strands of the divided Soviet dissident movement also produced disagreement.

Solzhenitsyn, the Soviet dissident with the highest profile, was particularly problematic for his sometimes extreme right-wing beliefs – the dissident would eventually call for a union state of Slavic countries and was a fierce defender of Russian culture, as well as a critic of Marxism and Western materialism – and provoked fierce debate in Western politics.¹¹⁰ In a telling incident, the left-wing British MP Eric Heffer attacked Solzhenitsyn, as well as Conservatives’ support of him, arguing their approach ‘towards the Soviet Union [was] totally hysterical...and [was] not helping those forces in the Soviet Union which want[ed] to move the Soviet Union in a more democratic direction’, while calling on the government to recognise ‘forces in the Soviet Union which [we]re not like Solzhenitsyn but like Roy Medvedef [sic.]-namely, democratic Socialists who believe[d] in the type of Socialism in which ... the Labour Party believe[d], people who [we]re not given to the hysterical attitudes adopted by the Opposition or by Solzhenitsyn’.¹¹¹ Scholars and commentators continued to debate Solzhenitsyn’s beliefs even after 1991; supporters called him a realist patriot, detractors: a nationalist, and possibly a fascist.¹¹² Another argument has even called Solzhenitsyn a misunderstood ‘Russian liberal’.¹¹³ Regardless of these varying interpretations, the one which prevailed in

¹⁰⁷ See Kriza, *Solzhenitsyn*, 131-46; Hella Pick, “‘Monopoly’ on dissidents”, *Guardian*, 10th March, 1977, 1.

¹⁰⁸ Schulzinger, ‘Détente in the Nixon–Ford years’, 374; Tulli, “‘Whose rights are human rights?’”, 573.

¹⁰⁹ Schulzinger, ‘Détente in the Nixon–Ford years’, 573.

¹¹⁰ Solzhenitsyn outlined this envisaged state in a pamphlet. See Solzhenitsyn, *Rebuilding Russia* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991); Francis X. Clines, ‘Russia Gets Call By Solzhenitsyn For Slavic State’, *New York Times*, 19th September, 1990, Section A, 1.

¹¹¹ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 908 (1975-76), col. 1284, 31st March, 1976.

¹¹² David G. Rowley, ‘Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Russian Nationalism’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 32, no. 3 (July, 1997): 321.

¹¹³ See Mikhail S. Bernstam, ‘Solzhenitsyn: The Russian Liberal’, in *Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2001), 113-26.

Washington and London in the era of détente was that of Solzhenitsyn the nationalist, who could possibly endanger détente through his visceral critique of the policy itself. The dissident toured both the UK and US during 1975-76, delivering lectures on the dangers of détente including his notable Harvard Address, arguing that the West risked surrendering its values and freedoms through its tolerance of the USSR and he urged Western leaders to take a tough line with Moscow.¹¹⁴ This inevitably produced private and public rebukes by Western politicians.

Kissinger, in 1975 discussions with Andrei Gromyko (Soviet Foreign Minister 1957-85) on preparations for the signing of the Helsinki Accords, which committed the US and USSR to respect human rights in their countries, commented on his dislike for Solzhenitsyn's political philosophy. Remarking that he did not foresee the USSR's demise resulting from the Helsinki Accords, Kissinger expressed that the successor state to a fallen Soviet Union could 'be more of a problem' to American policymakers, citing Solzhenitsyn, saying '[t]he government [he] would establish would be more aggressive' than the USSR.¹¹⁵ In Britain, meanwhile, in 1976 Prime Minister Harold Wilson was questioned by an opposition Conservative MP on whether he would visit Solzhenitsyn in Switzerland and asked for a comment on Solzhenitsyn's assertion that Britain's world 'standing' had declined to the level of a third-rate power.¹¹⁶

After refusing to meet Solzhenitsyn, the PM gave a diplomatic but clear critique of Solzhenitsyn: 'I respect his right to say whatever he pleases. That is a right that he enjoys now but that he did not enjoy previously. I respect his right to say whatever he wishes, but I do not agree with it'.¹¹⁷ The following day the Under-Secretary of State for the Air Force, Brynmor John, took exception to Solzhenitsyn's 'pessimism', and accused Conservative critics of the government's détente policy of having a 'Solzhenitsyn syndrome' and took even 'stronger exception to the utterances of the motley school of columnists, editors and peers which' had appeared in Britain 'dedicated to propagating his

¹¹⁴ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, 'A World Split Apart', *National Review*, 7th July 1978, 836-41 and 855. For Solzhenitsyn's speeches on tour during 1975-76 see, Solzhenitsyn, *Warning to the West* (London: Penguin, 2019).

¹¹⁵ Conversely, some now cite the Helsinki Accords as a key factor in the USSR's eventual demise. See Michael Cotey Morgan, *The Final Act: The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018). For a review, see Cindy Ewing, 'The Final Act: The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War by Michael Cotey Morgan', *International Journal*, 75, no. 1 (2020): 106-8; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXXIX, European Security*, eds. E. Selvage and Edward C. Keefer (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2007), Document 286.

¹¹⁶ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 908 (1975-76), col. 1099, 30th March, 1976.

¹¹⁷ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 908 (1975-76), col. 1099, 30th March, 1976.

pessimism'.¹¹⁸ Many Soviet officials and analysts were similarly hostile to potential allies in the New Left, seeing incompatibility with their beliefs and Soviet ideology.

The chief Soviet gripe with the New Left was its subordination of the working-class' position within the revolutionary vanguard, which was theorised on the basis that Western workers had become incorporated into the doctrine and machinery of capitalism.¹¹⁹ Soviet thinkers, conversely, held that the working class had to take a leading role in the launching of a revolution, as only they could successfully deliver a true workers' state. A movement without the workers at its heart could fall prey to bourgeois influences and quickly lose its revolutionary character.¹²⁰ Responding to 1968's revolutions, Timur Timofeyev, Director of the Academy of Sciences' Institute of the International Workers' Movement, criticised the New Left's demotion of the working class from revolutionary primacy.

Timofeyev noted that 1968 had brought into question which class should lead revolutions in the future within the ongoing struggle to topple capitalism. The author reflected on predictions that the transition of the Western economies away from manual labour to technical and information based work would result in the dramatic decline of traditional working class professions, and how writers like Marcuse had wrongly interpreted this process as leading to the indoctrination of the working class.¹²¹ Timofeyev argued that the working class would still continue to exist, citing Marx's notion of the 'aggregate worker' which described how even when a worker moved into a technical or mental form of labour they were still oppressed within the capitalist system and aware of it.¹²² Timofeyev insisted that the workers continued to be the main component of the revolution and that they had grown in their strength throughout 1968, taking part in numerous strike actions across Europe.

This aspect of the New Left was straightforward for all Soviet authors to support. Konstantin Zakharov reported for *Pravda* on continuing protests in Italy during the *Autunno Caldo*, 'Hot Autumn', of 1969, a major movement of New Left protest that saw students and workers staging

¹¹⁸ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 908 (1975-76), col. 1598, 1st April, 1976.

¹¹⁹ Timur Timofeyev, 'Questions of Theory: The Leading Revolutionary Force', *Pravda*, 24th December, 1968, 3-4 in *CDSF* 20, no. 52 (January, 1969): 25-7, 25.

¹²⁰ A. Iskenderov, 'Questions of Theory - Contemporary Capitalism and the Class Struggle', *Pravda*, 12th November, 1969, 3-4 in *CDSF* 21, no. 46 (December, 1969): 10-36.

¹²¹ Timofeyev, 'Questions of Theory', 3-4.

¹²² Timofeyev, 'Questions of Theory', 3-4.

mass strikes.¹²³ Zakharov enthusiastically interpreted the strikes as evidence of how the ‘chasm between the monopolistic upper strata of the countries of capital and the enormous masses of the working class continue[d] to deepen’.¹²⁴ Yet the author also took the time to attack the radicalism of the students, with Zakharov dismissing claims of ‘anarchist elements’ being active within the strikes as Western propaganda, reflecting his own dissatisfaction with new forms of socialism that emerged out of 1968.¹²⁵ Other authors, meanwhile, went much further in their criticism. Marcuse was called a ‘False Prophet’ and his followers ‘Werewolves’ by Yuri Zhukov, who said radicals loyal to the philosopher ‘dream[ed] of “Decommunizing” Marxism’.¹²⁶ Zhukov, a recipient of the Lenin Prize who had served as *Pravda*’s foreign affairs editor for five years and was ‘the most prominent Soviet journalist commenting on the New Left’, placed Marcuse in the same category as Maoists, while ridiculing the New Left’s opposition to industrial society.¹²⁷ Zhukov was also a candidate member of the CPSU’s Central Committee, ‘in close contact with the Party leadership’, and in one observer’s words a ‘notorious hardliner ... seen as something of a bore even by his fellow journalists’ and can be considered to have represented the opinion of the most conservative elements within the leadership on the New Left.¹²⁸ Yuri Frantsev, meanwhile, doubted Marcuse’s progressive credentials for his refusal ‘to recognise the truth discovered by Marx ... that the intelligentsia becomes a revolutionary force only when it crosses over to the positions of the working class in its struggle against the bourgeoisie and when it gives its knowledge to the working class’.¹²⁹

Meanwhile, other possible New Left candidates for the Soviet press to depict as dissident heroes, in addition to Angela Davis, came under attack. For example, French-based German student activist Daniel Cohn-Bendit was a leading figure and icon of the New Left but was condemned by Soviet authors for his criticism of Soviet communism.¹³⁰ Cohn-Bendit was a combative character, known for publicly challenging French politicians to debates and might have become a celebrated figure of

¹²³ Konstantin Zakharov, ‘Commentator’s Column: The Chasm Deepens – Strikes in the West’, *Pravda*, 19th September, 1969, 5 in *CDSP* 21, no. 38 (October, 1969): 20

¹²⁴ Zakharov, ‘Commentator’s Column: The Chasm Deepens’, 5.

¹²⁵ Zakharov, 5.

¹²⁶ Zhukov, ‘Werewolves’, 4. Also see Zhukov, ‘Revolutsionnyy class i ego kritiki’, *Pravda*, 16th September, 1972, 4.

¹²⁷ Zhukov, ‘Werewolves’, 4; Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 21.

¹²⁸ Angus Roxburgh, *Pravda: Inside the Soviet Media Machine* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1987), 63.

¹²⁹ Frantsev, ‘Marx and the Present Day’, in *CDSP* 20, no. 18: 2.

¹³⁰ T. Shmeleva, ‘The Idea of the Unity of Democratic Forces’, 3 in *CDSP* 20, no. 40 (October, 1968): 18-19; Molchanov, ‘Students Rebel in the West’, 13.

anti-capitalist dissent in the Soviet media.¹³¹ However, despite his anti-capitalist enlightenment, Cohn-Bendit's independence and the inability of the Soviet state to control a figure such as him, as Soviet socialism demanded, made him an unsuitable candidate for valorisation. Zhukov accused Cohn-Bendit of seeking to sow dissent and divide the progressive movement in France, as well as isolate the workers from the revolution calling him one of Marcuse's 'werewolves'.¹³²

Cohn-Bendit's forceful spirit reflected the free-form nature of the New Left as a whole, an additional factor which made the movement incompatible with Soviet socialism it being based around the principles of conformity and mass-mobilisation led by a highly organised and regimented vanguard party. The myriad groupuscules of the New Left were impossible for a single party to establish control over, and the inability of the French Communist Party to do so had persuaded Soviet leaders to seek to contain the revolutionary events of May '68 in France rather than support them.¹³³ This raises questions over whether it is possible to argue that there were major similarities with the West or shades of dissidentism in the relationship between the Soviet Union and dissident figures who were explicitly New Left in their beliefs.

One general issue in comparatively assessing dissidentism between East and West in the Cold War is a difference between the forms of protest in the West and Soviet Union which supporters sought to emphasise. The Soviet dissidents were part of a wider movement, with myriad cultural connections and a multi-layered network of contacts in politics and academia across Soviet society. However, certain Soviet dissidents' profiles, like Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov, quickly rose above others, while the more limited scale of acts of protest and the state's use of trials to persecute dissidents not only facilitated the creation of dissident personalities, but also served the Western narrative of the heroic struggle of the individual against totalitarianism, making it easier and giving reasons for the Western press to create dissident figures. On the other hand, not only did the movements of interest to the Soviet Union generally have a mass-mobilisation character which made it harder to find ideal personalities, Soviet authors were disinclined towards narratives of history that gave the individual a key role. Frantsev stated in his article on the New Left, 'Lenin smashed the populist theory that history is made by "critically thinking individuals"' saying, 'in a society that has reached the

¹³¹ Vinen, *Long '68*, 124.

¹³² Zhukov, 'Werewolves', 4.

¹³³ Bracke, *Which Socialism, Whose Détente?*, 181.

capitalist stage of development, no “outstanding personalities” will change the course of history until the working class – the greatest force of social development – enters the struggle’ and accused Marcuse of failing to recognise this fact.¹³⁴

This individualism in theory made the Soviet press less attracted to building up profiles of individual figures of dissent, necessary for dissidentism, for how they contravened the mainstream narrative of a workers’ led revolution. Still, though, the case of Davis certainly suggests that this approach was followed at times, as do other examples which will be explored in upcoming chapters. The conclusion that can be reached is that dissidentism occurred and dissident figures were created when they did not directly contravene points of Soviet doxa – Davis, despite coming from the New Left, was compatible with the long-term Soviet narrative of contrasting Western racial injustice with supposed Soviet tolerance, was a member of the CPUSA, and was more open to Soviet support than most New Leftists. However, acts of New Left dissent were interpreted fairly positively in a more general sense within the Soviet view of capitalism as being in a protracted state of crisis. New Left protests and strikes were seen as evidence of the growing crisis of capitalism that would eventually lead to its collapse. Furthermore, despite ideological differences with student radicals, Soviet papers still took advantage of the New Left’s protests to utilise a narrative of Western oppression against left-wing activists by pointing to examples of where New Leftists were attacked by police.¹³⁵

In a notable book on the New Left by Aleksandr Brychkov, an analyst with a special interest in the New Left, the author’s commentary on the BPP’s treatment by the US authorities mirrored the language of dissidentism and that used to describe the treatment of Angela Davis in the Soviet press as well as to describe Soviet dissidents in the West.¹³⁶ Brychkov spoke of the systematic elimination of the BPP’s leadership through the auspices of the FBI and American judicial system, describing BPP leader Bobby Seale as the victim of a ‘mock trial’ in 1970-71 for a ‘charge of conspiracy to murder, which was as false as [a] charge of conspiring to incite a riot’.¹³⁷ Brychkov also portrayed the response of the authorities to other elements of the New Left as highly repressive, including SDS

¹³⁴ Frantsev, ‘Marx and the Present Day’, in *CDSP* 20, no. 18: 8.

¹³⁵ ‘Police Brutality Against Students’, 5.

¹³⁶ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 227-8.

¹³⁷ Brychkov, *American Youth Today*, 162-3.

whose offices Brychkov went to visit in February 1969 the same time as the Academy of Sciences approved a wider discussion of the New Left among Soviet academics.¹³⁸

Brychkov described witnessing the security measures taken by SDS to control entry to their offices as a result of ‘continuous harassment by the authorities and attacks, including physical attacks, by American ultra-Rightists’.¹³⁹ Yet, as well as highlighting how the Soviet Union sought to create images of anti-left wing persecution out of the New Left, there is another useful comparison with the West to be made in terms of analysing both sides’ use of dissidentism to prove the superiority of the rival Cold War ideologies. It is important to assess whether in the Soviet coverage of the New Left something similar took place to how Western supporters of Soviet dissidents, especially conservative Anglo-American politicians, often portrayed the appearance of the dissident movement in the USSR as evidence of the universality of Western values and their inevitable triumph against communism in spite of continued repression by the state.

Later, in the mid-1970s, while she was Leader of the Opposition, Margaret Thatcher extensively incorporated Soviet dissidents into her political campaigning. She portrayed dissidents as proof of the bankruptcy of socialism saying how ‘... the heroic actions of a number of Russian dissidents over the past few years ... brought home to us and to some Iron Curtain countries how deepseated [was] the desire for liberty and how much can be achieved through resolve, courage and ideals’.¹⁴⁰ In a similar way, despite ideological differences with the New Left, a consistent motif surrounding Soviet coverage of 1968 and its aftermath was that the strikes and protests illustrated the unpopularity of capitalism and the inevitable rise of socialism. A *Pravda* editorial of August 1968 called the ‘class battles in the capitalist countries ... new confirmation of the intensification of the general crisis of capitalism’.¹⁴¹ Brezhnev repeated the very same view in a 1970 speech, saying:

We are witnesses to a tempestuous upsurge of the young people’s movement in the capitalist countries. This is an important symptom of the deepening general crisis of capitalism. Young people refuse to reconcile themselves to the system of exploitation, to the bloody adventures of imperialism. The mighty demonstrations of young workers,

¹³⁸ Brychkov, 162-3.

¹³⁹ Brychkov, 164.

¹⁴⁰ Margaret Thatcher, ‘Speech to Les Grandes Conférences Catholiques ("The Sinews of Foreign Policy")’, 23rd June, 1978, 16, *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*.

¹⁴¹ ‘Master the Leninist Ideological Legacy’, *Pravda*, 31st August, 1968, 2-3. As Rentola notes, Soviet analysts in this period also saw such developments as supporting Soviet foreign policy aims. They assessed that pressure from the New Left would push social democratic parties further to the left, a process which they considered compatible with détente whereby the USSR could benefit from closer relations with Western countries ruled by more ideologically suitable social democratic governments. See Rentola, ‘The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party’, 142.

peasants and students, the mass scale and aggressive spirit of their actions, has in recent years become a serious factor in the political struggle in the capitalist countries.¹⁴²

This aspect of the New Left was not problematic for Soviet authors and analysts to accept and is essentially comparable to the type of rhetoric which surrounded Soviet dissent in the West, suggesting a general appreciation of New Left protest as a useful vehicle to illustrate Western brutality and Marxism's inevitable rise even if there were ideological differences. However, a more important issue in looking at the applicability of dissidentism to the wider New Left and the USSR would in fact be the role of violence, given the framework's stipulation for 'non-violent' acts of dissent. Acts of New Left dissent could turn very violent, drawing criticism from Soviet authors repeatedly and seeing Marcuse labelled as a 'false "friend"' of 'young people' and a "'prophet" of left extremism'.¹⁴³ Rudi Dutschke, meanwhile, a key New Left figure in West Germany, was sharply criticised for his perceived advocacy of violence, with Soviet author S. S. Salychev calling him 'pernicious' and, along with Cohn-Bendit, an 'anarchist'.¹⁴⁴

New Leftists with views that directly contradicted mainstream Soviet ideology could not benefit from dissidentism with the USSR's state media. Yet while ideologically supportive dissidentism may not have been possible between overt New Leftists and the Soviet state officially, contemporary scholarship does at least suggest that some within the Soviet government and academic establishment privately harboured respect for the New Left and even hoped that some of its ideas could be applied to Soviet thinking. As Rentola has argued, liberals who had been involved in studying Western Marxism during the Khrushchev era, when there was greater scope for critical thinking about the Soviet Union's faults, 'might have secretly cherished hopes of finding a two-way street, where new Western communist thinking would also influence Soviet ideology'.¹⁴⁵ Even as the Finnish experiment came to an end, Rentola says there were those like 'Yuri Krasin [that] still wanted to incorporate the New Left' who in 1971 said to colleagues in the International Department "'We

¹⁴² Leonid I. Brezhnev, 'Speech by Comrade L. I. Brezhnev', *Pravda, Izvestiya, and Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 27th May, 1970, in *CDSF* 22, no. 21, 23rd June, 1970, 4.

¹⁴³ Zhukov, 'Werewolves', 4; R. Kosolapov, 'Questions of Theory: Socialism and Young People, *Pravda*, 17th March, 1969, 3- 4 in *CDSF* 21, no. 11 (April, 1969): 27-29, 28.

¹⁴⁴ Salychev, "*Novyye levyye*", 85-6.

¹⁴⁵ Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 147 and 153 (see endnote 36 of Rentola's text).

should find means to utilize this great force” from whom the communists could learn the necessity of action’.¹⁴⁶

Menhert has also suggested this idea saying that, despite the wishes of the censors, some Soviet authors agreed with certain New Left ideas presented to them and that he even ‘almost suspect[ed]’ some Soviet authors to have quoted a New Left theory ‘not to condemn it but to acquaint ... Soviet contemporaries with it in a round about, safer way’.¹⁴⁷ This is a challenging area of Soviet history to interrogate and not a major theme of this study, however, a brief overview of the issue is warranted for how it connects to the thesis’ second research strand on uncovering internal Soviet tensions over whether to support and portray Western radicals as dissidents, which of them deserved support, and whether ideological exchanges took place with them. Indeed, there are examples of Soviet publishing in which New Left groups and theories were discussed dispassionately, objectively, and without criticism beyond the necessary minimum, where the author could be argued to have deliberately chosen to present the New Left uncritically in order to transmit the ideas to their readers.¹⁴⁸

Menhert points to N. S. Yulina, L. A. Salycheva, and M. Novinskaya as among those Soviet authors concerned with the New Left who were most able to accurately grasp the ideas behind radical protest.¹⁴⁹ However, perhaps the best candidate in the search for examples of Soviet authors trying to covertly import New Left ideas to the USSR would be the aforementioned Aleksandr Brychkov who had met with SDS members in 1969.¹⁵⁰ Menhert considers Brychkov, an employee of the journal of the Institute of the World Economy and International Relations (MEIMO), to have been the most accomplished Soviet expert on the New Left and he was indeed the author of one of the most authoritative books on the New Left, *Molodaya Amerika* ‘*Young America*’ (1971), and its English-language version *American Youth Today* (1973).¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ Rentola, 150.

¹⁴⁷ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 40 and 120.

¹⁴⁸ Menhert, 43. Maude Bracke has suggested that Czechoslovak authors may have done something similar during the Prague Spring, couching their critiques of neo-Stalinist society in Marxist language to ‘discourse, thus disguising an unspoken wish to abandon Marxist analysis’. See Bracke, ‘French Responses to the Prague Spring’, 1737.

¹⁴⁹ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 40.

¹⁵⁰ Brychkov, *American Youth Today*, 162-3.

¹⁵¹ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 228; Aleksandr Brychkov, *Molodaya Amerika* (Moscow: Molodaya Gvardiya, 1971); Brychkov, *American Youth Today*.

Notably, Brychkov accurately analysed the key causes of New Left revolt. While Soviet authors were generally at pains to emphasise the material causes of the protests of 1968 and after, it remained a fact that the working class had been an inconsistent participant in New Left-led protests and that the leading demographic among the protestors were students who largely came from affluent backgrounds and represented part of the intelligentsia. Though material problems with the university system existed which the students responded to, coming mainly from well-off middle-class families meant students had been the beneficiaries of rising living standards throughout the 1960s in Europe and the US.¹⁵² More political and social issues motivated students and members of the intelligentsia like Marcuse. This fact was neglected in most Soviet accounts, not fitting with the Marxist analysis that the satisfaction of material needs was the main cause of unrest in capitalist societies.¹⁵³

Brychkov, however, outlined that students' concerns were not with satisfying their material needs but those of a spiritual and intellectual nature, with another writer Igor Kon making a similar point.¹⁵⁴ These were significant interventions because they implied a different interpretation of the meaning of the 'scientific-technological revolution', which was responsible for the post-war increase in living standards in developed economies including the USSR, to the intelligentsia's role in society. If students and intelligentsia were equally as or even more radical than workers in developed countries, including the USSR, it could have meant that the intelligentsia, as Marcuse argued, was becoming a class of its own distinct from the middle and working classes and needed to rethink its relationship with revolution and take a leading role.¹⁵⁵ This was a position that challenged Soviet orthodoxy, according to which the working class' concerns, or what they were interpreted as by the state, took precedence over all other classes and the intelligentsia were not a separate class.¹⁵⁶ In the context of developed socialism in the 1970s, this meant challenging the authority of the party and bureaucracy, which in theory represented the workers' interests, and the intelligentsia taking a leading role in the revolution, thus raising the prospect of formulating a different path to communism to that supported by the state.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² Brychkov, *American Youth Today*, 35.

¹⁵³ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 37.

¹⁵⁴ Aleksandr Brychkov, 'Ot bunto k bor'be...', *Molodoy Kommunist*, 1969, no. 12: 48 reprinted in Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 153-4; Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 37. See Igor Kon, 'Studencheskiye volneniya i teoriya 'konflikta pokoleniy', *SshA*, 1971, no. 3: 27-39.

¹⁵⁵ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 120; Taagepera, 'The Impact of the New Left on Estonia', 45-6.

¹⁵⁶ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 120.

¹⁵⁷ Menhert, 120.

Brychkov's intention seems to have been to force his fellow academics to confront the issue and such a proposition must have had resonance with Soviet intellectuals at the time, whose enthusiastic, 'remarkably often and thorough' studies of the New Left cannot always be accounted for simply by a desire to debunk the students' theories or to follow the demands of the Academy of Sciences to influence the New Left.¹⁵⁸ In a similar case of a Soviet academic apparently responding to New Left thinking and applying it to the USSR, Rein Taagepera noted the case of the Estonian philosopher, Gustav Naan, who addressed the question of whether the intelligentsia, which was increasingly advocating reform, was becoming a class of its own and if integrated into the Soviet governing hierarchy could help revitalise Soviet society.¹⁵⁹

It is still difficult to prove in any way whether Soviet experts on the New Left ever sought to import the movement's ideas to the USSR. What can be said for certain, though, is, as Menhert suggests, that many later commentaries of the 1969-72 period 'usually display[ed] sympathy for the New Left' to some degree or another, and that for all the ideological issues between the USSR and the New Left the latter had consistently provided useful examples of anti-capitalist dissent and Western political repression which allowed Moscow to counter Western criticism and undermine the West.¹⁶⁰ However, in 1972 scope for future experiments and dissidentism with the New Left approved by the state was largely ended.

The end of the experiment with the New Left

An early indication of the winding down of the experiments with the New Left came in the editorial for *Voprosy filosofii's* January 1972 edition, which described its irritation with the trajectory and activities of the New Left.¹⁶¹ Though the same piece pledged to continue its project of analysing the New Left, or as the journal called it "'left" ... opportunism', it also signalled a loss of faith and interest in the New Left by *Voprosy filosofii* and announced the journal would move on to focus on new topics associated with 'materialistic dialectics'.¹⁶² A further sign was to be found in the non-materialisation of a series originally planned by the journal back in 1968.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Menhert, 120; Referring to the February 1969 Academy of Sciences resolution.

¹⁵⁹ Taagepera, 'The Impact of the New Left on Estonia', 46-7.

¹⁶⁰ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 40.

¹⁶¹ 'Editorial', *Voprosy filosofii* 26, no. 1 (1972): 3-17; Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 45.

¹⁶² Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 4.

¹⁶³ Menhert, 39.

A final article appeared in December 1972, which as Menhert says marked ‘the conclusion of an unwritten series’ and ‘a kind of endpoint in the concern with the New Left’.¹⁶⁴ Works continued to appear on the New Left, but not on the same scale as before and with no scope for sober judgement or appreciation. Any remaining hopes for the New Left to become a potential ally had given way to one of condemnation and even ridicule. The chance for Marcuse to be taken seriously had also vanished, with *Literaturnaya gazeta*, previously a journal with some sympathies for the Western radical-left, publishing in September 1972 a review of Marcuse’s new book, *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (1972), which described the German philosopher as ‘rearming’ for a new campaign against true Marxism, while calling him ‘dangerous’ and his theories saturated with ‘inconsistency’.¹⁶⁵

A complex array of factors can be seen to have underlined this process of disengagement and narrowing of the scope for debate and dissidentism with the New Left. A change in the priorities of Soviet foreign policy was undoubtedly a major factor, most of all the decision by Brezhnev to fully back détente. While before Soviet leaders had been suspicious of détente, suspicions shared by the General Secretary, by 1972 Brezhnev had become convinced of the need for détente. The Soviet leader saw the Soviet Union as having a ‘special responsibility’ in the aftermath of the Second World War ‘to prevent future major wars’, which led him to approach the United States with sometimes radical proposals for ensuring world peace and stability.¹⁶⁶

The stability and power afforded by détente, which support for increasingly aggressive Western revolutionaries was by then in conflict with, was more attractive to Soviet leaders and therefore dampened their enthusiasm about the New Left, experiments with whom, including in Finland, had borne no meaningful results.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, the Soviet leadership had already expressed concerns about the utility of such Finland-style policies, given that the loyalty of any government which emerged from a successful New Left revolution in a European country, especially France where this was a likelihood for a time in 1968, could not be relied upon. In France, the Soviet leadership had put pressure on the large local communist party to contain the May protests in 1968, preferring ‘the

¹⁶⁴ Menhert, 39. The article in question was M. I. Novinskaya, ‘Molodezh v usloviyakh sovremennogo kapitalizma’, *Voprosy filosofii* 1972, no. 12: 89-101.

¹⁶⁵ A. Nikitina, ‘Gerbert Markuze “perebooruzhayetsya”’, *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 1972, no. 38: 15; Herbert Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (London: Allen Lane, 1972).

¹⁶⁶ Vladislav Zubok, ‘The Soviet Union and détente of the 1970s’, *Cold War History* 8, no. 4, (2008): 430-2.

¹⁶⁷ Rentola, ‘The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party’, 150.

continuation of Gaullist détente' to a New Left administration which would not necessarily ally itself with Moscow.¹⁶⁸ In fact, the Soviet leadership's preference for the order of détente would lead them to criticise aggressive efforts even by the more orthodox French Communist Party (CPF) itself long after 1968.

In his 1972 diary, Chernyaev, then Deputy Director of the International Department, recorded the Soviet leadership's dissatisfaction with Georges Marchais, the new General Secretary of the CPF, who was 'trying to use us [the Soviet leadership] to topple' the incumbent French president Georges Pompidou (1969-74).¹⁶⁹ Chernyaev described the Soviet leadership as 'slapping' Marchais for harbouring such ambitions and his further comments reflected the primacy of détente to Soviet thinking as regards relations with other communists by this time.¹⁷⁰ Chernyaev wrote that Moscow was 'engaging with Georges [Marchais] not because he [was] a communist, but because he [could] (?) [sic.] become a national figure', commenting with apparent satisfaction that the CPF was 'quickly "progressing"' towards becoming a social democratic party which stood a chance of winning an election.¹⁷¹

Evidently, by 1972 the Soviet leadership preferred acquiring influence in the West through détente and the electoral success of fraternal parties, rather than through New Left or other revolutionary agitation. Another international factor was the worsening of the Sino-Soviet split and the need to combat the global influence of Maoism, which was a major ideological inspiration for many in the New Left, with Chernyaev noting that the Soviet Union needed 'to morally isolate China and harmlessly ... maintain our moral prestige in the revolutionary public opinion, which still exists as a certain type of myth'.¹⁷² At the same time, though, there were significant domestic factors which can be seen to have played into the disengagement from the New Left.

The conservatives in the Soviet leadership were gaining more and more influence. Notable reformers were increasingly being sacked from senior positions such as Aleksandr Yakovlev, later an architect

¹⁶⁸ Bracke, *Which Socialism, Whose Détente?*, 181.

¹⁶⁹ Anatoly S. Chernyaev, *The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1972*, ed. Svetlana Savranskaya, trans. Anna Melyakova, (Washington DC: The National Security Archive, 2012), 36; Seth Offenbach, 'National Security Archive: Anatoly S. Chernyaev Diary, 1978', *H-Diplo* (5th May, 2018), <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28443/discussions/1864356/national-security-archive-anatoly-s-chernyaev-diary-1978>

¹⁷⁰ Chernyaev, *The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1972*, 36.

¹⁷¹ Chernyaev, *The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1972*, 36.

¹⁷² Chernyaev, 49.

of *glasnost*, who was removed from his position as interim head of the Propaganda Department in 1972.¹⁷³ Such an atmosphere was inconducive to further objective study of or dissidentism with the New Left. Yet changes in the New Left itself were also influential on Soviet attitudes towards the movement and any potential worth it may have had in foreign or domestic policy contexts. Into the mid-1970s, the economic questions that had long pre-occupied the New Left were being joined by issues of identity and also sexual expression. More radical forms of feminism and gay liberation became an increasingly visible feature of the New Left protest during the 1970s.¹⁷⁴ The shift towards such issues was dissatisfactory to the Soviet leadership alienating them from the New Left even further and made them less likely to offer support – in this regard, mainstream thinking was socially conservative with the sexual revolution, for example, having been negatively received in Soviet journals.¹⁷⁵ Chernyaev's comments on a colleague's trip to the United States from 1972, during which he interacted with students, reflected the leadership's disappointment with this aspect of the New Left's diversification.

Chernyaev reported that in March Stanislav Menshikov, a 'consultant of the International Department', had returned from a month-long stay in the United States.¹⁷⁶ Menshikov had conducted a similar trip two years before but returned much less inspired by the students' activism. When before they had been occupied with protesting the Vietnam War, by 1972, the students' concerns had shifted to gay rights, or as Chernyaev mockingly put it: 'freedom for homosexuals!'¹⁷⁷ He continued, remarking that this shift reflected what he felt to be '[t]otal political apathy among the youth'.¹⁷⁸ On one level, Chernyaev and Menshikov's comments reflected both men's homophobia; homosexuality was illegal in the USSR after 1934, formally codified as a criminal act in 1960 and regularly punished with imprisonment.¹⁷⁹ On another, they further highlight the growth of the gulf between the New Left and the political objectives of the Soviet leadership, especially given the fact

¹⁷³ Arbatov, *The System*, 146.

¹⁷⁴ Vinen, *Long '68*, 227-34 and 241-43.

¹⁷⁵ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 85.

¹⁷⁶ Chernyaev, *The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1972*, 7.

¹⁷⁷ Chernyaev, *The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1972*, 7.

¹⁷⁸ Chernyaev, 7.

¹⁷⁹ Barbara Alpern Engel, 'Women and the state', 481. For some discussion on the legal status of homosexuality in the USSR, see L. Englestein, 'Soviet policy toward male homosexuality: its origins and historical roots', *Journal of Homosexuality* 29, no. 2-3 (1995): 155-78 and Rustam Alexander, 'Soviet Legal and Criminological Debates on the Decriminalization of Homosexuality (1965-75)', *Slavic Review* 77, no. 1 (2018): 30-52.

Cherynaev was a reformer and had initially welcomed the revolutions of 1968. Yet even more dramatic political shifts in the New Left would play a role in widening the chasm between the New Left and the USSR.

In the same period in which Menshikov had made his journeys to America, a new type of New Left movement had started to appear in the form of the urban guerrillas. This violent strain of New Left politics that emerged embraced insurrection by the means of terrorism on capitalist soil as the route to communism. The notorious West German Red Army Faction (RAF) and Italian Red Brigades (RB) carried out assassinations and bombings in the name of communist revolution; the Weather Underground and Angry Party represented the American and British iterations of the violent New Left, though these groups were far less prominent or lethal than either the RAF or RB.¹⁸⁰ The violent nature of these cells put the Soviet leadership off supporting them publicly but, as was visible in Soviet press coverage of the RAF and RB which focused on distancing the USSR from these groups rather than just condemning them, also clearly spooked the Soviet establishment about the potential damage that might be done to the communist movement's international reputation by association with the New Left in this form and acted as another factor in prompting Soviet disengagement from the New Left in the 1970s.¹⁸¹

A final factor in sharpening the Soviet leadership's opinion firmly against the New Left was also the appearance of signs that, despite their best wishes, New Left copycats were emerging in the USSR. An early indication that the New Left was indeed becoming the ideological rival that conservative Soviet leaders imagined it to be was the adoption of hippy culture by young Soviet people and the formation of communes. A part of the New Left phenomenon, the hippies had been noticed by Soviet experts on Western communism but were generally only treated as a curiosity. Brychkov, who seems to have often sympathised with the New Left, dismissed the hippies as politically immature.¹⁸² Yet this aspect of New Left culture seems to have been one of those to resonate most with the Soviet youth as Juliane Fürst has illustrated and it was around 1971-72, when hippies organised several

¹⁸⁰ Dan Berger, 'The Weather Underground's place in history: A response to Jonah Raskin', *Socialism and Democracy* 20, no. 2 (2006): 137-48; J. D. Taylor, 'The Party's Over? The Angry Brigade, The Counterculture, and the British New Left, 1967-1972', *The Historical Journal* 58, no. 3 (2015): 877-900.

¹⁸¹ V. Ardatovsky, 'Problems and Opinions: Behind Terrorism', *Izvestiya*, 5th June, 1978, 4 in *CDSP* 30, no. 23 (July, 1978): 15; A. Galkin, 'The Face of Neo-Fascism', *International Affairs* (Soviet journal) 25, no. 5 (1979): 67.

¹⁸² Brychkov, *American Youth Today*, 162.

demonstrations, that they came to the attention of the KGB who were initially unsure as to the politics of these strangely dressed young people.¹⁸³ The Soviet hippies and other New Left groups would emerge at a time when the broader Soviet dissident movement was becoming of increasing concern to the leadership. Thus, the combination of the New Left's increasing violence and diversification, the Soviet leadership's embrace of détente, and a growing dissident threat at home persuaded the leadership against the worth of the New Left. Yet in many ways the leadership had acted too late to prevent the importation of New Left ideas. An active Soviet New Left would emerge in the mid-1970s which the KGB would work to eliminate.

Conclusion

Studying the years 1968 to 1972 with a focus on Soviet interaction with the New Left of the West brings significant findings which support arguments in favour of rethinking the nature of Soviet and Cold War history. Most significantly, dissidentism and transnational dissident-promoting coalitions can be established as a phenomenon of both the West and the Soviet Union in their relationships with in opposing Cold War blocs. Soviet-West dissidentism upheld ideologically suitable figures in the West, like Angela Davis, as dissidents who were examples of the unpopularity of capitalism and the universality of Soviet socialist values, serving Soviet attempts to counter the democratic superiority discourses of the West that the USSR was uniquely repressive.

This also draws historians' attention to the fact that political repression could exist in the West in very select circumstances but, more significantly, illustrates the utility of studying Cold War history forwards rather than backwards from the vantage points of 1989 and 1991. The stories covered in this chapter highlight how engaged the USSR was with dissidentism in the Brezhnev era. Yet studying the wider aspects of the Soviet relationship with these radical leftwingers also highlights how Soviet-New Left dissidentism was affected by significant political tensions in the 1970s, just as Western interactions with Soviet dissidents were, as well as exposing Soviet elites' conflicts over different conceptions of socialism and Soviet modernity. In the different degrees of Soviet support for the New Left, the underappreciated complexity of Soviet ideological thought in the 1970s and the different issues which underpinned Soviet politics are highlighted, much in the same way as the

¹⁸³ Fürst, *Flowers through Concrete*, 78-83.

issue of supporting dissidents in the Soviet Union exposed political tensions in the West.¹⁸⁴ The different Soviet assessments of the New Left's suitability as an ally produced contrasting responses from the elite among reformers and conservatives as to what forms of socialism abroad should be supported by the USSR and as a result New Leftists were supported only in very select circumstances. Meanwhile, the scope for the New Left inspiring certain Soviet analysts' thinking described here contributes to efforts to highlight the overlooked dynamism of the Brezhnev era, the existence of rival concepts of Soviet socialism, and the chances for alternative socialisms to emerge in Soviet society.¹⁸⁵ One such alternative which began to emerge following the state's experiment with the New Left was the Soviet New Left.

The following chapter assesses the relationship between the Soviet New Left and the Western original within the framework of dissidentism and compares it with the relationship between opposition politicians in the West and Soviet dissidents. Meanwhile, the chapter also explores how the Soviet state sought to deal with the dual challenges of increasing support for the New Left at home, part of a broader upsurge of dissent, and increasing criticism from abroad on its rights record at a time when the New Left no longer provided an effective counter narrative and human rights discourse began to become a powerful, globalised force in international politics. The chapter discusses how the USSR's propaganda responded to this situation and searched for new targets for Soviet-West dissidentism, examining how the path for a future transnational dissident-promoting coalition was paved in this period through increasing interaction with the British trade union movement and the growing strength of its neoliberal conservative opponents.

¹⁸⁴ Rentola, 'The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party', 141.

¹⁸⁵ Laqua and Alston, 'Activism and Dissent under State Socialism', 295.

CHAPTER III: THE SOVIET UNION IN THE SHADOW OF WEST-SOVIET DISSIDENTISM,

1972-1979

We must also heed the warnings of those, like Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who remind us that we have been fighting a kind of 'Third World War' over the entire period since 1945...¹

– Margaret Thatcher, 1976

Introduction

Just as the USSR's experiment with the New Left ended in failure and disillusionment in 1972, Soviet dissidents and human rights were becoming increasingly important in British and US politics.² Indeed, the period 1972-79 saw the human rights 'breakthrough' take place.³ This had significant consequences for the USSR because as well as human rights groups raising awareness, in the West conservative politicians began to take on the issue of Soviet human rights abuses as a vehicle to campaign against the continuation of détente and the relatively soft line this policy required Western governments to take when commenting on the persecution of Soviet dissidents. Conservatives argued that the policy represented a failure to stand up for Western values of liberty and democracy and passionately voiced support for Soviet dissidents like Solzhenitsyn, pressuring Western governments to confront Moscow. The Soviet Union, however, by this point could no longer call on the New Left to respond to the growing chorus of criticism of its treatment of political opponents. In the years prior, the New Left had at least provided examples of anti-capitalist protest and Western repression that Soviet leaders could point to in answer to Western criticism of the USSR's record on political rights, even if there had been serious ideological differences. By 1972, however, the New Left did not offer an effective counterpoint to human rights criticism stemming from the West, having become increasingly violent while no other convenient political movements had emerged within it apart from a few exceptions which receive due attention here. Thus, Soviet leaders and editors had to seek out new examples of Western dissent and adapt to the human rights breakthrough. At the same time, though, the New Left had become more popular among the Soviet opposition and political

¹ Margaret Thatcher, 'Speech at Kensington Town Hall ("Britain Awake") (The Iron Lady)', 19th January, 1976, 8, *Margaret Thatcher Foundation Archive*.

² Kenneth Cmiel, 'The Emergence of Human Rights Politics in the United States', *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 3, *The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History: A Special Issue* (December, 1999): 1234.

³ Eckel, 'The Rebirth of Politics from the Spirit of Morality', in *The Breakthrough*, 228.

underground, bringing the possibility that dissidentism could develop between the Soviet opposition and the extant New Left in the West.

This chapter comparatively examines the different forms of Anglo-American and Soviet engagement with dissidents from the opposing Cold War bloc during 1972-79. A special focus falls on two forms of opposition in each context, anti-détente conservatives in the US and UK and the Soviet New Left in the USSR – specifically two groups known as the Leningrad School and Revolutionary Communards.⁴ The rationale behind this choice of focus is two-fold. First, the activities of anti-détente conservatives (by-and-large then in opposition) in the West were key to sustaining dissidentism with Soviet dissidents as they used the stories of Soviet dissidents to highlight the human rights failings of détente to pressure governments to drop the policy, which sometimes led to significant legislative changes affecting how Western states interacted with the Soviet Union.⁵ Therefore, this chapter, in line with the thesis’ approach of comparing Soviet and Western experiences ‘side by side’ to uncover commonalities and differences, assesses whether a similar process took place in the Soviet Union’s opposition.⁶ The analysis determines whether dissidentism developed between the latter and Western New Left radicals, whereby the Soviet New Left placed pressure on the USSR’s government to adopt more radical socialist policies by accusing it of failing to stand up for Soviet values of radicalism through its non-support of the New Left. Second, Soviet opposition groups with an interest in the New Left are a focus because the ways in which Western opposition conservatives engaged with dissidents were expressly political and related to using dissidents’ statuses or ideas to achieve specific domestic political objectives framed in Cold War or ideological terms. Therefore, an effective comparison can be made in terms of achieving this thesis’ goals of assessing whether dissidentism and the creation of dissident figures occurred in the USSR as well as the West by asking whether the Soviet New Left did something similar.⁷ Overall, the

⁴ While other radical-left dissident groups operated, these two groups were directly inspired by the movements of 1968 and Marcusean theory and are the most relevant to this thesis. See Natasha Wilson, ‘Young and socialist at Moscow State University’, 77-102; Alekseyeva, *Soviet dissent*, 422; and Evgeny Kazakov and Dmitrii Rublëv, ‘Listovki “Dvizhenija revoljucionnyh kommunarov”’, *Acta samizdatica/Zapiski o samizdate*, 2016, no. 3: 27-43.

⁵ Referring to the Jackson-Vanik amendment which required states to protect human rights in order to receive Most Favoured Nation status when trading with the US. See Noam Kochavi, ‘Insights Abandoned, Flexibility Lost: Kissinger, Soviet Jewish Emigration, and the Demise of Détente’, *Diplomatic History* 29, no. 3, *Diplomatic History Roundtable: The Bush Administration’s Foreign Policy in Historical Perspective* (June, 2005): 503-30.

⁶ Major and Mitter, ‘East is East and West is West?’, 6-7.

⁷ Szulecki, ‘The “Dissidents” as a Synecdoche and Western Construct’, 9-10.

analysis shows that dissidentism could never truly be used to describe the connections between the Soviet New Left and the Western New Left, as the former's interest in the latter was primarily theoretical rather than being invested in specific New Left personalities highlighting a key difference with the West where the interest was in personalities as well as ideas.

At the same time, the chapter analyses the position of the Soviet government and how it reacted to the Soviet New Left and the increasing criticism of its human rights record from the West. The analysis shows how Soviet-West dissidentism changed after 1972 as the Soviet state sought alternative examples of capitalist repression to serve as counterpoints to Western criticism. In particular, the chapter shows how the Soviet media paid increasing attention to the Native American rights movement but most of all showed a growing interest in framing trade unionists as victims of human rights abuses in the West, the latter theme having gone overlooked in the existing literature. The analysis pays attention to the continuing ideological tensions which affected Soviet leaders' decisions over which groups to support, while providing further evidence of the utility of reading Cold War history forwards by illustrating how Soviet preferences for dissidentism shifted – as they continually did – from the New Left to the trade union movement during the 1970s. Connected to this shift, the chapter also considers the importance of the human rights 'breakthrough' identified by Eckel and Moyn which occurred at this time, and explores how the new found emphasis on dissidentism with trade unionists was a key part of how the Soviet press responded as human rights became a globalised discourse that could be used to criticise its policies by the Soviet dissident movement and opponents abroad.⁸ Finally, the chapter addresses how Western conservatives' utilisation of the Soviet dissidents contributed to shifts in Anglo-American government policy and set the stage for a renewed Cold War confrontation over human rights when these conservatives achieved electoral success in both the US and UK by 1980. This simultaneously provided greater opportunities for the Soviet Union to exploit the 'trade unionists as dissidents' narrative further when the new conservative governments introduced disruptive labour and economic policies that provoked dramatic industrial action.

⁸ Eckel, 'The Rebirth of Politics from the Spirit of Morality', in *The Breakthrough*, 228.

The rise of the Soviet dissidents and Soviet New Left

The failure of the Soviet experiment with the New Left and the transformation of the movement itself deprived Soviet leaders and propagandists of a useful counternarrative to growing Western criticism of the USSR's human rights record. Despite significant ideological tensions, the USSR's media had been able to exploit examples of Western repression against the New Left which had provided a cause célèbre of dissent for the Soviet press in Angela Davis as well as evidence of capitalism's unpopularity in 1968ers' protests. However, by the mid-1970s the movement provided few further such propaganda opportunities, with the New Left fracturing and descending into infighting. That is not to say, however, that the New Left disappeared entirely from the Soviet view but that the extant New Left offered little real potential for future dissidentism. The most significant development in the New Left in the 1970s was the adoption of violence and terrorism by parts of the movement.

The infighting in the extant New Left was caused by conflict between more moderate factions and the new, violent strain of New Left politics which embraced insurrection by the means of urban guerrilla warfare to precipitate communist revolutions. SDS, the most notable New Left organisation in the US, fractured between moderates and the terrorist Weathermen faction – later the Weather Underground – before its eventual dissolution in the mid-1970s.⁹ However, it was from the West German student movement that the most notorious representative of this new kind of politics emerged in the form of the Red Army Faction (RAF), who carried out assassinations and bombings in the name of communist revolution. The group had been formed in 1970, in the aftermath of 1968's failure. The radical young West Germans who joined the RAF, like Gudrun Ensslin, Andreas Baader, Ulrike Meinhof, and Horst Mahler, were motivated by the violent reaction of the West German police to student activism and became convinced that the only effective means of revolution was armed struggle.¹⁰ To this end the RAF waged a campaign of violence against the West German state, hoping to destabilise the government and incite revolution, which peaked during the 'German Autumn' of 1977 when the RAF kidnapped the German industrialist and former SS member Hanns

⁹ 'SDS Group's Session Ends in Bickering', *Los Angeles Times*, 1st January, 1970, 24. Also see Jeremy Peter Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004).

¹⁰ Martin Gutmann, 'Notable Literature on Germany's Red Army Faction within the Context of *Die RAF und der linke Terrorismus*' *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31, no. 4 (2008): 371.

Martin Schleyer and demanded the release of imprisoned RAF comrades. When these demands were refused, Schleyer was murdered and his body dumped in a car for the authorities to find.¹¹

The wanton violence of the RAF and other left-wing terrorist groups naturally dissuaded the Soviet leadership from offering them rhetorical support. However, the relationship between these new violent organisations and the Soviet leadership was never clear cut. Though Soviet press coverage of New Left terrorism denounced their violence, articles on the urban guerrillas still reflected the insecurity of the Soviet leadership about the New Left as an ideological rival. Coverage of the RAF went much further than simply denouncing the killings: it also expressly focused on denying any link between 'true' communism and these organisations. Despite the stability of the Soviet system, the leadership and Soviet editors continued to feel insecure enough about Soviet communism's popularity to consider it necessary to publish articles explaining the differences between Soviet communism and that of the violent New Left, so as to defend Soviet communism's superior status.¹²

At the same time, though, Soviet journalists still sought to utilise the violent New Left as a means to undermine Western democracy. The Soviet press promoted conspiracy theories that Western intelligence agencies had facilitated or even instead carried out the terrorist acts of RAF-type groups, such as the Italian Red Brigades (RB), in false-flag operations in order to denigrate communism's reputation; contrastingly, there are suggestions the KGB could have operationally supported the RAF.¹³ The controversy generated by the RAF and others like them unsurprisingly diminished the opportunities for dissidentism between the Soviet Union and extant New Left further in the later 1970s. That is not to say, however, that there were not opportunities to exploit the situation surrounding the RAF along the lines of dissidentism.

While the urban guerrillas' acts may have been violent, many of them were also arrested and subjected to treatment in prison that led supporters and Amnesty International's West German branch to call for an investigation into whether the inmates were having their rights as political prisoners breached; Amnesty ultimately found that the RAF inmates' claims of torture were unsubstantiated

¹¹ Gutmann, 'Notable Literature on Germany's Red Army Faction within the Context of *Die RAF und der linke Terrorismus*', 371-2.

¹² Ardatovsky, 'Problems and Opinions: Behind Terrorism', 4.

¹³ Galkin, 'The Face of Neo-Fascism', 67; Göktuğ Sönmez, 'Factors behind the Rise and Fall of Left-Wing Terrorism in Western Europe: The Cases of Rote Armee Fraktion and Brigade Rosse', *Security Strategies Journal* 15, no. 31 (2019): 475.

but criticised the prison conditions.¹⁴ Later, several incarcerated RAF members subsequently died in their cells in controversial circumstances in apparent suicides.¹⁵ The Soviet leadership, however, disturbed by the emergence of a domestic New Left, did not enter this debate on the side of the urban guerrillas. The only forms of engagement with the violent New Left were promoting conspiracy theories that the urban guerrillas were in some way facilitated by Western intelligence agencies in order to undermine Soviet communism's international image and explaining the differences between Soviet and New Left communism.¹⁶ Soviet papers decried the 'left-wing "excesses"' of groups like the RB, who they called 'pseudorevolutionaries' and reasserted the USSR's commitment to peace, as well as condemning such 'excesses' for the damage they could do to communism's reputation.¹⁷ By the late 1970s, the New Left was simply too radical for the increasingly conservative Soviet leadership. This was not only because the New Left had changed, but also because the Soviet leadership had become more committed to détente and Moscow was disinclined to openly support the disruptive activities of the New Left. This situation was a particularly problematic one for the Soviet Union in terms of waging the war of words over human rights and dissidents, as it came at a time when human rights and the Soviet dissidents' currency were growing in Western political discourse.

As discussed in chapter one, the 1970s are typically regarded as the 'breakthrough' era for human rights in the West, when their discussion became an increasingly important feature of domestic and international politics.¹⁸ The mid-point of the decade also saw the emergence of West-East dissidentism and what Szulecki calls the '[b]irth of the [d]issident [f]igure', as dissidents in the Warsaw Pact states 'became household names' and popular across the political spectrum in Western countries.¹⁹ Kenneth Cmiel cites a number of key events which helped bring human rights to the fore of politics in the 1970s, including the military overthrow of Salvador Allende as Chilean president

¹⁴ Jonathan Power, 'In the face of repression', *Guardian*, 12th May, 2001. For a wider discussion of Amnesty's role in Cold War politics, see Hurst, *British Human Rights Organizations and Soviet Dissent, 1965-1985*, 147-78.

¹⁵ 'Ulrike Meinhof, an Anarchist Leader In Germany, Is Found Hanged in Cell', *New York Times*, 10th May, 1976, 6; Paul Hofmann, '3 Jailed German Terrorists Reported Suicides As Hostages From Hijacked Plane Fly Home', *New York Times*, 19th October, 1977, 21.

¹⁶ Galkin, 'The Face of Neo-Fascism', 67.

¹⁷ Galkin, 'The Face of Neo-Fascism', 64; L. Zamoisky, 'Reporting the Details: After the Moro Abduction', *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 1977, no. 15: 9, in *CDSP* 30, no. 15 (1978): 19.

¹⁸ Jan Eckel and Samuel Moyn, eds., *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s*.

¹⁹ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 119-44; Horvath, "'The Solzhenitsyn Effect'", 880.

in 1973, Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* being published the same year, the 1975 Helsinki Accords, and of decisive importance: the end of the Vietnam War, which saw the emergence of 'a new way to approach world politics'.²⁰ Responding to these events, human rights organisations, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, began to publish accounts of abuses by governments that had gone overlooked which gained increasingly wide circulations.²¹ This human rights activism raised general awareness of the Soviet dissidents' plight, with bodies like Amnesty supporting the circulation of *samizdat*, especially *A Chronicle of Current Events*, and campaigning on behalf of individual dissidents.²² The decisive shift, however, as Hurst, Stephen Hopgood, Jack Snyder, and Leslie Vinjamuri point out, was the promotion of human rights to the top of the agenda in international relations, most of all by the US under Jimmy Carter, without which human rights would have remained a more marginal issue.²³ As Hurst further argues, this led to a 'rush to expertise' in the mid-1970s, as growing interest in human rights within politics and among the public positioned human rights organisations, which had been campaigning already for years, as authorities on human rights and enabled them to have a wider impact on public discourse.²⁴

The Soviet dissidents were of vital importance to this increase in interest and awareness of dissent and human rights abuses in communist states. Horvath has spoken of a 'Solzhenitsyn Effect', whereby the dissident's exposé of the Soviet system's abusive character in *Gulag Archipelago* forced those on the left to confront their wishful thinking about the nature of Soviet communism and led them to adopt more critical positions on Soviet human rights.²⁵ The Soviet dissidents themselves, meanwhile, began to take up the rapidly emerging global language of human rights. This itself acted as a challenge to the Soviet state, which had long trumpeted the superiority of its own economically based model of human rights. Soviet theory considered rights to be socially constructed, intimately connected to the establishment of socialism, as well as being tools to shape a society towards achieving communism.²⁶ This stood in contrast to the prevailing counter-view of human rights as

²⁰ Cmiel, 'The Emergence of Human Rights Politics in the United States', 1234.

²¹ Cmiel, 1232.

²² Hurst, "'To Build a Castle'", 8.

²³ Hurst, *British Human Rights Organizations and Soviet Dissent, 1965-1985*, 179; Stephen Hopgood, Jack Snyder, and Leslie Vinjamuri, eds., *Human Rights Futures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 6.

²⁴ Hurst, *British Human Rights Organizations and Soviet Dissent, 1965-1985*, 179.

²⁵ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 137-8; Horvath, "'The Solzhenitsyn Effect'", 879-907.

²⁶ Nathans, 'Soviet Rights-Talk in the Post-Stalin Era', 183.

naturally occurring and incompatible with the infringements on civil society inherent to the Soviet system.²⁷ Dissidents, however, were attracted to alternative models and increasingly utilised the burgeoning human rights discourse of the mid-1970s. This provided a direct link to potential allies in the West, including politicians across the political spectrum in Britain and America who were also drawing upon this new human rights discourse, appropriating it for their own political campaigns. Opponents of détente, however, who were primarily conservatives opposed to the incumbent administration, though some left-leaning figures and groups were also involved, made particularly aggressive use of dissidents and human rights in their political campaigning, capitalising on the new awareness of Soviet human rights abuses among the public.²⁸

This included British Conservatives in the House of Commons, and US Republicans and Democrats opposed to détente in Congress or operating from other political offices and vehicles such as governorships and party primary campaigns. Though there was certainly earnestness in many conservatives' proclamations of support for human rights in this period, it is noticeable that, while human rights activists focused on exposing abuses in both right-wing and left-wing dictatorships, the thrust of conservatives' criticism tended to be directed towards the communist states, most of all the Soviet Union, as they attempted to undermine the pro-détente policies of the incumbent administration while in opposition.²⁹

From the discourse on human rights in British and American politics, several new narratives on the need to support dissidents emerged. On the one hand, in the American case, liberals claimed embracing human rights offered an avenue to a more internationalist and morally viable foreign policy in touch with the 'best' American values, one that abandoned realpolitik and American support for anti-communist dictators for the sake of 'containing' communism.³⁰ On the other hand, conservatives in both Westminster and Washington took on human rights as a vehicle via which they could attack détente for causing the abandonment of opponents of the Soviet government and therefore betraying Western values of support for freedom of speech and liberty.³¹ The disastrous damage done to the US's image through its intervention in Vietnam was decisive in shaping this

²⁷ Nathans, 183.

²⁸ See Bent Boel, 'Western European Social Democrats and Dissidence in the Soviet Bloc during the Cold War', in Brier, *Entangled Protest*, 151-69.

²⁹ Tulli, "'Whose rights are human rights?'" , 573.

³⁰ Tulli, 573.

³¹ Tulli, 573.

process, and many, including future President Jimmy Carter, saw support for human rights as a route to restore American morality, ‘character’, and ‘international prestige’ in Vietnam’s aftermath – as Keys says, ‘human rights promotion was an antidote to shame and guilt’.³² At the same time, those who felt less guilty about the war and had strongly supported America’s involvement came to see human rights promotion as a way of projecting strength. In Keys’ words, ‘moralizing against Soviet abuses served as a remedy for what they saw as excessive American self-criticism over failures in Vietnam and a reminder that communism, not American imperialism, was the real evil.’³³ Stephen Hopgood, meanwhile, has offered a more critical analysis of the adoption of human rights by the US and its allies, and argued that ‘there has been a Western-led drive to globalise them for ideological and Realpolitik reasons.’³⁴

Nevertheless, the combined strength of these arguments would lead to a major shift in US foreign policy led by Jimmy Carter who installed human rights as a mainstay of his 1977-81 presidency attaching them to all major discussions with international leaders, meeting with dissidents and building their language into his own political rhetoric; the British government was initially more hesitant about associating with Soviet dissidents out of concern for maintaining productive economic relations with Moscow.³⁵ However, despite promoting human rights to the top of his foreign policy agenda, Carter continued to receive criticism from those supporting the conservative argument who perceived him as a weak president who misapplied human rights in international relations. A particular criticism levelled against Carter was that he was naïvely optimistic.³⁶ British and American conservatives were gripped by a sense of pessimism about the position of the West, seeing it as weak through its détente with the Soviet Union, and embraced the message of many dissidents that the

³² Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War*, 85; Barbara Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue: The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 3.

³³ Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue*, 49.

³⁴ Stephen Hopgood, ‘Human Rights on the Road to Nowhere’, in *Human Rights Futures*, Stephen Hopgood, Jack Snyder, and Leslie Vinjamuri, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 288; Hopgood, *The Endtimes of Human Rights* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).

³⁵ David F. Schmitz and Vanessa Walker, ‘Jimmy Carter and the Foreign Policy of Human Rights: The Development of a Post-Cold War Foreign Policy’, *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 1 (January, 2004): 118-9; Tulli, “‘Whose rights are human rights?’”, 593; Hurst, *British Human Rights Organizations and Soviet Dissent, 1965-1985*, 44-5; Minutes from Cabinet Meeting, 13th July, 1978, *TNA, Kew*, CAB 128/64/6, 1-2.

³⁶ Kirkpatrick, ‘Dictatorships and Double Standards’, in ‘Jeane J. Kirkpatrick Reprint Issue’, special issue, *World Affairs* 170, no. 2 (Fall 2007): 72.

idealist policy of rapprochement would not lead the Soviet Union to reform on its own accord and that instead the West needed to confront Moscow.³⁷

The Soviet dissidents were an ideal vehicle for conservatives to make their anti-détente campaigns more penetrating and convince voters to elect a more anti-communist administration. The dissidents were Cold War ‘truth-tellers’, who exposed the lie at the heart of the Soviet system that demanded Soviet citizens conform with orthodoxy and participate in Soviet ‘rituals’ despite knowing that the system was failing or else face repressive sanctions.³⁸ They also carried moral weight, as victims of communism’s brutality and détente’s indifference to their struggles. While conservative critiques of détente might have been dismissed as partisan, the dissidents’ own pessimistic views on détente could not be ignored as easily, particularly for the human dimension to their stories, having often suffered torture and other brutal methods of punishment in the Soviet Union for their beliefs. Retelling the emotive stories of prominent dissidents, who were themselves increasingly pessimistic about détente, was an effective way to exploit those lingering doubts and change hearts and minds.

In the Soviet dissident movement itself meanwhile, though attitudes to détente within it differed, by the mid-1970s many of the most prominent members of the community had begun to criticise East-West rapprochement in its then current form. Andrei Amalrik and Vladimir Bukovsky both attacked détente in a 1977 edition of *Index on Censorship*, which included a survey of East European dissidents’ responses to the question ‘[is] détente working?’³⁹ Amalrik felt that, under the then current policy, the USSR was able to preserve its position as a superpower while only having to make ‘sham concessions’ as regards its recent commitment to the Helsinki Accords.⁴⁰ Similarly, using

³⁷ Szulecki, ‘The “Dissidents” as a Synecdoche and Western Construct’, 9-10.

³⁸ Philip Boobbyer, ‘Truth-telling, Conscience and Dissent in Late Soviet Russia: Evidence from Oral Histories’, *European History Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (2000): 553. The utility of the truth-telling function in Western discourse to conservatives was exemplified in a later *Washington Post* comparison of Reaganite Jeane Kirkpatrick and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn as opponents of communism. The latter was deemed easier to ‘tolerate’, as he had a personal experience of communism’s brutality, was ‘a victim of the gulag’, and therefore possessed an argument worth listening while as an individual, despite his difficult character, was to be admired for his ‘militancy’. Kirkpatrick, on the other hand, was dismissed as a ‘rogue voice of discord’, with little in the way of an audience outside partisan ‘Reagan circles’, and therefore to be ignored. See C. McCarthy, ‘Solzhenitsyn and Kirkpatrick: Taking Care of Communism’, *The Washington Post*, 22nd May, 1983, K4. For further discussion of the contest over truth in Cold War journalism, see Dina Fainberg, *Cold War Correspondents: Soviet and American Reporters on the Ideological Frontlines* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020). Truth-telling is also discussed in Robert C. Rowland and John M. Jones, ‘Reagan’s Strategy for the Cold War and the Evil Empire Address’, *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 19, no. 3 (Fall, 2016): 438.

³⁹ Andrei Amalrik, Vladimir Bukovsky, Ota Filip, Leszek Kolakowski, Jiří Pelikán, George Schöpflin and Rudolf Tökes, ‘Is détente working?’, *Index on Censorship* 6, no. 6 (1977): 44-51.

⁴⁰ Amalrik et al., ‘Is détente working?’, 47.

language evocative of Western neoconservatives, Bukovsky argued that the West was ‘undergoing unilateral moral disarmament’ and that the signing of the Helsinki Accords merely represented ‘yet another step forward in the communist offensive and the further enslavement of peoples’.⁴¹

Meanwhile, Andrei Sakharov, though he began an optimist, was certainly gravitating closer towards Bukovsky and Amalrik’s pessimist positions, even if he did not fully adopt them.⁴² Sakharov argued that détente on Soviet terms, whereby trade continued while dissidents’ treatment was overlooked, would represent a capitulation by the West and ‘contaminate’ international relations with anti-democratic tendencies.⁴³ By the late 1970s, Sakharov was also growing increasingly pessimistic about détente’s ability to expand freedom in the USSR developing the ideas he had laid out in his 1968 essay *Progress* on the need for a new approach to East-West relations even further.⁴⁴ Solzhenitsyn, on the other hand, though he certainly stands apart from Bukovsky, Amalrik, and Sakharov for the intensely Slavophilic character of his worldview, still had an influential pessimist view on détente and world affairs which conservatives made particular use of. Solzhenitsyn perceived détente as a symptom of moral weakness in the West, calling on Western governments to expand their armed forces and reverse the Soviet Union’s military advantage which he felt had been established by the late 1970s.⁴⁵

It should be noted that Soviet dissidents frequently expressed dissatisfaction with their citation in Western terms by conservatives and other groups. Vladimir Bukovsky complained of the lack of understanding among the Western audiences he addressed and also regretted his heroization and transformation into an ‘icon’ ‘dragged from city to city’ to perform the role of a ‘professional hero’ during the 1970s.⁴⁶ Dissidents also criticised the use of the very term ‘dissident’, which the Westernised dissident discourse of the 1970s popularised. In their view, the word obscured the nature of what the movement was trying to achieve; Sakharov disliked the term and Elena Bonner wrote that he was a ‘physicist’, not a dissident.⁴⁷ There were grades of dissent between the ‘overt dissent’

⁴¹ Bukovsky et al., 47.

⁴² For more discussion of Sakharov’s views on détente, see Barbara Martin, ‘The Sakharov-Medvedev Debate on Détente and Human Rights: From the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the Helsinki Accords’, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 23, no. 3 (2021): 138-74.

⁴³ Jay Bergman, *Meeting the Demands of Reason*, 228.

⁴⁴ Bergman, 266.

⁴⁵ Michael Charlton and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, ‘An Interview With Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’, *Worldview* 19, no. 6 (June, 1976): 42.

⁴⁶ Nathans, ‘Talking Fish’, 582.

⁴⁷ Nathans, 581.

of the dissidents who resisted the Soviet system ‘from without’ and the many others who did not expressly dissent but ‘discreetly tried to reform it from within’ who sought to live with internal moral clarity.⁴⁸ As Boobbyer says, ‘even Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov started off trying to oppose the system from within, and only by force of circumstances took a more confrontational stance.’⁴⁹ The dissidents preferred to stress their status as normal citizens attempting to raise their voices and make their government listen. However, the dissidents still benefitted from Western attention and served as effective tools for Western critics of the Soviet Union’s human rights record to make use of while they themselves remained a thorn in the side of the Soviet leadership.⁵⁰

A few years earlier, pointing to an example of the persecution of the New Left, despite any Soviet ideological disagreements with the movement, had been a response Moscow had been able to call upon when Western politicians made references to Solzhenitsyn and accusations about the mistreatment of other Soviet dissidents. By the mid-1970s, however, the prospect for dissidentism between the New Left and the Soviet government had largely ended. Yet, this did not end the chance of dissidentism between Soviet society and the New Left altogether. In the years following the end of the Soviet state’s experiment with New Left dissidentism, extracts of the key texts of the movement had begun to circulate among the political underground of the USSR, as well as university campuses. By the mid-1970s, a Soviet New Left had emerged which appropriated the ideas of the Western original to the Soviet context.

Given the importance of the political opposition in the West to fomenting dissidentism with the Soviet dissidents as anti-détente politicians sought to put pressure on their governments, there is an interesting point of comparison in the Soviet New Left’s outreach to the Western original. Lacking a parliamentary system to be part of in the Soviet Union, the Soviet supporters of the New Left who emerged, while not organised as a party, often self-identified as the opposition nonetheless, with a cohort of New Left-inspired Leningrad-based dissidents describing themselves as a ‘left opposition group’.⁵¹ The anti-détente conservatives, of course, were in no way comparable to the Soviet

⁴⁸ Boobbyer, ‘Truth-telling, Conscience and Dissent in Late Soviet Russia’, 554-5; Boobbyer, *Conscience, Dissent and Reform in Soviet Russia*, 2.

⁴⁹ Boobbyer, 555.

⁵⁰ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 13-14.

⁵¹ Amnesty International, ‘Arrests, Searches, Interrogations’, *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 51 (1st December, 1978): 36. It is notable that the Soviet New Left so openly declared themselves the opposition. Some former members of Soviet New Left groups now dismiss suggestions they were dissidents, while

dissidents in terms of their actions or circumstances. The former faced no jail time or state-sanctioned harassment or violence for their views.

But the anti-détente conservatives of the UK and US with an interest in dissidents, and Soviet New Left, were both political opponents of the incumbent government's policies who engaged with dissidents and their ideas in the opposing Cold War bloc. Shorten persuasively characterises right-wing opponents of détente as 'rebels' against the Cold War West's orthodoxy of détente and argues they are intellectually comparable with East European and Soviet dissidents who resisted the orthodoxy of the 'really existing socialism' imposed across the Warsaw Pact states as both groups' thinking correlated around opposition to 'totalitarianism'.⁵² Therefore, it is revealing for the purposes of this study to compare their engagement with dissidents to identify any similarities or differences between the British and American relationships with Soviet dissidents and the Soviet one with Western radicals, by assessing whether perceived dissidents from the opposing Cold War bloc served a similar political purpose to the opposition or intellectual 'rebels' in each context.

Wilson, for example, has explored how radical-socialists abroad, like Eurocommunists and Latin American socialists, inspired the Soviet youth and led to a revival of interest in seeking a reformed socialism among Soviet non-conformists in spite of the crushing of the Prague Spring; the ideological influence of Soviet dissidents on Western intellectuals is already well documented.⁵³ Contributing to such efforts, it is useful, in order to better understand the meaning of Western dissent to Soviet dissidents, to compare whether conservatives' exploitation of Soviet dissidents to pressure Western governments was replicated by the opposition in the USSR in their engagement with the New Left. That is, whether oppositionists attempted to use examples of New Leftists' activism and their persecution in the West to accuse the Soviet leadership of failing to stand up for socialist values through their non-support of the New Left and pressure the Soviet government to become more radical. Dissidentism can once again be used to help investigate these queries surrounding the Soviet New Left's relationship with the Western original.

many other Soviet dissidents were at pains to appear unpolitical stressing instead their role as citizens calling on the Soviet state to respect the rule of law.

⁵² Shorten, 'The Cold War as comparative political thought', 407-8.

⁵³ See Wilson, 'Young and socialist at Moscow State University', 77-102; Fürst, 'The Aging Pioneer', 296; Shorten, 'The Cold War as comparative political thought', 407-8.

The USSR's New Leftists

The Soviet New Left, which was part of a wider sub-culture of alternative leftists in the USSR, was most active during the mid- to late-1970s and Gorbachev era, experiencing a lull in activity around the early 1980s as the KGB clamped down on them.⁵⁴ The goals behind the Soviet New Left's outreach to their Western counterparts, however, while to a degree strategic, were more intellectually speculative, long-term, and experimental compared to the short-term electoral and immediate political motives that inspired Western conservatives to embrace the rhetoric and ideas of the Soviet dissidents, in addition to their personal and political convictions on the need to support human rights. In fact, some in the Soviet New Left had very personal goals in mind geared towards self-expression and discovery, as well as socialising. A former member of the Soviet New Left, Andrei Reznikov, who was persecuted by the KGB for his activities, has expressly denied any dissident or political motive behind his and others' embrace of the New Left, saying:

The dissident movement has absolutely nothing to do with it, we simply did not know about it. Why [was I attracted to] left-wing, Marxist ideas? I would say it's like the spontaneous generation of life... As far as I understand, such sentiments spontaneously arise among young people, it was and will be popular. As they say: those who were not left-wing in their youth have no heart, and those who remained left-wing at a respectable age have no head. Thinking about it, I come to the conclusion that this is a kind of element of growing up.⁵⁵

Other parts of the Soviet New Left, though, did have political goals. Unlike the Western New Left, however, the Soviet counterpart was by and large not determined to overthrow the state and build a replacement but rather wanted reform it.

These sentiments were reflected in *samizdat* leaflets distributed by Reznikov and his comrades in Leningrad in 1976. Reznikov described their 'content [as] reminiscent of what later became a refrain in "Perestroika": "you can't live like this anymore," etc. The leaflet ended with the words: "Long live freedom, democracy, communism!"'⁵⁶ While the USSR was declared obsolete by the Western New Left, the Soviet branch still believed it possible to reform it and hoped to inspire a union-wide debate and political re-alignment through their promotion of New Left ideas. The Soviet New Left, therefore, represented a reappropriation of New Left ideas to achieve specific domestic political goals which, while less strategic than conservatives' use of Soviet dissidents' ideas to bring about specific

⁵⁴ See Rublëv and Reznikov, 'Novye levye v SSSR'; Natasha Wilson, 'Young and socialist at Moscow State University', 77-102.; Fürst, *Flowers Through Concrete: Explorations in Soviet Hippieland*.

⁵⁵ Rublëv and Reznikov, 'Novye levye v SSSR'.

⁵⁶ Rublëv and Reznikov.

policy and political changes, in terms of goals is still broadly comparable as an example of where dissidents' arguments were re-used within the frameworks of socialism and the Cold War. The ways in which engagement with the New Left took place on the part of its Soviet counterpart, however, significantly differed from conservatives' engagement with Soviet dissidents as a result of the contrasting political systems established in each setting.

Conservatives' use of dissidents centred around electoral politics and the main means by which dissidents were taken advantage of was through the inclusion of their arguments and stories in campaign speeches or speeches given in legislative chambers. In the United Kingdom, in addition to the work of human rights NGOs, the opposition Conservative Party under Margaret Thatcher played an important role in shaping the national discourse around dissidents as she sought to make use of the dissident issue to undermine the incumbent, pro-détente Labour government during 1975-79.⁵⁷ As well as ongoing campaigns for human rights in Britain, the dissidents gained special political significance because of the reluctance of the incumbent Labour government to associate with them directly and tours by prominent dissidents like Solzhenitsyn and Vladimir Bukovsky. Bukovsky arrived in Britain in 1977, following a highly publicised prisoner exchange in which the USSR received the leader of the Chilean Communist Party Luis Corvalán.⁵⁸ Both the Conservative and Liberal parties sought meetings with Bukovsky and associated their parties with his cause. The Labour prime minister, James Callaghan (1976-79), however, was less enthusiastic, bluntly refusing to meet the dissident during a confrontational exchange with Thatcher at Prime Minister's Questions during which she attacked Callaghan's conduct.⁵⁹ Already, however, Thatcher was increasingly employing the dissident issue in her rhetoric, as she continued to ask the public whether they felt that 'West[erners] [were] losing [their] spiritual strength', through the policy of détente and their reluctance to stand up for the dissidents and therefore Western values.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Mark Hurst, "'To Build a Castle'", 32.

⁵⁸ Olga Ulianova, 'Corvalán for Bukovsky: a real exchange of prisoners during an imaginary war. The Chilean dictatorship, the Soviet Union, and US mediation, 1973-1976', *Cold War History* 14, no. 3 (2014): 315-36.

⁵⁹ Hella Pick, "'Monopoly" on dissidents', 1; Mark Hurst, *British Human Rights Organizations and Soviet Dissent, 1965-1985*, 44-5.

⁶⁰ Margaret Thatcher, 'Speech to Conservative Rally', 31st July, 1976, 5, *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*.

The messages of Soviet dissidents were a useful rhetorical tool to use as Thatcher made her case against the type of détente which had prevailed. In her famous ‘Iron Lady’ speech, Thatcher made multiple references to Solzhenitsyn, saying:

... we must also heed the warnings of those, like Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who remind us that we have been fighting a kind of ‘Third World War’ over the entire period since 1945—and that we have been steadily losing ground. As we look back over the battles of the past year, over the list of countries that have been lost to freedom or are imperilled by Soviet expansion can we deny that Solzhenitsyn is right?⁶¹

As Elisa Kriza says, ‘détente as a policy became connected to Solzhenitsyn insofar as the message of *Gulag* and his speeches focused on creating an uncompromising bond between a certain type of morality and politics’.⁶² While the left-leaning *Observer* newspaper argued it was possible to support both Solzhenitsyn and détente, conservatives frequently insisted that the Soviet Union represented an evil form of society and found it morally unacceptable to pursue a détente that they thought allowed the suppression of Soviet dissidents’ voices.⁶³ Solzhenitsyn was similarly utilised by conservatives and other opponents of détente in the United States, as was the broader Soviet dissident movement and the issue of human rights at large.⁶⁴

Following his expulsion in 1974 from the USSR, Solzhenitsyn was an ideal symbol for American opponents of détente to use in their campaigns. A Nobel laureate who was brutally punished for speaking out, Solzhenitsyn’s story highlighted what conservatives saw as the intransigence of Soviet oppression despite the supposed changes that détente was helping to bring. Solzhenitsyn was thus used by critics of détente, to illustrate the one-way nature of the policy and the betrayal of Western values that it entailed.⁶⁵ The catalyst for Solzhenitsyn’s politicisation in the US was the failure of the Gerald Ford administration (1974-77) to meet the dissident in July 1975. Kissinger had advised the President that if he met Solzhenitsyn, having been invited to a dinner hosted by anti-communist union leader George Meany at which the dissident was the guest of honour, then it might ‘torpedo détente for good’.⁶⁶ Scandal erupted, however, when the White House excused the President from the dinner by claiming he had other pressing commitments, which it turned out included meeting with his

⁶¹ Margaret Thatcher, ‘Speech at Kensington Town Hall (“Britain Awake”) (The Iron Lady)’, 9.

⁶² Elisa Kriza, *Alexander Solzhenitsyn*, 134.

⁶³ Kriza, 137.

⁶⁴ Kriza, 131-2.

⁶⁵ Tulli, ““Whose rights are human rights?””, 577.

⁶⁶ Bloodworth, ‘Senator Henry Jackson, the Solzhenitsyn Affair, and American Liberalism’, 73.

daughter.⁶⁷ At the union dinner, Solzhenitsyn delivered a scathing indictment of détente causing further controversy and humiliation for Ford's administration.⁶⁸

Among those to pounce on the incident was Ronald Reagan, then preparing to enter the race for the 1976 Republican nomination. In a short article, Reagan suggested that Ford had betrayed American values and highlighted the irony that during the very week when America was 'celebrating its independence as the haven of human liberty', the US government had apparently deferred to Soviet sensitivities over human rights and failed to support 'the world's greatest living writer and its most profound spokesman for human freedom and morality'.⁶⁹ The Democratic senator Henry Jackson, meanwhile, made much more extensive use of Solzhenitsyn than Reagan in his bid for the 1976 Democratic nomination.⁷⁰

The senator argued that détente led to an American weakness that not only 'undermined NATO's cohesion' but also 'threatened the Western alliance'.⁷¹ In his opposition to détente, Jackson achieved some success, notably the Jackson-Vanik amendment to the US Trade Act that linked the award of Most Favoured Nation trade status to Soviet bloc states to their establishment of sufficient human rights conditions.⁷² Jackson sought to further use human rights as part of his presidential campaign, by highlighting how détente betrayed American interests and the cause of the dissidents.⁷³ In a notable incident, the senator provided Solzhenitsyn with the use of his senate office to make his second major speech.⁷⁴ Following this, Jackson claimed Ford was "cowering" in fear of the Soviets, causing the White House to "side with the Soviet rulers against the American commitment to freedom."⁷⁵ Jackson's rival for the nomination, however, Jimmy Carter, would ultimately be the victor and, making the liberal argument in favour of embracing human rights that America needed to instate an internationalist and humanitarian foreign policy, Carter was able to win the 1976 election. Carter brought a new emphasis to human rights in US foreign policy, unlike anything done

⁶⁷ Bernard Gwertzman, 'Solzhenitsyn Says Ford Joins In Eastern Europe's "Betrayal"', *New York Times*, 22nd July, 1975, 1.

⁶⁸ Gwertzman, 'Detente Scored by Solzhenitsyn', *New York Times*, 1st July, 1975, 6.

⁶⁹ Ronald Reagan, 'The Ronald Reagan Column', *Copley News Service*, 14th July, 1975, 2 and 1, in *The Ron Nessen Papers, The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Box 39, Folder 'Reagan - Newspaper Columns'*.

⁷⁰ Bloodworth, 'Senator Henry Jackson, the Solzhenitsyn Affair, and American Liberalism', 69–77.

⁷¹ Bloodworth, 'Senator Henry Jackson, the Solzhenitsyn Affair, and American Liberalism', 71.

⁷² Known as the 'Jackson-Vanik Amendment' after its co-sponsor Charles A. Vanik.

⁷³ Bloodworth, 'Senator Henry Jackson, the Solzhenitsyn Affair, and American Liberalism', 72.

⁷⁴ Bloodworth, 74.

⁷⁵ Bloodworth, 74.

by his recent predecessors, and ‘transformed United States involvement in the Helsinki process’ a shift which ‘surprised many observers’ Carter having expressed a mixed view of Helsinki in the run-up to the election.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the pessimist argument made by the likes of Reagan, Jackson, and indeed Solzhenitsyn continued to be influential. In fact, the conservative discourse on human rights along with the more liberal one had ‘reinforced each other’ in a way that allowed Carter to take advantage of both to gain power, as he attempted to ‘synthesise the neoconservatives’ and the new internationalists’ approaches to human rights’.⁷⁷

Carter, however, was never able to fully satisfy supporters of the former approach. His own strategy was to pay attention to human rights abuses in non-communist states that were existing or potential allies of the US, as well as those taking place in communist states. To conservatives, who took a realist and pessimist view of world affairs and viewed the Soviet Union as the main enemy, this was dissatisfactory and naïve for its utopianism, and it was during Carter’s presidency Jeane Kirkpatrick’s influential ‘Dictatorships and Double Standards’ article appeared which encapsulated the increasing popularity of an anti-communist foreign policy.⁷⁸ Foreign policy would remain a major weak spot for Carter’s administration that Ronald Reagan would exploit during his successful presidential bid in 1980, from which point onwards the Soviet dissidents would be treated by Washington as firm allies of the US. The Soviet dissidents as depicted in Reagan’s rhetoric, of course, never held anything other than right-wing beliefs despite left-wing dissidents like Roy Medvedev enjoying high profiles in the West. The left-wing Soviet dissident and political writer Boris Kagarlitsky has noted that Reagan certainly gained popularity among many other dissidents.⁷⁹ However, throughout the 1970s, he and several others had begun to read Marcuse and a small but growing Soviet New Left emerged that started writing self-published manifestos, distributing political leaflets, and discussing ideas among themselves to create alternative political futures.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War*, 81-2.

⁷⁷ Tulli, ‘Whose rights are human rights?’, 593.

⁷⁸ Kirkpatrick, ‘Dictatorship and Double Standards’, *Commentary* 68, no. 5 (November, 1979): 34–45.

⁷⁹ Boris Kagarlitsky, ‘Being A Marxist in the Soviet Union’, *New Zealand Monthly Review* (June/July, 1990), 26.

⁸⁰ Awareness of Marcuse and other New Left theory varied between members of the underground Soviet radical left, with access to New Left literature strictly controlled by Soviet libraries. On the one hand, Kagarlitsky actively read Marcuse and described his works as highly influential in the Soviet New Left saying he only read Marx after he had read Marcuse, while others absorbed New Left theory via officially sponsored attack pieces designed to debunk it. On the other hand, Reznikov claims to have never had access to Marcuse’s books. See Kagarlitsky, ‘Being A Marxist in the Soviet Union’, 27; Wilson, ‘The generation of Allende and Solidarność’, 176-7; Rublëv and Reznikov, ‘Novye levye v SSSR’.

As Wilson has illustrated, in the mid-1970s there emerged a 'second generation of dissidents' seeking to revive and reform socialism, of which the Soviet New Left was a part, differing from the first 1960s generation of Soviet dissidents who had largely become disillusioned with socialism after 1968.⁸¹ The Soviet New Left's engagement with its Western counterpart was expressly about ideas and not individuals, though. Generally, their goals were not to use the examples of persecuted New Left figures to try and persuade the government to take up New Left ideas, but rather to promote the ideas themselves. In fact, the Soviet radical-left and youth at large were largely disinterested in the major personalities of the Western New Left, about whom they only had limited access to relevant texts and information, who could have performed this function that the Soviet dissidents did for Western conservatives attempting to reverse détente.⁸² As Kagarlitsky argues, 'Western student leaders like Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Rudi Dutschke', the latter of whom continued to be politically active in this period and was expelled from the UK as a threat to national security for his 'politically undesirable' beliefs, 'were of no particular interest to anyone in the East'.⁸³

The Soviet New Left could have put forward the state's lack of support for the likes of Cohn-Bendit and Dutschke as examples of where the Soviet Union was failing to live up to its founding principles of internationalism, socialist solidarity, and radicalism. Instead, however, the Soviet New Left sought to carry out their own activism, specific to the conditions of the Soviet Union, based upon political experimentation. The Soviet New Left, unlike the Western original, merely sought to reform not overthrow the state; the majority of Soviet dissidents on the left and right of the political spectrum sought only to reform the Soviet Union not dissolve it.⁸⁴ Yet, even if they may have not been self-styled revolutionaries, the more expressly political elements of the Soviet New Left considered themselves part of the unofficial opposition and produced manifestos that contained revolutionary ideas throughout which the influence of the New Left was clearly visible, and which were designed to create the conditions for the reform of the Soviet system, drawing some comparison with Western conservatives' use of dissident ideas to reform government policy through pressure and debate.

⁸¹ Wilson, 'Young and socialist at Moscow State University', 78.

⁸² Wilson, 'The generation of Allende and Solidarność', 176-7.

⁸³ Kagarlitsky, '1960s East and West: The Nature of the Shestidesiatniki and the New Left', trans. William Nickell, *boundary 2* 36, no. 1 (2009): 98; Harold Beeley, 'Letters to the Editor: Rudi Dutschke: no security risk', *Guardian*, 13th January, 1971, 10.

⁸⁴ Kagarlitsky, '1960s East and West', 98; Marshal S. Shatz, 'Programs and prospects', in *Soviet Dissent in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 157-83.

In fact, *A Chronicle of Current Events*' account of Andrei Reznikov's distribution of leaflets in Leningrad in 1976 differs from his own, given retrospectively in a 2010 interview, in which he generally appears to have been at pains to stress the lack of revolutionary and dissident content in the movement's literature, seeming to conflate his own disillusionment with New Left socialism with the Soviet New Left lacking a political character.⁸⁵ Rather than reading 'Long live freedom, democracy, communism!' as Reznikov recalled, *Chronicle*, and also Alekseyeva in 1985, described the headline of Reznikov's leaflets to be 'Long Live the New Revolution! Long Live Communism!', a statement that clearly drew upon the New Left concept of re-launching the revolution following a revised program.⁸⁶ Whether *Chronicle's* version is more accurate is difficult to assess as it directly contradicts the author of the text in question, though *Chronicle's* account was contemporary rather than retrospective. Furthermore, regardless of the possible inconsistencies and unreliability of Reznikov's account, it is clear the Soviet New Left were far more political than Reznikov suggests. In fact, Reznikov had been a member of a collective of young Soviet New Leftists who formed the radical 'Leningrad School'.⁸⁷

The Leningrad School was a Soviet New Left group active in the late 1970s. Its associates included Andrei Besov, Aleksei Chistyakov, Viktor Chistyakov, Alexander Fomenkov, Irina Fyodorova, Irina Lopotukhina, Reznikov, Alexander Skobov, and Arkady Tsurkov, most of whom were either students at university or school.⁸⁸ In its first year of existence in 1976, as well as distributing leaflets, the group put together what the *Chronicle* called a 'programmatic statement' that described the group as:

A group of young people, motivated by their dissatisfaction with the surrounding reality – that motor of social progress – [who] have decided to embark on coordinated social activity aimed at transforming the existing society.⁸⁹

The document continued to argue that the Soviet system had 'fulfilled its historic function and ha[d] outlived its day', having become overly bureaucratic, and needed to be replaced 'with a more

⁸⁵ Rublëv and Reznikov, 'Novye levye v SSSR'.

⁸⁶ Rublëv and Reznikov; Amnesty International, 'News in Brief', *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 40 (20th May, 1976): 105; Alekseyeva, *Soviet dissent*, 422.

⁸⁷ Alekseyeva, 422.

⁸⁸ Amnesty International, 'News in Brief', *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 40: 105; Amnesty International, 'The Trials of Tsurkov and Skobov', *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 53 (1st August, 1979): 35-6; Evgeny Kazakov and Dmitrii Rublëv, 'Koleso istorii ne vertelos', ono skatyvalos'. *Levoe podpol'e v Leningrade, 1975–1982*, *Neprikosnovennyj zapas* 91, no. 5 (2013): 156–75, <https://magazines.gorky.media/nz/2013/5/koleso-istorii-ne-vertelos-ono-skatyvalos-levoe-podpole-v-leningrade-1975-8211-1982.html>.

⁸⁹ *A Chronicle of Current Events* no. 51: 34.

forward-thinking system – socialism’; this reflected a view common among left-wing dissidents, as noted Kagarlitsky, that what was called socialism by the authorities in the USSR did not constitute ‘real’ socialism.⁹⁰ The transition to a ‘forward-thinking system’ from the ‘state-monopoly capitalism’ that the Soviet system embodied, was in the Leningrad School’s view a ‘revolutionary process’.⁹¹ The School also argued the ‘system [that] was established in Russia after the 1917 revolution was in keeping with the laws of history and inevitable’, exhibiting the influence of Leninism on the Soviet New Left that continued throughout the movement’s development, as well as the desire of the Leningrad School to stress that their ideas remained within the remit of Marxism and were therefore not a threat to the USSR’s foundational ideology.⁹²

Nevertheless, the School’s criticisms of Soviet socialism as outdated and unable to satisfy ‘the widest material and spiritual demands of each member of society’ strongly resembled the classic New Left critique of developed socialism’s ‘irrelevance’ to furthering the cause of radical left-wing politics in the mid-20th century.⁹³ The School’s members concluded that an ‘indispensable condition for achieving’ the replacement of Soviet communism was:

...the presence of a strong, organized and, most important, constructive opposition, which will present the government with a peaceful solution to conflict, and which has a concrete programme for improvements... The intelligentsia will then be able to play its vanguard role and lead the masses behind it, will then be able to give birth to a strong, organized opposition when it finally forms itself into its own class, will advance its own programme and form its own political party, a militant, united vanguard party... To achieve all this the intelligentsia must overcome its three weaknesses: ideological, organizational and moral. For this, in turn, the exchange of information and ideas and the discussion of burning polemical questions must be organized in intellectually critical circles. It is necessary to undertake education and self-education to unite cultural forces and stimulate public thinking. The group sees its primary task as furthering this aim...⁹⁴

The School, whose declaration seemed to call for a revival of the 1969-72 experiment and supported ideas about the intelligentsia taking a leading role in socialist society, followed up its commitment to the goal of facilitating the reform of the Soviet system through knowledge exchange by publishing a short lived journal called *Perspektiva* (*Perspective*) between spring and autumn of 1978, planning

⁹⁰ Amnesty, ‘Arrests, Searches, Interrogations’, *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 51: 34; Boris Kagarlitsky, “‘An extremely socialist way of becoming capitalist.’ The Soviet New Left Critiques Perestroika. Interview with Boris Kagarlitsky’, *Breakthrough* 14, no. 2 (Winter, 1990): 35.

⁹¹ *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 51: 34.

⁹² Patrick Flaherty, ‘Perestroika radicals: the origins and ideology of the Soviet new left’, *Monthly review*, an independent Socialist magazine 40, no. 4 (1988): 29; Anthony D’Agostino, *Gorbachev’s Revolution, 1985-1991* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 37.

⁹³ *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 51: 35.

⁹⁴ *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 51: 35.

a conference the same year in October, as well as organising a ‘commune’ at Alexander Skobov’s flat (which the group shared with some hippies) that was active for six-months.⁹⁵

Meanwhile, in addition to Leningrad, other parts of the Soviet Union also had active New Leftists. In particular, the Estonian Soviet Republic seems to have been host to some of the most prominent Soviet New Left activism. Leningrad School member Arkady Tsurkov was a student at Tartu University and was active in trying to organise New Left groups in the city as well as in Leningrad. Tsurkov was accused by the KGB of trying to distribute copies of the School’s journal *Perspektiya* to students in Tartu, as well as to former fellow activist Aleksandr Fomenkov in his military unit who by then had been drafted into the army after being arrested and expelled from school.⁹⁶ Beyond the activities of the Leningrad School, there is also evidence that the intelligentsia in Estonia were adopting New Left ideas. As referenced in chapter two, the philosopher Gustav Naan was reprimanded for writing a criticism of the bureaucratisation of Soviet communism and the need for the intelligentsia to form a new revolutionary vanguard in the Estonian journal *Looming*.⁹⁷ Meanwhile, the Estonian poet Arvi Siig published a poem that was critical of both Soviet and American imperialism and praised Che Guevara.⁹⁸

Moscow too had active radical leftist groups, such as the Young Socialists and Moscow-Petrozavodsk group, though the importance of Marcusian New Left ideology to these groups was less important than Eurocommunism, *Solidarność*, and the socialist currents of Latin America.⁹⁹ Another Leningrad-based group, however, the small collective known as the Revolutionary

⁹⁵ Amnesty, ‘Arrests, Searches, Interrogations’, *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 51: 36; Wilson, ‘The generation of Allende and Solidarność’, 176. The journal was initially called *Unity* in its first edition. There were several other *samizdat* journals at least tentatively connected to the Soviet New Left, including *Left Turn*, *Variations*, and *Socialism and the Future*. See *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 53: 34 and ‘Sud nad Mikhailom Rivkinym (21-2)’, *Vesti iz SSSR*, no. 21. The conference was never held as Reznikov says that the KGB pre-emptively arrested its participants, though some had already travelled and met. See Rublëv and Reznikov, ‘Novye levye v SSSR’. For discussion of the commune see Fürst, ‘We all live in a Yellow Submarine: Life in a Leningrad Commune’, *Dropping out of Socialism*, eds. Fürst and McLellan, 179-207 and Ekaterina Nezvankina, ‘We All Live in a Yellow Submarine’, *The Russian Reader* (August, 2020), <https://therussianreader.com/2020/08/05/yellow-submarine/>. For discussion of the hippie movement in the wider USSR, see Turje Toomitsu, ‘The Imaginary Elsewhere of Soviet Hippies in Estonia’, in *Dropping out of Socialism*, eds. Fürst and McLellan, 41-62.

⁹⁶ *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 53: 35-6. *Perspektiva* should not be confused with the similarly named *Perspektyvos* (*Perspectives*), which was a longer-lived *samizdat* journal focusing on the Lithuanian national movement. See Amnesty International, ‘Lithuanian Samizdat’, *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 54 (15th November, 1979): 152. For discussion of some of *Perspektiva*’s other output, see Fürst, *Flowers Through Concrete*, 126-8.

⁹⁷ Taagepera, ‘The Impact of the New Left on Estonia’, 47.

⁹⁸ Taagepera, 48-50.

⁹⁹ See Wilson, ‘Young and socialist at Moscow State University’, 77-102.

Communards or Movement of Revolutionary Communards, were a more conclusively New Left group active during 1978-79.¹⁰⁰ KGB searches of the Communards' property encountered works by Marcuse, and the group's members saw 'themselves as children of "1968"' who decried the 'terrible three-headed monster [of] the State-the Family-Private Property'.¹⁰¹ The pamphlets of the group committed the Communards to 'world revolution', but also expressed 'humanist' values, while proposing to discuss with anyone, 'be it an atheist, a communist, a social democrat or the General Secretary', the problems with Soviet society and find 'alternative ways of social development'.¹⁰² The Communards seem to have engaged with the New Left in a similar way to the Leningrad School, and focused on using the movement's ideas to reform the USSR rather than citing individual New Leftists and accusing the Soviet state of failing to defend socialism by not standing in solidarity with the students of 1968, leading to their brutal repression by the KGB. There were exceptions to this rule, however. During their court case one of the Communards, Aleksei Stasevich, gave the following speech when the contents of stickers produced by his group were condemned as 'hooliganism':

What's anti-social in it? The fact that we consider people to be exploited in our society and their consciousness manipulated? That conditions do not exist for people's free development and creativity? That we feel solidarity with the French youth movement of 1968? That we consider the commune the kernel of a communist society?¹⁰³

Stasevich's rhetorical questions about the problems associated with his support of the New Left in some respects were emblematic of Western politicians' references to Soviet dissidents. Stasevich drew parallels between the values of the New Left and communism in his argument, implying that it was natural for Soviet communists to stand in 'solidarity' with the New Leftists on the basis the latter supported ideas which were fundamental to achieving communism. Stasevich seemed to suggest that the failure of the Soviet state to support the New Left represented a betrayal of its own values in his argument that 'the commune is the kernel of a communist society', meaning that the New Left was essentially communist, and the Soviet state's persecution of the Communards for their 'solidarity

¹⁰⁰ Kazakov and Rublëv, 'Koleso istorii ne vertelos', ono skatyvalos'. Also see Kazakov and Rublëv, 'Listovki "Dvizhenija revoljucionnyh kommunarov"', 27-43; 'Delo "sotsialistov" (20/21-7)', *Vesti iz SSSR*, 15th November, 1982, no. 20-21, <https://vesti-iz-sssr.com/2016/12/13/delo-sotsialistov-1982-2021-7/>.

¹⁰¹ Kazakov and Rublëv, 'Koleso istorii ne vertelos', ono skatyvalos'.

¹⁰² Leaflets of the Revolutionary Communards f172, op. 3, N. Miletich, Memorial International Archive (MIA), St. Petersburg reproduced in Kazakov and Rublëv, 'Listovki "Dvizhenija revoljucionnyh kommunarov"', 35-7 (see appendices no. 1 and 2).

¹⁰³ Amnesty International, 'The Trial of Stasevich, V. Mikhailov and Kochneva', *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 55 (31st December, 1979): 7; Alekseyeva, *Soviet dissent*, 423.

with the French youth movement' was at odds with socialism's values.¹⁰⁴ Certainly, this incident stands as the most explicit example of Soviet oppositionists expressing direct support for the actors of the New Left. The case of the Communards is also revealing in terms of assessing the impact of the Soviet state's experiment and official study of the New Left during 1969-72.

Though the experiment ended in 1972, with the academic establishment and Soviet leadership drawing the conclusion that the New Left was of little relevance to Soviet society, it seems that against the best wishes of the Soviet censors that their discussion of the New Left, which was often focused on debunking it as a false representation of communism to prevent its spread throughout Soviet society, seems to have done the very opposite. Members of the Communards recall that their first exposure to Marcuse came through reading 'political brochures' and extracting the selected quotes included in articles on New Left theory.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, members of the Leningrad School were first exposed to New Left theory in official pamphlets that criticised it – the translated versions of New Left texts had their access restricted in public libraries while most members lacked the language skills to read the originals, so Soviet attack pieces designed to debunk the New Left became a primary vehicle via which the movement's ideas were injected into Soviet society.¹⁰⁶ This supports the possibility that sympathetic authors like Brychkov successfully covertly transmitted New Left ideas to Soviet society through their analyses, as Menhert has suggested Soviet writers may have attempted to do in their critical overviews of Marcuse and other authors.¹⁰⁷ The question remains, however, while the influence and interest in the New Left is clear in the Communards', Leningrad School's, and others Soviet oppositionists' engagement with New Left politics, whether their activities represented anything similar to the dissidentism that was taking place between the West and the Soviet dissidents.

Assessing the Soviet New Left through the lens of dissidentism

Stasevich's statement of solidarity with the French student revolutionaries was emblematic of dissidentism in many respects and the most direct expression of support for radicals in the West by the Soviet New Left. Furthermore, Stasevich gave his speech, which was in itself a political act of

¹⁰⁴ Amnesty, 'The Trial of Stasevich, V. Mikhailov and Kochneva', *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 55: 7.

¹⁰⁵ Kazakov and Rublëv, 'Listovski "Dvizheniya revolyutsionnykh kommunarov"', 32.

¹⁰⁶ Wilson, 'The generation of Allende and Solidarność', 176-7.

¹⁰⁷ Menhert, *Moscow and the New Left*, 40.

defiance and criticism of the USSR, directly to officials of the Soviet judicial system. Therefore, it is possible to consider his reference to the naturalness of solidarity between Soviet and New Left communists to represent an attempt to shame the Soviet authorities over their non-support of the New Left and pressure them to support its ideals in line with official Soviet ideology's claim to be the leader of global radicalism, much like anti-détente conservatives did in their references to Soviet dissidents and Western governments' failure to stand up for liberal values of freedom of speech.¹⁰⁸ That said, though, Stasevich ultimately referred to the French youth movement rather than specific individuals so therefore was not deifying certain Western radicals as dissidents.¹⁰⁹ In fact, many of the Communards did not consider themselves to be oppositionists, even if they were carrying out activities associated with the underground, and were more concerned with youthful protest and self-expression through their acts of dissent.¹¹⁰

Further examples of where the Soviet New Left's engagement with the Western original was similar to the conservatives' use of Soviet dissidents are hard to come by. Their engagement was primarily ideological and rhetorical and not based around acts or individuals. While conservatives' engagement with Soviet dissidents may also have had a significant ideological bent and reflected their genuine commitment to human rights, it ultimately centred on supporting specific individuals and specific acts of resistance by those individuals, i.e. supporting dissidence, as a means to shame and pressurise Western policymakers. The Soviet New Left, however, was more concerned with repurposing the ideas of the New Left rather than supporting its representatives. Indeed, as Kagarlitsky has said, the Western student leaders were of little interest to young citizens living in communist states, even if the ideas which inspired them were.¹¹¹ Rather, members of the Communards, for example, 'played [at being] Cohn-Bendit and Rudi Dutschke', debating New Left concepts among themselves but taking little concrete action.¹¹² Meanwhile, in terms of assessing dissidentism, while 'domestic recognition' and notoriety may be established, 'Soviet attention' and 'open, legal, and non-violent action under a repressive sanction (dissidence)' cannot be.¹¹³ It is not that these factors were not present at all – the New Left were sometimes persecuted for their acts – but specifically, that that

¹⁰⁸ 'The Trial of Stasevich, V. Mikhailov and Kochneva', *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 55: 7.

¹⁰⁹ Kazakov and Rublëv, 'Koleso istorii ne vertelos', ono skatyvalos'.

¹¹⁰ Kazakov and Rublëv, 'Listovski "Dvizheniya revolyutsionnykh kommunarov"', 31.

¹¹¹ Kagarlitsky, '1960s East and West', 98.

¹¹² Kazakov and Rublëv, 'Listovski "Dvizheniya revolyutsionnykh kommunarov"', 31.

¹¹³ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 3.

Soviet opposition attention was not typically directed towards New Left 'action' in addition to ideas.¹¹⁴ Neither was it consistently connected to shaming and pressurising the Soviet government. Therefore, neither dissidentism, a transnational dissident-promoting coalition, nor Western-style valorisation of individual dissidents can be considered to have taken place between the New Left and its Soviet counterpart in any meaningful sense. There were, though, some notable exceptions to the lack of support and deification of individuals.

Andrei Reznikov has described how he and other members of the Soviet New Left admired those in groups like the RAF, controversially saying: 'they [New Left terrorists] were treated with great interest. I had a portrait of Patricia Hearst, a hostage who defected to the left-wing terrorists [the US-based Symbionese Liberation Army], hanging somewhere... We treated these organizations rather positively'.¹¹⁵ Dissidentism, of course, cannot be established here, this time because the urban guerrillas were expressly violent, but Reznikov's claim is intriguing for how it reveals the possibility of interest in deifying Western leftists though ultimately it remains an outlier.¹¹⁶ Yet, in another instance, Andrei Tsurkov offered to go to protest at the West German Consulate over the trial of the RAF leaders.¹¹⁷ However, this was not a serious effort and the trial was clearly not considered important by his Soviet New Left group, as only three others volunteered to take part in a potential demonstration nor could this in any circumstance be considered dissidentism given the RAF's violent nature violates Szulecki's requirement for non-violence.¹¹⁸

Interestingly, some Soviet New Leftists did theoretically consider armed struggle to be justified in circumstances where the incumbent regime fiercely resisted. Evgeny Kazakov and Dmitirii Rublëv have mentioned the existence of a Kazan-based 'Red Brigade' whose members sought to emulate the Italian left-wing terrorist group the Red Brigades, although the levels of violence and activity of the Soviet variant are difficult to ascertain.¹¹⁹ However, organised violence was not ever a serious

¹¹⁴ In fact, some in the wider Soviet dissident movement were hostile to the New Left and did not treat them as fellow dissidents despite their persecution by Western governments fearing the damage that acknowledging the existence of oppression in the West to their claims that the Soviet Union was exceptional in its brutality. As Roman says, 'Soviet activists often trivialised instances of government crackdown and police brutality in Western societies and marvelled at the right that protestors had to stage mass demonstrations'. See Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 516.

¹¹⁵ Rublëv and Reznikov, 'Novye levye v SSSR'; Wilson, 'The generation of Allende and Solidarność', 177.

¹¹⁶ See Kazakov and Rublëv, 'Koleso istorii ne vertelos', ono skatyvalos'.

¹¹⁷ Kazakov and Rublëv.

¹¹⁸ Kazakov and Rublëv.

¹¹⁹ Kazakov and Rublëv, 'Koleso istorii ne vertelos', ono skatyvalos'', n3.

possibility for the Leningrad School.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, the mere presence of portraits of New Left terrorists among the belongings of the Soviet New Left would have been cause for their surveillance and arrest by the KGB, who subjected the likes of Reznikov to property searches with similar impunity to those carried out against the wider Soviet dissident movement.¹²¹ Indeed, it is evident that the Soviet New Left were considered serious threats to Soviet communism by the Kremlin and throughout the late 1970s many of the movement's members were imprisoned or sent to psychiatric institutes.¹²² There was only one exception to the Soviet leadership's non-support of the New Left in the late 1970s: Native American rights.

Exploring alternative targets for Soviet-West dissidentism

As Anton Weiss-Wendt has shown, the charge of genocide by the United States against Native Americans made by elements of the New Left received prominent coverage in the Soviet press and was an example of the Soviet Union's numerous attempts to '[tap] the New Left' for political gain.¹²³ Most important of all to the Soviet press was the figure of Leonard Peltier, a prominent Native American activist. Peltier was convicted of murdering two federal agents in 1977 after they entered the territory of Pine Ridge Reservation in search of a suspected burglar.¹²⁴ However, several human rights organisations, including Amnesty International, rejected the legitimacy of the criminal case against Peltier, considering him to have been framed by the FBI, and the Soviet press thus championed his cause, turning him into an anti-American dissident.¹²⁵ The Native American activist became an important figure that the Soviet press invested in as a champion of anti-Western resistance and victim of US oppression.

Notably, his legal representatives were invited to Moscow and given air-time on Soviet television news to criticise the US government.¹²⁶ The extent of Peltier's coverage has led Weiss-Wendt to go as far to say that, 'what Angela Davis was for the Soviets briefly in the early 1970s, Peltier remained

¹²⁰ Kazakov and Rubl'ev, n3.

¹²¹ Amnesty, 'Arrests, Searches, Interrogations', *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 51: 35.

¹²² *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 51: 36.

¹²³ Weiss-Wendt, 'Moscow Taps the New Left', 116.

¹²⁴ 'Suspect in F.B.I. Slayings Seized by Canadian Police', *New York Times*, 7th February, 1976, 48; 'Indian Is Found Guilty Of First-Degree Murder In Death of 2 F.B.I. Men', *New York Times*, 19th April, 1977, 22.

¹²⁵ Graham Heathcote, 'Amnesty Finds U.S. Cases Hard to Check: Assessment made by Official in Study of 16 Possible American Frame-Ups Incomplete Source', *Los Angeles Times*, 15th April, 1979, 2; 'A Rights Group Says F.B.I. Made Up Data Presented in 2 Trials: They Say It Is Continuing', *New York Times*, 14th October, 1981, A29.

¹²⁶ Weiss-Wendt, 'Moscow Taps the New Left', 118.

throughout the 1980s'.¹²⁷ Though Peltier was accused of a violent act his guilt remained in doubt, at least in the eyes of the Soviet press, and its treatment of him, though it is difficult to characterise as dissidentism given the unclear role of violence, makes the Native American activist another example of how the Soviet press valorised perceived dissidents in a similar manner to how Western journalists beatified the Soviet dissidents.

Peltier's valorisation also took place against the backdrop of a wider dialogue between Native American activists and Marxist governments. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Native American sovereignty movement 'attempted to reconfigure the geography of American Indian sovereignty into a fully independent Native America in alliance with revolutionary Marxism and its "red" nations around the globe'.¹²⁸ Radical Native American activists sought the diplomatic support of communist governments to put pressure on the US government to recognise demands for a Native American sovereign state.¹²⁹ The Soviet and East European regimes were more than happy to oblige these overtures and invited Native American activists to tour the communist bloc.¹³⁰ Again, however, the priority of the Soviet government was to make good anti-American propaganda, and the communist authorities appropriated the Native American sovereignty cause, as well as seeking to control their activities and those of sympathisers through the security services.¹³¹

As Weiss-Wendt has said, the communist interest in Native American rights was connected to the deterioration of US-USSR relations throughout the period.¹³² As America became more hostile in its rhetoric and policies towards the USSR the Soviet press launched ever more scathing propaganda assaults on the US, which included trying to highlight movements of anti-American dissent of which the radical Native American sovereignty movement was a convenient example. Of course, Native American activists were aware that their cause was being used by the Soviet press to achieve its own Cold War propaganda objectives.¹³³ As with Angela Davis and her family, the Native American

¹²⁷ Weiss-Wendt, 117.

¹²⁸ Tóth, "'Red" nations', 197–221.

¹²⁹ Tóth, 198.

¹³⁰ Tóth, 211.

¹³¹ Tóth, 220 and 211.

¹³² Weiss-Wendt, 'Moscow Taps the New Left', 118.

¹³³ Weiss-Wendt, 'Moscow Taps the New Left', 117.

sovereignty movement's receipt of Soviet support was a strategic decision, whereby they chose to exploit Cold War tensions by allying with Marxist states to further their own goals.¹³⁴

Despite the scale of the attention given to the Native American sovereignty movement, however, this did not represent Soviet endorsement of New Left ideas. The Native American sovereignty movement was compatible with traditional Soviet narratives of capitalist states as racist and Soviet coverage focused on these aspects and not those done with the New Left. Dissidentism with the wider New Left had simply become ideologically impractical for the Soviet Union by the late 1970s. Yet if dissidentism was not a possibility between either the Soviet state or its oppositionists and the New Left, this did not mean that the scope for dissidentism between the Soviet state and other Western anti-capitalist movements had ended. By the late 1970s, the Soviet press was beginning to identify new ways in which it could counter Western human rights criticism.

The type of political prisoners and dissident figures who had become of interest to the increasingly conservative Soviet leadership included more ideologically reliable communists in South America and Africa. The 25th Congress of the CPSU in 1976 featured a unique segment, not mirrored in previous congresses, devoted to demanding 'Freedom for the Prisoners of Imperialism and Reaction!'¹³⁵ The resolution detailed the Soviet leadership's unequivocal support for all 'victims of fascist repressions, those incarcerated in concentration camps and prisons'.¹³⁶ While in principle referring to all allies of socialism worldwide, the statement focused on South American communists such as the former leader of the Chilean communists Luis Corvalán and numerous imprisoned members of the Uruguayan, Paraguayan, South African, Zimbabwean, and Namibian communist parties.¹³⁷ Still, though, the Soviet leadership struggled to counter the growing chorus of human rights criticism coming from the West, most of all from the US particularly after the election of Jimmy Carter in 1976. Without the convenience of its previous supply of New Left victims of capitalist oppression to point to as evidence of capitalism's bankruptcy, who could be portrayed as victims of Western oppression despite the incorrectness of their beliefs, the Soviet leadership were at a

¹³⁴ Tóth, "'Red' nations", 197-8.

¹³⁵ 'Resolution: "Freedom for the Prisoners of Imperialism and Reaction!"' in CPSU, *Documents and Resolutions: XXVth Congress of the CPSU*, 261-4.

¹³⁶ 'Resolution: "Freedom for the Prisoners of Imperialism and Reaction!"', 261.

¹³⁷ 'Resolution', 262. As discussed earlier, Corvalán eventually ended up in the USSR following the prisoner exchange which saw Vladimir Bukovsky go West. See Ulianova, 'Corvalán for Bukovsky', 315-36.

disadvantage as détente gave way to a more hostile international environment throughout the late 1970s.

At the same time, the domestic ideological threat posed by the dissident Soviet New Left made the Kremlin less likely to support the movement's remaining representatives in the West for fear of giving legitimacy to the activities of the likes of the Leningrad School. Thus, while dissidentism continued between the USSR and the Native American sovereignty movement, it ended between Moscow and the wider New Left. In the Anglo-American context, meanwhile, governments began to offer greater official support to the Soviet dissidents and take a harder line with Moscow. President Jimmy Carter became increasingly confrontational in his approach to relations with the Soviet Union and made a point of criticising human rights in the USSR.¹³⁸ The President notably met Vladimir Bukovsky at the White House in 1977, much to the frustration of Moscow.¹³⁹ Despite his shift to confrontation, however, Carter's leadership of US foreign policy still came under fire for being perceived as weak and ill-founded, including on the issue of supporting the Soviet dissidents. Carter never successfully built sufficient public support for his policy, repeatedly misreading the public mood and struggling to satisfy conservatives.¹⁴⁰ The President's attempt to institute human rights as central to US foreign policy while taking an even-handed approach and criticising abuses in both left and right-wing dictatorships drew the ire of conservatives who sought an anti-communist stance on world affairs.

Carter's supposed 'disinclination to single out the Soviet Union for criticism' was a key charge in neoconservative Jeane Kirkpatrick's influential critique of his human rights policy.¹⁴¹ Conservatives succeeded in building a narrative that the Carter administration was weak on foreign policy that was a factor in achieving a Reagan victory in the 1980 election.¹⁴² From that point onwards, human rights abuses in the Soviet Union would be forcefully singled out by Washington, as they would also be by London following Thatcher's election in 1979 who later described her and Reagan's joint intention

¹³⁸ Luis da Vinha, 'Revisiting the Carter Administration's Human Rights Policy: Understanding Traditional Challenges for Contemporary Foreign Policy', *Revista de Paz y Conflictos*, no. 7 (2014): 99.

¹³⁹ Murrey Marder, 'Carter Firm as Soviets Assail Support of Dissidents: Carter Firm as Soviets Hit Support of Dissident', *Washington Post*, 19th February, 1977, A1.

¹⁴⁰ Andrew Z. Katz, 'Public Opinion and the Contradictions of Jimmy Carter's Foreign Policy', *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (December, 2000): 662.

¹⁴¹ Kirkpatrick, 'Establishing a Viable Human Rights Policy', *World Affairs* 143, no. 4 (Spring 1981): 326.

¹⁴² The 1979-80 Iran Hostage crisis was a particularly damaging affair for Carter as he failed to secure the release of the hostages during his time in office.

while in office as to win ‘the battle of ideas’ against ‘the socialism of the Soviet Union’ and put ‘freedom on the offensive’.¹⁴³ The Conservative opposition had placed mounting pressure on the incumbent Labour government to take action on Soviet dissidents. The trial of Soviet dissidents Alexander Ginzburg and Natan Sharansky in 1978 provoked a serious debate in parliament and the government was challenged to take action by the Conservative opposition.¹⁴⁴ The foreign secretary, David Owen, while reluctant to provoke the Soviet Union unnecessarily, conceded in Cabinet that he would nonetheless have to meet with Sharansky’s wife, Avital Sharansky, who was touring Western countries to generate support for her imprisoned husband, while ministers also registered that they ought to support Carter’s firmer policy on human rights in the USSR.¹⁴⁵ Thatcher, upon defeating Labour in 1979, would make a point of meeting with Soviet dissidents throughout her premiership.¹⁴⁶

The Soviet press initially lacked effective targets for dissidentism to respond to Carter and later Reagan and Thatcher on human rights, beyond citing the Native American sovereignty movement and worldwide communist allies. However, the Soviet media would eventually find new and far more useful targets for Soviet-West dissidentism in the labour movements which became increasingly active in the US and UK during the late-1970s to mid-1980s in response to the neoliberal policies instigated by Reagan and Thatcher – in Britain there was also significant strike action during the Winter of Discontent (1978-79).¹⁴⁷ In the late 1970s, against a backdrop of growing calls for ‘closer links’ with the USSR in Britain’s leading mining union, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), the Soviet press began to prepare the ground for turning members of the labour movement in the US and UK into dissidents on the pages of the Soviet dailies.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ See da Vinha, ‘Revisiting the Carter Administration’s Human Rights Policy’, 109; Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (London: Harper Press, 2011), 258.

¹⁴⁴ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 953 (1977-78), col. 1041, 10th July 1978. Natan Sharansky was at the time known as Anatoly Scharansky, changing his name to his current one after emigrating to Israel in 1986.

¹⁴⁵ Minutes from Cabinet Meeting, 13th July 1978, 1-2.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Prime Minister’s meeting with Alexander Solzhenitsyn: record of meeting’, 11th May, 1983, *TNA, Kew*, PREM 19/1103.

¹⁴⁷ See Tara Martin López and Sheila Rowbotham, *The Winter of Discontent: Myth, Memory, and History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014).

¹⁴⁸ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 259.

Western labour protest as a human rights issue

In 1977, *Izvestiya* and *Pravda* covered the story of the British communist journalist Maurice Jones who was alleged to be the victim of politically motivated police brutality. Jones was the editor of the *Yorkshire Miner*, a left-wing trade unionist newspaper, and took part in strike action in London in June 1977.¹⁴⁹ Whilst participating in a picket, Jones was arrested by police on charges of insulting behaviour and released following questioning.¹⁵⁰ He later vanished, breaking the terms of his bail, and his whereabouts remained unknown until late July. It then transpired that Jones had fled to East Germany seeking political asylum there, claiming that the British police officers who had interrogated him had threatened him and his family. Jones was persuaded to return by the Home Secretary's promise of an investigation into the police's conduct towards him, but on arrival back in London he was violently apprehended by six police officers at Heathrow Airport who threw Jones to the floor and placed him under arrest.¹⁵¹ The affair made international headlines, including in the USSR.¹⁵²

Izvestiya broke the story with a short piece under the title 'Persecuted for Beliefs' on the 21st of July that mentioned how 'the threat of police reprisals for political activities prompted Jones and his family to urgently emigrate' to East Germany.¹⁵³ This was followed a day later by a longer page five *Pravda* story entitled 'Why did Maurice Jones Run Away?', which stated that police investigators had told Jones the British authorities could not allow his newspaper to have political influence on the miners and during their interrogation of him had made references to the insecurity of his Finnish wife Leena Jones' immigration status as well as veiled threats about the safety of their young daughter.¹⁵⁴

The story then migrated to the front page of *Izvestiya's* 25th July edition, which reported on how 'men in civilian clothes blackmailed Maurice Jones and threatened reprisals against him and his family for his progressive political convictions' and quoted a close colleague and friend of Jones', the influential NUM trade unionist Arthur Scargill, who called the 'actions of the police ... a

¹⁴⁹ 'Missing editor mystery', *Guardian*, 11th July 1977, 2.

¹⁵⁰ 'Missing editor mystery', 2.

¹⁵¹ Martin Wainwright, 'Runaway editor returns to "brutal" airport arrest', *Guardian*, 25th July 1977, 1.

¹⁵² 'East Germany Confirms Defection Of Editor of British Miners' Paper', *New York Times*, 19th July 1977, 21.

¹⁵³ 'Presleduyut za ubezhdeniya', *Izvestiya*, 21st July 1977, 4.

¹⁵⁴ V. Ovchinnikov, 'Pochemu uyekhal Moris Dzhons?', *Pravda*, 22nd July 1977, 5.

manifestation of cruelty and unjustified violence'.¹⁵⁵ In another piece featured on its front page published three days later, *Izvestiya*, taking its lead from the left-wing British newspaper the *Morning Star*, stated Jones' treatment illustrated 'what methods the ruling classes resort[ed] to in an attempt to silence the truthful voice of the workers' press'.¹⁵⁶

The coverage of the Jones case reflected an attempt to portray a picture of trade unionists facing state-mandated political repression and violence in the West and allowed the Soviet press to push a counter narrative to that emanating from the West about the USSR as a site of uniquely punitive oppression. In fact, in a September piece from the same year by *Pravda* on proposed amendments to the USSR's constitution, which was being re-written in 1977, the Soviet paper made further references to the Jones case and used it to draw a direct comparison between the state of freedom of speech in the West and USSR.¹⁵⁷ The article's author, L. Tiytsen, discussed the 1977 constitution's new clause granting 'the right of asylum to foreigners persecuted for the protection of the interests of workers and the cause of peace' and 'for participation in the revolution' among other 'progressive' 'activities'.¹⁵⁸ Tiytsen justified the necessity of such a legal innovation, by reminding readers of the case of Jones' application for asylum in East Germany. The author went on to recount the details of the story, describing Jones' violent arrest and the trap supposedly set for him by the authorities and police when he was arrested at the airport after returning home on the promise of an investigation into his treatment, with Tiytsen saying, with reference to the Western governments, 'this is how those who preach to us about human rights act in practice. Here is their true attitude to these rights'.¹⁵⁹

This was much more comfortable territory for the Soviet leadership and propagandists than the ideological dilemma they had always faced with the New Left, which left them uncertain as to how far to go in their support of manifestations of New Left ideas, protest, and persecution. It also offered the Soviet press a way to directly engage with human rights in a way that favoured its own economically focused interpretation. The human rights breakthrough may have initially placed the Soviet Union at a disadvantage, but in response the Soviet press and state confidently developed a counter-narrative focused on trade unionists' rights being abused in the West. The coverage of Jones'

¹⁵⁵ 'Proizvol i zhestokost', *Izvestiya*, 25th July 1977, 1.

¹⁵⁶ 'Zhertva ugroz i shantazha', *Izvestiya*, 28th July 1977, 1.

¹⁵⁷ L. Tiytsen, 'Verny slakoy traditsii', *Pravda*, 5th September, 1977, 4.

¹⁵⁸ L. Tiytsen, 'Verny slakoy traditsii', 4.

¹⁵⁹ Tiytsen, 4.

case was indicative of the type of reporting on the violation of trade unionists' rights which would appear in the build-up to and during the bitter British miners' strike of 1984-85. Jones' unionist comrade Arthur Scargill, in fact, would become a 'dissident' hero of the Soviet press on a far grander scale and benefited from an extensive Soviet propaganda campaign in support of the striking miners he led during their momentous 1984-85 strike as president of the NUM.

Conclusion

Across the period 1972-79, the Soviet Union reckoned with the decisive divergence of the New Left from its own ideological line and how this deprived it of a useful counternarrative to growing Western criticism of its treatment of dissidents against the backdrop of the human rights breakthrough. Among those contributing to the criticism were opposition conservatives like Thatcher and Reagan who eventually won power, in 1979 and 1980 respectively, via campaigns which utilised a narrative that the incumbent government's foreign policy failed the Soviet dissidents by prioritising détente with Moscow over addressing human rights abuses in the USSR. At the same time, members of the Soviet opposition conducted their own experiment with the Western New Left, forming groups and writing manifestos inspired by the movement's ideas. Never, however, did the Soviet New Left's interaction with Western radicalism resemble dissidentism and only had limited similarities to Western conservatives' engagement with Soviet dissidents. Yet, despite the moderate nature of the Soviet New Left's engagement with the Western original, it was enough to concern Soviet leaders who oversaw the KGB's suppression of the movement. Nevertheless, the leadership did not simply settle with being at a disadvantage in the war of words over human rights after losing the option to use the example of the New Left. Instead, new targets for dissidentism were sought out in the shape of the Native American Sovereignty movement, Third World communists, and most importantly Western trade unionists.

This chapter's findings present further evidence of the complexity and ever evolving nature of the USSR's relationship with dissidentism. In many ways this relationship was becoming similar to the Western one with Soviet dissidents, but as shown in this chapter there were limits to the similarities in the comparison of the opposition's engagement with dissidents in each setting. At the same time, though, the chapter shows the dynamism of the Soviet attempts to respond to Western criticism in the various alternatives to the New Left it explored throughout the period to create dissident figures

from. These findings highlight the utility of this thesis' forward reading and long-term approach to studying the history of the USSR's approach to Soviet-West dissidentism, by revealing the different shifts in Soviet attitudes to dissent abroad and coalition formation with Western left-wingers. Equally, this approach enables the analysis to show the multiple ways the Soviet Union contested Western human rights narratives, as well as illustrating the effectiveness of dissidentism as an analytical tool in assessing similarities and differences between the West and USSR in their relationships with human rights propaganda and discourse.

Trade unionists, of course, served as the most convenient example for the USSR. The next chapter covers the myriad ways the Soviet press engaged with the Anglo-American labour movements during a period of heightened labour activism in the first half of the 1980s in response to US and UK exploitation of Soviet dissidents. The analysis highlights the full extent to which the USSR capitalised on the labour unrest provoked by the election of Thatcher and Reagan in the UK and US and created dissident figures out of the 1984-85 British miners' strike, and that by the US Professional Air Traffic Controllers' Organisation (PATCO) in 1981, in a similar way to how the US and the UK governments exploited the profile of select Soviet dissidents in the first half of the 1980s.

CHAPTER IV: LABOUR, ANTI-NEOLIBERAL PROTEST, AND THE REVIVAL OF SOVIET-WEST DISSIDENTISM, 1979-85

[On] what moral grounds exactly does the Washington administration pose as the world's defender of human rights?¹⁶⁰

– Konstantin Chernenko, 1982

Introduction

Following their elections, it became clear that both Thatcher and Reagan would take more hostile stances towards the Soviet Union than their predecessors' administrations, stances associated with the initial phase of the Cold War during the 1950s and early 1960s. Many commentators talked of a renewed, 'second Cold War' distinct from the era of détente of the previous decade.¹⁶¹ In the aftermath of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and suppression of the Polish independent trade union movement *Solidarność* during 1980-82, dissidents, who in the Soviet Union by the early 1980s were under unmanageable pressure from the KGB, became key rhetorical tools in the revitalised war of words fought by Reagan and Thatcher against Moscow as they tried to undermine communism's international image.¹⁶² As the previous chapter illustrated, by this point Soviet propagandists had lost the option of the exploiting images of New Left protest and Western repression to create a counternarrative to the growing chorus of criticism coming from the West and needed to find a new response.¹⁶³ The Soviet press had, however, begun to depict Western trade unionists as victims of human rights abuses in response to Western diatribes about Solzhenitsyn and other dissidents. The USSR was able to exploit this narrative much more extensively after 1979, as neoliberal policies initiated by Thatcher and Reagan helped to provide new dissident figures for the Soviet press and government to enlist in their own struggle to undermine the West's claims to superiority on human rights. The restructuring of the US and British economies by Reagan and Thatcher provoked exceptional levels of labour unrest and industrial action that Moscow took

¹⁶⁰ Konstantin Chernenko, 'The CPSU, Society, and Human Rights', in *Soviet-U.S. Relations*, 162.

¹⁶¹ Eckart Conze, Martin Klimke, and Jeremy Varon, eds., *Nuclear Threats, Nuclear Fear and the Cold War of the 1980s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 1; Christoph Laucht, 'The politics of the unknown: Uncertainty and the nuclear threat in Britain, 1979-1985', *History Compass* 16, no. 12 (2018): e12510.

¹⁶² Rowland and Jones, 'Reagan's Strategy for the Cold War and the Evil Empire Address', 438; Serge Schmemmann, 'Soviet Accuses Reagan of "Instigation" on Poland', *New York Times*, 19th December, 1981, Section 1, 8.

¹⁶³ Weiss-Wendt, 'Moscow Taps the New Left', 115-6.

advantage of. Most importantly of all, the USSR formed a dissident-promoting coalition with Arthur Scargill, the leader of striking British miners during 1984-85.

The labour movements that acted against the Reagan and Thatcher administrations, which in the British context often had Marxist links, were ideal subjects for Soviet propaganda to turn into dissidents on the pages of *Pravda* and more suitable than the radical New Left had ever been. Similarly, the anti-communist and anti-détente Reagan and Thatcher (though more so the former) were much more prepared to embrace the Soviet dissidents, especially many of the increasingly right-wing ones since exiled from the Soviet Union like Solzhenitsyn and Vladimir Bukovsky, as well as *Solidarność* in Poland.¹⁶⁴ The apparent new ideological closeness between the dissidents of the 1980s and their respective allies is one of the major themes explored in this chapter, which assesses the political similarities and differences that affected these new transnational dissident-promoting coalitions. This is accompanied by an investigation of the goals behind supporting dissidents in each context as well as the forms support and engagement took.

The chapter illustrates how the rival Anglo-American and Soviet governments engaged in an aggressive and reactive war of words that heavily utilised the creation of dissident figures in the opposing Cold War bloc and offers a new argument as to why the relationship between the Soviet Union and British miners, specifically the striking miners' leader Arthur Scargill, can be considered an example of dissidentism. At the same time, however, this chapter also illustrates how significant ideological disagreements between them still persisted between the targets of dissidentism and their transnational supporters.

As before, this chapter's structure is case study based, closely examining some key examples of transnational dissident-promoting coalitions throughout the period 1980-84. Reagan and Thatcher's

¹⁶⁴ Phillip Boobbyer, 'Vladimir Bukovsky and Soviet Communism', *The Slavonic and East European Review* 87, no. 3 (July 2009): 469. The weakness of Britain's economy had a significant impact on Thatcher's policy towards the Soviet Union forcing her to frequently take a more pragmatic approach at times, see Daniel James Lahey, 'The Thatcher government's response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, 1979-1980', *Cold War History* 13, no. 1 (2013): 40-2. Analysis of Thatcher's speeches also shows mentions of Soviet dissidents became fewer and more moderated during her premiership compared to her time as Leader of the Opposition (1975-79). For example, the names of Bukovsky, Sakharov, and Solzhenitsyn were mentioned in twelve of Thatcher's speeches in the five-year period 1975-79, compared to only seven mentions in the eleven-year period 1979-90 when she was Prime Minister. Based on data acquired from the *Thatcher Foundation* archives: <https://www.margareththatcher.org/search?w=sakharov%20solzhenitsyn%20bukovsky&searchtype=or&t=0&starty=1975&endy=1990&importance%5B0%5D=1i&importance%5B1%5D=2i&importance%5B2%5D=3i&doctype%5B0%5D=speeches&startm=&startd=&endm=&endd=&onedayy=&onedaym=&onedayd=> (accessed 11th October, 2022).

official discourse on dissidents and human rights is compared with the Soviet discourse surrounding labour movements to illustrate how both sides similarly sought to cultivate images of dissent in the opposing Cold War bloc. Overall, this chapter highlights how Soviet and Anglo-American governments' engagement in dissidentism intensified and changed during the first half of the 1980s, a result of perceived new ideological alignment between the targets of dissidentism and their supportive government allies. However, the chapter's main significance is that through the above-mentioned comparison it provides the significant evidence for the possibility of Soviet-West dissidentism yet and strongly corroborates the guiding hypothesis of this thesis that the USSR had a relationship with its dissenting allies abroad akin to that which the US and UK governments had with theirs. In doing so, through its forward-facing reading of the Cold War, this chapter exhibits an overlooked episode in the history of Cold War human rights discourse, illustrating a notable example of how the Soviet Union attempted to contest Western human rights narratives. At the same time, the analysis also addresses the centrality of ideology to Soviet-West dissidentism by comparing the extent of support given to trade unionists in the 1980s to that given to the New Left in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁶⁵

Ideal allies? Ideological compatibilities and incompatibilities

For the first time, the British, American, and Soviet governments were all resolved and fully able to support respective targets for dissidentism in the early 1980s. In the former context, the Thatcher and Reagan governments, though more so the latter, were prepared to throw the weight of their respective governments' propaganda apparatuses behind the cause of the Soviet dissidents. Relieved of the constraints of détente, Washington and London singled out the Soviet Union as a uniquely punitive perpetrator of human rights abuses against dissidents. Many of the Soviet dissidents themselves, meanwhile, were prepared to support such a stance by the West, having lost much of their faith in détente. In a 2019 interview, Bukovsky positively contrasted 'Grandpa Reagan', whom he called 'a member of the family', against the 'naïve' Carter.¹⁶⁶ Natan Shcharansky, meanwhile, described his and other dissidents' reaction as ecstatic when, while serving prison terms, they first learned of Reagan's determination to hold the USSR to account. Shcharansky recalled that upon reading a

¹⁶⁵ Peterson, 'Wielding the Human Rights Weapon', 25.

¹⁶⁶ Jay Nordlinger, "'Not Suitable for Recruiting": A Talk with Vladimir Bukovsky, Part I', *National Review* 71, no. 10 (June, 2019).

Pravda article condemning Reagan's attacks on the human rights situation in the USSR, he and fellow inmates, through morse code and via the toilet tubes, 'tried to inform [one another] that finally the leader of the free world called a spade a spade, [called] the Soviet Union an evil empire, and it mean[t], we believed, it mean[t] the days of the Soviet Union [we]re numbered'.¹⁶⁷

At the same time, the Soviet Union, following the breakdown of its relationship with the New Left and growing interest in Western trade unions, was provided with new and ideologically suitable figures for its media to portray as anti-capitalist dissidents with which to attack Western capitalism in the form of massive labour activism which emerged in the US and UK during the first half of the decade. First, PATCO's strike in 1981 and then, more significantly, the British miners' strike of 1984-85 were seized upon by Soviet propagandists as examples of capitalism's brutality and incompatibility with human rights.¹⁶⁸

The strike by, and Reagan's disbandment of, PATCO in August 1981 has been described as potentially the most significant of President Reagan's domestic actions.¹⁶⁹ It decisively set the tone for the neoliberal economic policy which Reagan's administration would enact throughout the 1980s. PATCO's members, who were also federal employees, were demanding better pay and reforms which the government resisted threatening mass sackings if the controllers did not return to work after 48-hours.¹⁷⁰ After negotiations failed, the union went on strike in violation of ordinance banning industrial action by federal workers which grounded air traffic nationally. In response, after two days of strikes Reagan sacked 11,325 strikers, nearly all PATCO members, and disbanded their union.¹⁷¹ Historians of the strike debate whether Reagan acted in a draconian manner, but there is no doubt that the event was a watershed moment in labour relations in the history of the United States as it fatally undermined union power for subsequent generations; some even suggest that Reagan successfully used the strike as a way to demonstrate his hard-line political approach to observant

¹⁶⁷ Natan Sharansky, 'Excerpt of a Speech Delivered by Natan Sharansky [sic.] in 2008 When He Received The Ronald Reagan Freedom Award', speech given in Washington D.C., *Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute*, 17th September, 2008.

¹⁶⁸ Anatoliy Manakov and John Kubik, '94 sluchaya vozmozhnykh intsidentov v vozdukh zafiksiroval profsoyuz aviadispatcherov', *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 1981, no. 36: 9.

¹⁶⁹ Jefferson, Cowie, 'Out of Control: Reagan, Labor, and the Fate of the Nation', *Dissent* 59, no. 1 (2012): 56.

¹⁷⁰ Richard Witkin, 'Controllers Strike, Halting 7,000 Flights; Reagan Gives 48-Hour Notice on Strikers of Dismissal', *New York Times*, 4th August, 1981, Section A, 1.

¹⁷¹ Joseph A. McCartin, 'PATCO, Permanent Replacement, and the Loss of Labor's Strike Weapon', *Perspectives on Work* 10, no. 1 (Summer 2006): 17.

Soviet leaders with Secretary of State George Schultz (1982-89) considering the PATCO sackings the most significant ruling made by Reagan in terms of foreign policy for the rest of his presidency.¹⁷²

The British miners' strike, meanwhile, began in 1984 in response to the Thatcher government's proposed plans to close twenty coal mines and make redundant 20,000 miners.¹⁷³ This strike was on a grander scale than PATCO's and became a gruelling year-long battle between not just the NUM, the leading union involved in the strike, and the government, but also between the forces of union power, which had been highly influential in the UK since the end of WWII, and the neoliberalism being introduced by Thatcher. Near the end of 1984, close to 150,000 miners had been on strike for ten-months as they tried to outlast the government's onslaught against them, which notably employed mass police-presences at pickets, and to undermine the energy production of the UK sufficiently enough to bring the government to the negotiating table.¹⁷⁴ The miners lost and, as with Reagan's victory over PATCO, Thatcher's defeat of the NUM marked a turning point in British history, ensuring neoliberalism would become the driving economic and ideological force in British society.¹⁷⁵ As Milne says, the struggle led by Scargill was the 'most important strike in the capitalist world for a generation'.¹⁷⁶

The new Soviet enthusiasm for these Western left-wing economic 'dissidents' lay in the compatibility of mass, organised labour protest with the traditional Soviet concept of modernity and socialism. Whereas the New Left had directly challenged this, consisting of many independently minded groupuscules, the labour movements involved in the PATCO and miners' strikes were organised according to traditional, socialist principles of mass membership, organised unions, and participation in large-scale political action. As Kotkin has explored, the dominant Soviet concept of modernity was predicated on the combination of these values, which the orthodox conservatives dominant in the Soviet leadership by the late 1970s considered a naturally superior alternative to

¹⁷² For discussion, see Cowie, 'Out of Control', 58-9; Joseph A. McCartin, 'The Strike That Busted Unions', *New York Times*, 2nd August, 2011; George Schultz quoted in Scott Farris, *Kennedy and Reagan: Why Their Legacies Endure* (Guildford, CT: Globe Pequot/Lyons Press, 2013), 228.

¹⁷³ Ghilarducci, 'When management strikes', 117.

¹⁷⁴ Andrew Glyn, 'Economy and the UK Miners' Strike', *Social Scientist* 13, no. 1 (January, 1985): 23.

¹⁷⁵ Martina Steber, 'Fundamentals at stake: the Conservatives, industrial relations and the rhetorical framing of the miners' strike in 1984/1985', *Contemporary British History* 32, no. 1 (2018): 60-77.

¹⁷⁶ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 291.

liberal capitalism and expected to one day supersede the order of the West.¹⁷⁷ Thus, the strikes were appealing to the Soviet media as opportunities to push a narrative of new anti-capitalist dissent in the West.¹⁷⁸ In terms of propaganda value, meanwhile, the imagery of thousands of workers on strike and in conflict with right-wing administrations that the Soviet press demonised as violators of workers' rights, reinforced the prevailing Soviet narrative of the time that the West was in crisis and undergoing a decisive period of instability.¹⁷⁹ There were also some unique factors in the British context, however, which made the miners particularly attractive to the Soviet Union.

First of all, there was a long history of solidarity between the NUM, whose industry was one of Britain's most militant and unionised, and the Soviet Union. Moscow had backed strike action by British workers, including the miners, in 1926 during the General Strike, embargoing British-bound freight and sending financial aid, while Soviet oil and coal exports to the UK were ceased.¹⁸⁰ During the 1960s and 1970s, the British miners had a growing appetite for cooperation and interaction with the USSR and its trade unions while the NUM membership became radicalised, contributing to the use of aggressive picketing tactics in successful strikes for greater pay in 1972 and 1974 which brought down the incumbent Conservative government in 1974.¹⁸¹ Such ideological changes were welcomed by the Soviet leadership, with Brezhnev satisfactorily noting the left-wing ideological evolution of the Western trade union movement in his opening speech to the 25th CPSU Congress in 1976.¹⁸² Referring to the 'leftward shift in the trade unions' Brezhnev felt confident to state that, though capitalism could sustain itself for a while longer, it was 'a society without a future'.¹⁸³ By 1982, the NUM had shifted even further to the left when it came under the leadership of Arthur Scargill, a firebrand communist with a long history of expressing orthodox Marxist views.

¹⁷⁷ Kotkin, 'Modern Times', 114-5. Of course, as Krylova has shown, other concepts of Soviet modernity which gave more agency to individuals existed parallel to the traditional concept. However, the traditional concept was most influential with regard to the miners' strike and the strike was supported by conservative members of the Politburo. See Krylova, 'Soviet Modernity', 191.

¹⁷⁸ Kent, 'Decoding the Soviet Press', 2.

¹⁷⁹ A. Galkin, 'The New 'Conservative Wave' as an Outgrowth of the Ideological Crisis of Capitalism', *Voprosy filosofii*, 1977, no. 12: 80, in *CDSP* 30, no. 13 (April, 1978): 17-19.

¹⁸⁰ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 257-8.

¹⁸¹ Milne, 258-9.

¹⁸² Leonid Brezhnev, 'Report of the CPSU Central Committee and the Immediate Tasks of the Party in Home and Foreign Policy, Delivered by Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CC CPSU. February 24, 1976' in CPSU, *Documents and Resolutions: XXVth Congress of the CPSU*, 34.

¹⁸³ Brezhnev, 'Report of the CPSU Central Committee', 34.

In a notable example, as a member of a Youth Communist League (YCL) delegation touring the Soviet capital in 1957, Scargill had met with Nikita Khrushchev and proceeded to assail the Soviet premier for his decision to remove Stalin's body from the mausoleum in Red Square and to rename Stalingrad as part of the de-Stalinisation process.¹⁸⁴ Scargill is said to have accused Khrushchev of 'distorting history', emphasising the importance of the role played by Stalin in the defeat of Nazi Germany by the Allies and later said Khrushchev's actions were the equivalent of the British 'trying to pretend Churchill never existed'.¹⁸⁵ Compared to the likes of New Leftists such as Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Rudi Dutschke, who were just as likely to assail Soviet communism as they were capitalism, Scargill, though occasionally critical of Soviet human rights abuses, aligned with the Kremlin on key issues and was an ideal target for dissidentism for Moscow.¹⁸⁶ As well as having backed the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, most significant of all, both in terms of the domestic and international politics of the early 1980s, Scargill took the Soviet view on the non-communist *Solidarność* trade union movement which was causing major upheaval in Poland during the early part of the decade.¹⁸⁷ Echoing Politburo attacks, the NUM president denounced *Solidarność* as 'an anti-socialist organisation who desire[d] the overthrow of a socialist state'.¹⁸⁸

The *Solidarność* movement was one of the most significant challenges to state socialism in Eastern Europe during the Cold War. A crisis over prices in the summer of 1980 boiled over into mass industrial action by Polish workers that eventually led to the formation, and initial government recognition of, the first independent trade union in communist Poland, which took the name *Solidarność*, meaning 'solidarity'.¹⁸⁹ These events challenged communist authority, creating a crisis for both the Polish and Soviet governments.¹⁹⁰ Eventually, martial law was imposed on the country

¹⁸⁴ Mike Ingram and Chris Marsden, 'The Socialist Labour Party: Scargill seeks to resurrect Stalinism under a flag of convenience', *World Socialist Web Site*, 3rd September, 2003, <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2001/09/scar-s03.html>; Michael Crick, *Scargill and the Miners* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 32.

¹⁸⁵ John Mortimer and Arthur Scargill, 'Why "The King" Spurns the Commons', *The Sunday Times*, 10th January, 1982, 17; John Mortimer, *In Character* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 66.

¹⁸⁶ Robert Taylor, 'Scargill acts on Soviet miner', *Observer*, 25th July 1982, 4.

¹⁸⁷ Notably, though, Scargill criticised the decision by the Kremlin to suppress the Prague Spring which he considered a legitimate 'rethink of socialism', while he felt the Hungarian uprising had been backed by the CIA. See Crick, *Scargill and the Miners*, 149

¹⁸⁸ Patrick Wintour, 'Scargill letter condemns Solidarity', *Guardian*, 8th September, 1983, 1. For Scargill's earlier views on human rights in Eastern Europe, see Arthur Scargill, 'The New Unionism', *New Left Review* 92 (July/August, 1975): 32-3.

¹⁸⁹ Robert Ledger, 'From Solidarity to "Shock Therapy": British Foreign Policy Towards Poland Under the Thatcher Government, 1980-1990', *Contemporary British History*, 30, no. 1 (2016): 101.

¹⁹⁰ Richard Pipes, 'Gorbachev's Russia: Breakdown or Crackdown?', *Commentary* 89, no. 3 (March, 1990): 13-25.

by December 1981, curtailing the freedoms won previously.¹⁹¹ The events in Poland represented one of the most serious instances of organised dissent in the Warsaw Pact states and served as useful propaganda that Western conservatives could exploit.¹⁹² Thus, *Solidarność*, especially its leader, Lech Wałęsa, became a favourite of Reagan.¹⁹³ The President offered firm support to *Solidarność*, as did Thatcher, and used the crisis to undermine communist authority in Poland as well as the Soviet Union's global image. The President suggested that the Soviet Union was acting with imperialist intent in Poland and forcing the Polish government to follow its oppressive line.¹⁹⁴

The Soviet press and leadership, expectedly, responded robustly to these interventions by the US president on Poland. The USSR insisted that the Polish crisis was being dealt with by the Polish government alone, that there were extremist elements in *Solidarność*, and that the US was attempting to incite a 'counterrevolution' in the country.¹⁹⁵ The Soviet press responded to Western accusations that events in Poland were evidence of mass discontent with communism with direct references to the strikes by PATCO and the British miners under the leadership of the Marxist Scargill which were portrayed as evidence of capitalism's frailty.¹⁹⁶

Ultimately, the reasons behind Moscow's enthusiasm for the US air traffic controllers and the British miners lay in the fact that the Soviet leadership's official vision for the future had decisively reverted to a more traditional form of Marxism by the early 1980s. While in the early 1970s there had been at least some room for reformist ideas, particularly in foreign policy, and experimental partnerships with non-Soviet communists like the New Left such as happened in Finland, by the end of the decade and the start of the next one the hardliners had become entirely dominant and were conveniently met by ideologically suitable targets for dissidentism in Britain and America.¹⁹⁷ By contrast, the British and, most of all, the US government's newly enthusiastic embrace of the Soviet dissidents (albeit only the centrist and right-wing ones who suited their politics) was rooted in the fact that they had

¹⁹¹ Robert Pear, 'Poland's Premier Says Martial Law is Lesser of 2 Evils', *New York Times*, 25th December, 1981, Section 1, 1.

¹⁹² For further discussion, see Robert Brier, *Poland's Solidarity Movement and the Global Politics of Human Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

¹⁹³ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Central Europe*, 186.

¹⁹⁴ Steven R. Weisman, 'Poland Reports 7 Dead, Hundreds Hurt in Clashes; Reagan Warns Soviets on Aid', *New York Times*, 18th December, 1981, Section A, 1.

¹⁹⁵ Schmemann, 'Soviet Accuses Reagan of "Instigation" on Poland', 8.

¹⁹⁶ S. Yershov, 'Class Battles', *International Affairs* 27, no. 9 (1981): 142.

¹⁹⁷ Other, more reformist members of the Politburo like Anatoly Chernyaev, privately despaired at the ideological stagnation of the leadership See Chernyaev, *The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1980*, ed. Svetlana Savranskaya, trans. Anna Melyakova (Washington: The National Security Archive, 2020), 18.

each set a new vision for their respective foreign policies. It is important to note, however, that Reagan's embrace of the Soviet dissidents was not quite a volte-face in US foreign policy, as it is sometimes described as by supporters of the President, and even some dissidents, who considered Carter weak and naïve.

In many ways, rather than reversing the stance taken by his predecessor, Reagan actually built on the legacy of Carter who had become increasingly confrontational towards the Soviet Union towards the end of his presidency and instituted human rights as a cornerstone of his administration's foreign policy. In fact, early on in its life Reagan's government had briefly attempted to move away from human rights in foreign policy but had to back track in a matter of weeks following a backlash in public opinion.¹⁹⁸ Carter, though he had failed to build a coalition of support for his own policies, had nonetheless created the expectation that US foreign policy should contain a moralistic bent.¹⁹⁹

However, once resolved to firmly support human rights in the Soviet Union, the Reagan White House did not relent in its appropriation of the Soviet dissidents nor in its attacks on the USSR. And even though Reagan was still only building on the legacy left behind by Jimmy Carter, Reagan's first term in office was notable for its escalation of official US rhetoric on human rights and the involvement of Soviet dissidents in White House public relations reached new heights. Reagan's administration made a point of bringing dissidents to meet the President in full view of the public on a regular basis, as did Thatcher.²⁰⁰ Utilising dissidents was thus a key element of both Anglo-American and Soviet public diplomacy as the second Cold War heated up.

Cold War strategy in Soviet and Anglo-American dissidentism, 1981-84

Support for Soviet dissidents was part of Reagan's wider approach to 'winning' the Cold War, his so-called 'Grand Strategy'.²⁰¹ It is important to understand and outline this strategy first, in order to

¹⁹⁸ da Vinha, 'Revisiting the Carter Administration's Human Rights Policy', 109.

¹⁹⁹ da Vinha, 109.

²⁰⁰ Bryce Nelson, 'Reagan Meets Soviet Dissidents, Promises Help', *Los Angeles Times*, 29th May, 1981, B11; Daniel J. Mahoney, *Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: The Ascent from Ideology* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2001), xiii. Meetings, however, did not always go as planned. See Robert G. Kaiser, 'Reagan, Solzhenitsyn to Dine', *Washington Post*, 8th April, 1982, A13 and 'Solzhenitsyn "Unable to Attend" Luncheon With Reagan, Emigres', *Los Angeles Times*, 11th May, 1982, B4; 'Record of a conversation between the Prime Minister and Mr. Alexander Solzhenitsyn at 1730 hours on Wednesday 11 at 10 Downing Street', 7.

²⁰¹ Rowland and Jones, 'Reagan's Strategy for the Cold War and the Evil Empire Address', 427. For a critique of this concept, see James Graham Wilson, 'How Grand was Reagan's Strategy, 1976-1984?', *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 18, no. 4 (2007): 773-803.

place the Soviet counter-strategy into context and to show the extensive similarities that existed between the two approaches. Reagan's strategy was based around the three basic pillars of argument that: (a) Soviet communism was 'evil and a failure'; (b) that the US would have to initiate an arms build-up so great Moscow would be forced to negotiate arms reductions; and (c) that liberal democracy would 'triumph over Soviet communism'.²⁰² Key to this was 'support for broadly liberal values' across the globe.²⁰³

Reagan's administration always allowed itself flexibility in who it could consider an ally, exemplified by the double-standards employed towards authoritarian dictatorships in the Kirkpatrick Doctrine which considered totalitarian governments – of which communist states were the prime example – as a greater threat than right-wing authoritarian governments for the supposed lack of an ideological, totalitarian aspect to their regimes.²⁰⁴ The President's rhetorical conception of Western liberalism was therefore quite malleable and could be stretched to include Solzhenitsyn as an ally, by focusing on his demand for freedom of expression and worship, despite his apparent preference for theocracy. In terms of fighting the propaganda war, Reagan's intention was to portray the Cold War as a battle between a good, liberal West with friends across the world, and a bankrupt, evil, and isolated Soviet Union as exemplified in his famous 'Evil Empire Speech'.²⁰⁵ Thus, in his rhetoric, Reagan portrayed the Soviet dissidents as standing shoulder to shoulder with himself and his Cold War warrior allies in the West.

Reagan's Grand Strategy for winning the Cold War involved heavy use of dissident figures and the imagery of dissent in Soviet society in his rhetoric. The dissidents' fight for freedom in the face of harsh repression served as evidence to the world of the universality of Western values and the righteousness of America's crusade against Soviet barbarism. This effort was supported by Reagan's staff, who strategized how best to exploit the dissident issue. This included not just speechwriters but also senior national security advisors, such as Richard Pipes who had led the team of national security experts that condemned the CIA for underestimating Soviet aggression and capabilities in 1976, who authored remarks to be read on behalf of the president on the occasion of Andrei Sakharov's 60th

²⁰² Rowland and Jones, 'Reagan's Strategy for the Cold War and the Evil Empire Address', 427.

²⁰³ Rowland and Jones, 429.

²⁰⁴ Kirkpatrick, 'Dictatorship and Double Standards', 34–45

²⁰⁵ Ronald Reagan, 'Address to the National Association of Evangelicals ("Evil Empire" Speech)', 8th March 1983, speech given in Sheraton Twin Towers Hotel, Orlando, Florida, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, Simi Valley, California.

birthday in 1981.²⁰⁶ The strategic nature of the administration's appropriation of Soviet dissidents was particularly visible when the Christian Rescue Effort for the Emancipation of Dissidents (CREED), a conservative anti-communist group, made overtures to the White House for presidential involvement in several of their events.

In 1982, two representatives of CREED, Congressman Jack Kemp and Senator Roger Jepsen, jointly wrote to the President requesting his attendance at an upcoming CREED meeting to be held in April that year. As well as suggesting to Reagan that the meeting presented him with 'an excellent opportunity to reaffirm our nation's solidarity with the persecuted', they also cited the case of the 'Siberian Seven'.²⁰⁷ These were a Pentecostal family who had taken refuge in the US embassy in Moscow and sought to emigrate from the USSR for fear of religious persecution.²⁰⁸ Their treatment was an emotive issue in US-Soviet relations while they stayed at the embassy during 1978-83. Presidential staffers responded positively to these invitations and strategized on the specific ways in which involvement with the cases raised by CREED could support the administration's broader anti-Soviet narrative. Kemp and Jepsen's request was passed on by Kenneth Duberstein, an assistant to the President, to Reagan's scheduling office, promising them that their 'special interest [would] be given careful consideration'.²⁰⁹ At the scheduling office, Gregory Newell, Director of Presidential Appointments and Scheduling, gave his wholehearted recommendation saying CREED's April meeting was 'an excellent occasion for presidential involvement' which would '[k]eep heat on the Soviets and their stooges' and '[s]how sensitivity on the human rights area'.²¹⁰ Earlier, in response to another CREED overture, Special Assistant to the President Morton Blackwell had suggested taking action on the case of a Soviet teenager, Walter Palavchek, who had fled to the US but faced being repatriated on account of a 'poor' Department of Justice decision, saying:

A meeting of the CREED organization would be a good occasion for the President to reverse the low level Justice Department decision on this issue and announce himself in favor of allowing this very bright (and photogenic) boy to remain in the U.S. with his sister if he wishes. The alternative to a change in Administration policy on Walter Palavchek may be T.V. film

²⁰⁶ Richard Pipes memo to Richard V. Allen, 'Sakharov Birthday Celebration', 24th April, 1981, *The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (RRPL), Simi Valley, California, Jack F. Matlock Files, Box 23, Folder 'Dissidents (1)'*; Richard Pipes, 'Team B of the C. I. A.', *New York Times*, 21st June 2003.

²⁰⁷ Roger W. Jepsen and Jack Kemp to Ronald Reagan, 4th February, 1982, *RRPL, Simi Valley, CA, Morton Blackwell Files (MBF), Box 7, Folder 'Dissidents (2/2)'*.

²⁰⁸ '16 Siberian Pentecostals End a Trip to Freedom', *New York Times*, 21st July 1983, Section A, 14.

²⁰⁹ Roger W. Jepsen and Jack Kemp letter to Ronald Reagan, 4th February, 1982.

²¹⁰ Gregory A. Newell to Red Cavaney and William Clark, 19th February, 1982, *RRPL, Simi Valley, CA, MBF, Box 7, Folder 'Dissidents (2/2)'*.

footage of this young man, who has caught the hearts of many Americans, being dragged kicking and screaming by Soviet Agents onto an Aeroflot jet.²¹¹

These communications by White House staffers illustrate the extent of strategic thinking which underpinned exploitation of the human rights failings of the Soviet Union and the calculated way in which the administration created images of dissent to undermine the Soviet Union and reinforce the narrative that Western values would inevitably prevail. With such a well-planned and resourced American propaganda strategy facing them, Soviet leaders had to respond with an equally well-resourced one of their own.

The Soviet response came through the press rather than leaders' speeches, focusing on strikes in the US and UK and therefore principally drew upon the well-established tradition of expressing solidarity with international socialism which was a guiding principle of Soviet foreign policy and taken seriously by senior Politburo members.²¹² However, there was sometimes debate on the matter of supporting the miners purely on an ideological basis and whether strategic concerns about maintaining stable relations, particularly economic ones, with the West should play a bigger role.²¹³ Stepan Shalayev, head of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (1982-90), even towards the end of the miners' strike in early 1985 when Scargill looked increasingly likely to succumb to defeat, still persistently argued that the Soviet Union should support the miners while others within the Politburo, such as Anatoly Chernyaev, were more realist and wary of the impact offering support to the miners could have on relations with the West.²¹⁴ Even earlier though, in November 1984, there had been a lack of consensus within the leadership when a lower-ranking official announced the Soviet maritime fleet would not carry the energy exports of third parties to the UK, only for the

²¹¹ Morton C. Blackwell to Elizabeth H. Dole, 19th August, 1981, *RRPL, Simi Valley, MBF*, Box 7, Folder 'Dissidents (2/2)'.

²¹² Kent, 'Decoding the Soviet Press', 2; Kent, 'Sovetskaya pressa glazami amerikanskogo zhurnalista', *Istoriya otechestvennykh SMI* (February, 2015): 109-19; McNair, *Glasnost, Perestroika, and the Soviet Media*, 138. The incumbent Soviet leader during the strike was Konstantin Chernenko (February 1984 to March 1985). During his premiership, which directly overlapped with the miners' strike before he died in office, Chernenko was frequently so seriously ill he was unable to fulfil his official duties as premier for periods and it seems did not make speeches on the miners' strike. For discussion on the often-internal party-political function of Soviet leaders' speech giving, see George W. Breslauer, *Khrushchev and Brezhnev as Leaders: Building Authority in Soviet Politics* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), 16-17; Chernenko, *Soviet-U.S. Relations; Chernenko, Selected Speeches and Writings*.

²¹³ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 276, 281, 283, and 292-3.

²¹⁴ Milne, 283; Chernyaev, *The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1985*, 9; Ed A. Hewett and Victor H. Winston, *Milestones in Glasnost and Perestroika: Politics and People 2* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), 55.

Politburo to then downplay his statement which was ‘all but denounced’; such an embargo carried a high political and economic cost to the USSR.²¹⁵

But, at the time the miners’ strike began in March 1984 those members wanting to support the miners according to their socialist beliefs were dominant. Therefore, the ban on third-parties exporting via Soviet ships, despite denials from Soviet prime minister Nikolai Tikhanov, on top of another embargo on coal and oil exports that had been announced in October in reality ‘quietly continued’ and was only relaxed towards the strike’s end following ‘pressure’ by Gorbachev, demonstrating the influence of ideology on Soviet foreign policy and the level of commitment to the cause of the miners’ strike.²¹⁶ The Soviet leadership also repeatedly attempted to transfer significant funds to support the NUM’s strike, the ramifications of which are explored in greater detail later. The Soviet initiation of these embargoes does however invite a comparison with Western economic sanctions on the USSR attached to human rights which were implemented in the 1970s.

Of particular importance was the US Jackson-Vanik amendment. The amendment’s passing under the co-sponsorship of Henry Jackson and Charles Vanik was a major blow to détente and a triumph for the anti-détente conservatives of the 1970s as they sought to undermine the incumbent administration’s conciliatory approach to human rights in the USSR. The Soviet embargoes represented the closest way that the USSR came close to replicating a serious linkage between anti-capitalist dissidents’ treatment and financial penalties. However, the rationale behind the embargoes came not from a sense of punishing the UK’s abuse of trade unionists’ human rights to try and bring about a correction of British policies – the embargo did not have a significant impact. Instead, the embargoes stemmed from the traditional socialist principle of displaying solidarity with workers struggling against capitalism worldwide.²¹⁷

Yet, though different from the Western example, this approach still existed within the socialist framework of interpreting human rights as unfulfilled in capitalist countries, where the dominance of the bourgeois classes allowed the repression of the rights of the workers who needed Soviet economic support if they were to ever assert their rights. Brezhnev also challenged the Western

²¹⁵ Assistant National Intelligence Officer for USSR memo ‘Soviet Leadership Disorder’ to Director and Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, 15th November, 1984, 2, General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. CIA-RDP89B00423R000300350010-4, 2.

²¹⁶ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 265.

²¹⁷ Laqua and Alston, ‘Activism and Dissent under State Socialism’, 307.

monopoly on the definition of human rights, calling the Western view on human rights a ‘...wrong and vulgar interpretation of the concepts of democracy and human rights by bourgeois and revisionist propaganda...’.²¹⁸ Hopgood has since argued that human rights as they have become known since the 1970s have been defined largely by the ‘broad needs and interests of the [Western middle class].’²¹⁹ Brezhnev’s criticism of Western human rights interpretation, meanwhile, highlighted a tension inherent to the Cold War debate over human rights between their liberal and socialist definitions and an attempt to contest the West’s monopolisation of human rights. Brezhnev illustrated this attitude and even proposed mirroring the approach of the Jackson-Vanik legislation to criticise it, remarking that the USSR was ‘being told [by the West]: “Either change your way of life or be prepared for cold war”’ and asking ‘what if we should reciprocate? What if we should demand modification of bourgeois laws and usages that go against our ideas of justice and democracy as a condition for normal interstate relations?’²²⁰ There is also another comparison which can be made here. However, it is not between the West and the USSR but rather between the Western political groups which the Soviet Union chose to portray and support as dissidents.

The New Left was almost never the beneficiary of significant diplomatic support – as opposed to officially mandated press support; Soviet officials regularly met with NUM leaders but never with New Leftists – economic assistance, or financial aid in the same way as the British miners were. Though significant propaganda resources were invested in creating dissident figures from the New Left, financial assistance was never provided even if diplomatic capital was invested in the case of Finland, Leonard Peltier – who was supported as an anti-racist campaigner – and Angela Davis who was specifically supported as an anti-racist member of the CPUSA rather than as a New Leftist.²²¹ While the question of sanctions is a broader topic of its own, it connects with this thesis’ research questions not only on comparisons with the West but also as to what dissident groups gained favour with the USSR over others as a result of ideological tensions within the Soviet leadership. What the implementation of diplomatic and economic support for the miners reveals, and the comparative lack

²¹⁸ Brezhnev, ‘Report on draft constitution to CC, 24th May, 1977’, in *Socialism, Democracy, and Human Rights* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980), 165

²¹⁹ Hopgood, ‘Human Rights on the Road to Nowhere’, 285.

²²⁰ Brezhnev, ‘Speech in the Kremlin at the World Congress of Peace Forces, 26th October 1973’, in *Socialism, Democracy, and Human Rights*, 83.

²²¹ Rentola, ‘The Year 1968 and the Soviet Communist Party’, 145.

of it for the New Left, is the influence of orthodox communist ideology on the Soviet strategy towards dissidentism.

Western states and politicians, though preference was often given to liberal and right-wing Soviet dissidents, still gave their support to influential dissidents while overlooking significant discrepancies between Western values and those of different dissidents, most notably the Orthodox nationalist faction of Soviet dissidents whose Russian chauvinist beliefs were at odds with Western liberalism.²²² By contrast, despite the general correlation between New Left protest and Soviet ideas about global solidarity with revolutionaries to advance the inevitable triumph of socialism, the New Left were rarely deemed suitable for practical support; the exception being in Finland in 1970 – again Peltier and Davis were not supported as New Leftists. Ideology was ultimately a much more decisive factor that shaped Soviet-West dissidentism compared to Western-Soviet dissidentism. Yet there were still more tangible, realist issues of hard-power foreign policy gains at play in Soviet support for the miners.

The Soviet regime sought a change of government in the UK which would bring the Labour Party to power.²²³ In a previous strike of 1974, as stated earlier, militant action taken by striking miners, among their leaders Arthur Scargill, had brought down the incumbent Conservative administration and paved the way for eventual electoral victory by Labour. Scargill expected that the miners could repeat the trick in 1984 and ranking Politburo members were initially persuaded by the NUM leader's calls that the USSR should honour its commitment to international solidarity and support the miners to continue their strike in terms of both practical and political assistance; *Pravda* had also reported on Scargill's call to remove the Conservatives from power back in 1983 indicating Soviet support.²²⁴ The compatibility, however, of a Labour win and Soviet solidarity with the miners would become increasingly problematic as this chapter later demonstrates.

²²² Pipes, *Vixi*, 115; Kriza, *Alexander Solzhenitsyn*, 166; Richard Grenier, 'Solzhenitsyn and Anti-Semitism: A New Debate', *New York Times*, 13th November, 1985, Section C, 21.

²²³ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 276; Chernyaev, *The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1985*, 9.

²²⁴ Becky Gardiner, 'We Agreed Deal with Thatcher Government – Scargill', *Guardian*, 7th March, 2009; Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain to the Central Committee of the CPSU, 'Memorandum of conversation with president of the National Union of Mine Workers A. Scargill' (Russian), 20th November, 1984 [R 20 Nov 84, no. 769] and S. Shalayev memorandum to the Central Committee of the CPSU (Russian), 2nd February, 1985, [2 Feb 85, no. 099c], Archives of the Central Committee of the CPSU reproduced by *The Vladimir Bukovsky Archives*; 'Korotko', *Izvestiya*, 30th May, 1983, 3.

Portraying strikers as human rights victims in the Soviet press, 1981-84

The themes focused on in the Soviet media mirrored those of British and American discourse. Primarily, these were depicting trade unionists as victims of injustice and the opposition bloc's barbarity, as well as portraying trade unionists as righteous defenders of universal rights. Trade unionists' strikes were also used as evidence of the opposing ideology's bankruptcy, and as proof the home ideology's inevitable supremacy. A final key theme was singling out trade unionists as dissident heroes for lionization, and exaggeration of social problems in the West. The first theme centred on highlighting instances of persecution against dissidents, especially the use of legal apparatuses, to emphasise the corrupt nature of the justice system in the opponent's society and there were comparable instances of both the Anglo-American and Soviet governments utilising this kind of narrative.

For example, in a 1983 statement, Reagan chastised the Soviet Union for reneging on a previous commitment to protect human rights made at the 1983 Madrid CSCE review of the Helsinki Act and said the USSR had 'sunk to a new low of brutality and repression' by sentencing several dissidents to long prison sentences for the 'dissemination of so-called anti-Soviet propaganda'.²²⁵ Similarly, bringing into doubt the integrity of Soviet justice, Reagan stated America's solidarity with citizens of socialist states 'who are captives, not because of crimes they have committed but because of crimes committed against them by dictators and tyrants'.²²⁶ Thatcher, meanwhile, attacked the trustworthiness of the Soviet Union's leaders, saying the 'exile of Professor Sakharov' left 'no room for illusion' as to the duplicity of the Soviet leadership and their lack of a desire for genuine reform or warmer East-West relations.²²⁷ Continuing her critique, the Prime Minister argued the 'Soviet Government's actions reveal[ed] a brutal disregard for accepted rules of international behaviour, for world public opinion, and for the principles laid down in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975'.²²⁸ Soviet coverage of human rights in the West certainly mirrored this narrative and, using similar language,

²²⁵ Henry Giniger, Milt Freudenheim and Carlyle C. Douglas, 'The World; The Curtain Gets Stuck at Madrid', *New York Times*, 24th July 1983, Section 4, 2; Ronald Reagan, 'Statement on Soviet Human Rights Policy', 18th October, 1983, *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1983 Book II – July 2 to December 31, 1983* (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1985), 1478.

²²⁶ Reagan, 'Remarks at a Ceremony Marking the Annual Observance of Captive Nations Week', 19th July 1983, *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1983 Book II – July 2 to December 31, 1983*, 1052-4.

²²⁷ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 977 (1979-80), cols. 933-935, 28th January, 1980.

²²⁸ Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th ser., vol. 977 (1979-80), cols. 933-935, 28th January, 1980.

the Soviet press denigrated the British and American justice systems as rigged and manipulatively weaponised by Thatcher and Reagan to persecute the working class and labour activists unjustly.

Focussing on the abuse of the judicial system, Soviet coverage of the 1981 strike by members of PATCO highlighted the charges and penalties brought against striking air traffic controllers. *Izvestiya* printed that ‘concocted “criminal cases” [were being brought] against the trade union and individual participants in the strike’.²²⁹ A. Palladin, meanwhile, called the breaking of PATCO ‘another sign of the return to the times when the chief slogan of the US ruling classes was “law and order”’ and described the legal methods used to dismiss the strikes as having been ‘promulgated during the height of McCarthyism’.²³⁰ Similarly, an *Izvestiya* article covering the early part of the 1984-85 miners’ strike called police action against the strikers ‘repression’ and featured a photograph of a miner being restrained in a headlock by a police officer, while a later *Pravda* piece alleged ‘police terror’ against the miners.²³¹

The arrest of miners was entirely unjust in the Soviet view, as all the strikers were doing was demanding respect for the fundamental right to work. In this regard, the conception of rights being violated were different to the conception of human rights that Reagan and Thatcher argued dissidents in the Soviet Union were being deprived of. Yet these rights were nonetheless equally fundamental in each side’s worldview, with both perceiving them to be superior to the other’s, and their reference in the context of dissent highlights how the Soviet side also drew upon the second theme and used dissidents to further the claims to supremacy of its civilisation.²³² The Soviet view on human rights in this period was captured in Konstantin Chernenko’s 1982 essay, written two years before he began his year-long stint as General Secretary in February 1984.²³³

²²⁹ G. Deynichenko, ‘Repressii protiv bastuyushchikha’, *Izvestiya*, 11th August, 1981, 4.

²³⁰ A. Palladin, ‘America as it really is: Reprisals. US Authorities’ Cruel Repression of Strike Movement Participants’, *Izvestiya*, 25th August, 1981, 15, in *CDSP* 34, no. 33 (September, 1981): 22-3.

²³¹ ‘Repressii protiv gornyakov’, *Izvestiya*, 3rd June, 1984, 5; A. Maslennikov, ‘Reshimost’ shakhterov’, *Pravda*, 21st November, 1984, 1.

²³² Peterson, ‘Wielding the Human Rights Weapon’, 424.

²³³ For a general discussion of Soviet human rights initiatives see Kopeček, ‘The Socialist Conception of Human Rights and Its Dissident Critique’, 261-89 and for an overview of state-led Soviet human rights projects in the 1980s see Ned Richardson-Little, ‘The Failure of the Socialist Declaration of Human Rights’, 318-41.

Chernenko questioned on ‘what moral grounds exactly d[id] the Washington administration pose as the world’s defender of human rights?’²³⁴ Chernenko claimed that the communist world was unfairly attacked for falsely alleged human rights abuses when in the US the ‘sores and evils of contemporary’ capitalism manifested themselves in ‘the most exaggerated and ugliest forms’.²³⁵ According to Chernenko, ‘socialism and human rights [were] indivisible, so genuine human rights and freedoms [were] unthinkable without socialism’, and the treatment of workers, left-wing activists, and minoritized groups in the West represented the worst violations of human rights with other Soviet officials re-iterating this argument publicly.²³⁶ Yet while claiming to defend all human rights, it was always the abuse of workers’ rights which the Soviet Union focused upon primarily in its defence against Western allegations rather than individual political expression, unless that related to left-wing politics as with the journalist Maurice Jones in 1977.²³⁷ This reflected the differing conceptions of human rights between the West and Soviet Union, where traditionally economic rights were paramount. Reflecting these differing perspectives, of the priority of the collective’s over the individual’s rights, Chernenko’s response to the ‘debate [over human rights] foisted upon’ the Soviet Union was to take the ‘opportunity [to] compar[e] the socialist and bourgeois ways of life, the real rights and freedoms enjoyed by the working people in the Soviet Union and in the United States’ rather than a direct comparison of human rights in each country according to Western definitions of rights.²³⁸

Thus, both sides portrayed examples of dissent in the opposing camp as evidence of oppressed citizens standing up for their different fundamental rights and of the universal desire for the presenting side’s way of life. Reagan and Thatcher portrayed the Soviet dissidents as examples of the inevitable triumph of the individual and Western liberalism, and the true unpopularity of communism; the Soviet press portrayed strikes and their labour ‘dissidents’ as evidence of Marxist materialism’s theories being proven right and the unpopularity of capitalism.²³⁹ In the US this narrative was connected to one of solidarity between the West and dissidents in the East, visible

²³⁴ Konstantin Chernenko, ‘The CPSU, Society, and Human Rights’, in *Soviet-U.S. Relations: The Selected Writings of Konstantin U. Chernenko*, 162.

²³⁵ Chernenko, ‘The CPSU, Society, and Human Rights’, 127.

²³⁶ Chernenko, 161; Peterson, ‘Wielding the Human Rights Weapon’, 425.

²³⁷ See Kopeček, ‘The Socialist Conception of Human Rights and Its Dissident Critique’, 261-89 and Richardson-Little, ‘The Failure of the Socialist Declaration of Human Rights’, 318-41.

²³⁸ Chernenko, ‘The CPSU, Society, and Human Rights’, 127.

²³⁹ McNair, *Glasnost, Perestroika, and the Soviet Media*, 139.

when Reagan discussed the persecution of dissidents in the USSR and the President described Americans and all those ‘who live[d] in freedom’ as ‘linked in spirit with those brave men and women being persecuted for demanding their rights or struggling to establish democracy’.²⁴⁰ Reagan continued by saying that, in ‘honouring these heroes’, Americans ‘proclaim[ed] [their] confidence that good and decent people w[ould] triumph over evil’ going on to compare left-wing totalitarianism with Nazism and expressing his conviction that the former would be ‘disregarded by a disgusted humanity’ and that Americans could ‘be confident that the tide of history [was] indeed running on the side of freedom’.²⁴¹

Reagan referenced this narrative of solidarity between dissidents and Americans throughout his presidency multiple times. In this way, Soviet dissidents were even depicted as part of the specifically neoliberal revival of the 1970s and 1980s that took place in America, of which Reagan was the political figurehead. In a 1984 speech, Reagan explicitly linked the dissidents’ activities to the neoconservative and neoliberal movements in the US. Reagan described that for most of his adult life, intellectuals had been pre-occupied with socialism as the solution to society’s ills. However, that trend had recently been reversed, with the award of Nobel Prizes to neoliberal economists like Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman, as well as the emergence of prominent neoconservative figures like Irving Kristol, who re-emphasised the traditional values of Western civilization.²⁴² To this list of neoliberals, Reagan added Solzhenitsyn and Bukovsky, whom he praised for having ‘brought new attention to the horrors of totalitarian rule and to the spiritual desert that is communism’.²⁴³

In drawing this comparison, Reagan suggested a symmetry between the intellectual direction of the USSR and the USA, as well as mooted a joint East-West trend of dissent against socialism implying that Western values’ rise was inevitable. Furthermore, the inclusion of Solzhenitsyn as an opponent of specifically *totalitarianism*, allowed Reagan to overlook the Russian’s tolerance for Tsarism while

²⁴⁰ Ronald Reagan, ‘Remarks on Signing the Bill of Rights Day and Human Rights Day and Week Proclamation’, 9th December, 1983, *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1983 Book II – July 2 to December 31, 1983*, 1674-6.

²⁴¹ Reagan, ‘Remarks on Signing the Bill of Rights Day...’, 1674-6.

²⁴² Ronald Reagan, ‘Remarks at Eureka College in Eureka, Illinois’, 6th February, 1984, *The Public Papers of Ronald Reagan, 1984 Book I – January 1 to June 29, 1984* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1986), 172-7.

²⁴³ Ronald Reagan, ‘Remarks at Eureka College in Eureka, Illinois’, 176.

still linking him to a global struggle for freedom.²⁴⁴ Bukovsky too was included as an ally, despite expressing deep reservations about US foreign policy.²⁴⁵ These speeches illustrate the extent of the Reagan administration's desire to make use of the dissidents, even where the dissidents had expressed direct opposition to the US government's policies. Similarly, the Soviet media was mobilised to portray an image of the West's dissenters as in-step with Soviet predictions of world revolution, while also depicting strikers as standing up for common, socialist decency as well as basic rights and as representatives of socialism's inevitable triumph.

A lengthy July 1984 *Izvestiya* piece on the 1984-85 strike described the British miners as struggling for 'elementary rights' to work and 'the right to ensure that their children [did] not become a generation of the unemployed'.²⁴⁶ A later issue printed a 'photo-accusation' that showed a miner being handcuffed by police accompanied by a short description that the strikers were 'continuing to struggle for their rights'.²⁴⁷ Meanwhile, a piece from the Soviet journal *International Affairs* cited the miners' strike as evidence of the accuracy of Marxist theory, with the author A. Lebedev saying that despite the best efforts of the Conservative government to 'cancel out the class struggle' it would always fail as the struggle was 'governed by its own objective laws of development...exemplified by what [was] going on in the British Isles'.²⁴⁸

Three years earlier, meanwhile, *Pravda* coverage of demonstrations in support of the PATCO strike had focused on depicting American workers in a united defence of their labour and civil rights. *Pravda* wrote of 'a mass demonstration' and of American labour being united in saying 'no' to Reagan's economic policy.²⁴⁹ The same piece also quoted a PATCO representative, Tony Kelly, who said the Reagan administration was denying them their 'essential rights'.²⁵⁰ More direct references to the protection of rights were made in the Soviet press' defence against Reagan's criticism of Soviet posturing during the 1980-82 labour crisis in Poland caused by the rise of *Solidarność*. An article of December 1981 printed in both *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* bemoaned Reagan's interventions on Poland,

²⁴⁴ Kriza, *Alexander Solzhenitsyn*, 166.

²⁴⁵ Vladimir Bukovsky, 'America's Crack-Up: American foreign policy is an amateur's delight', *The American Spectator*, October, 1984, 14-17.

²⁴⁶ V. Skosyrev, 'Bol'she knutom, men'she pryaniikom', *Izvestiya*, 20th June, 1984, 5.

²⁴⁷ 'Fotoobviniye', *Izvestiya*, 31st July 1984, 4.

²⁴⁸ A. Lebedev, 'Britons Demand Peace and Jobs', *International Affairs* 31, no. 1 (1985): 77.

²⁴⁹ Soviet coverage exaggerated the extent of cross union solidarity. One of the largest trade unions in the US, AFL-CIO, was notably anti-socialist and largely unsupportive of the PATCO strike. See A. H. Raskin, 'The Air Strike is Ominous for Labour', *New York Times*, 16th August, 1981, Section 3, 1.

²⁵⁰ A. Tolkunov, 'Massovaya manifestatsiya v vashingtone', *Pravda*, 21st September, 1981, 5.

in which he called on the Polish government to respect *Solidarność's* independent trade union status.

In response, the Soviet papers criticised Reagan's handling of the PATCO strike, saying:

The [President's] moaning about the "legal rights" of other peoples' trade unions would seem much more convincing if trade union rights were observed by the US government at home. The complaints about the internment of extremists from the Solidarity trade union association (not the "arrest and confinement in prisons and detention camps of thousands of Polish trade union leaders," as the President claims) would sound much more sincere if the present Washington administration had shown even a little of the largesse and concern that it lavishes on Solidarity to, for example, the American air traffic controllers' union. But no, the US subjects its trade union leaders to fines and draconian court sentences, and the union itself is being dissolved.²⁵¹

This echoed the type of rebuttal that the Soviet press had engaged in with its references to Angela Davis and Leonard Peltier, when defending the USSR against US accusations that the Soviet Union was trampling on dissidents' human rights in the 1960s and 1970s.²⁵² Davis and Peltier had become heroes in the Soviet press much in the same way as Reagan then celebrated Solzhenitsyn as a hero. This lionization and heroization of dissidents, perceived and real, were key aspects of their use as rhetorical weapons in the second Cold War's war of words, serving to create dissident figures who were beyond reproach and undeniably good people to shield them from criticism when their arguments were referenced.

Reagan, in fact, frequently called the Soviet dissidents heroes. In a 1984 speech, which the President used 'to castigate' the USSR while also proposing 'Non-Arms Pacts', Reagan spoke of the dissidents and how 'the persecution of these courageous, noble people weigh[ed] very heavily on our hearts'.²⁵³ In an earlier speech, Reagan had singled out Sakharov as a 'noble', 'good', and 'courageous' man and speaking of the dissident movement, said in 'honouring these heroes today, we proclaim our confidence that good and decent people will triumph over evil'.²⁵⁴ Similarly, in the aforementioned 1984 speech to Eureka College, the President called Bukovsky a 'noble crusader' and Solzhenitsyn a 'majestic figure'.²⁵⁵

²⁵¹ 'Concerning R. Reagan's Statement on Events in Poland', *Pravda and Izvestiya*, 19th December, 1981, 7, in *CDSP* 51, no. 33 (January, 1982): 6-7.

²⁵² Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 518.

²⁵³ Lou Cannon, 'Reagan Uses Speech to Castigate Soviets, Propose Non-Arms Pacts', *New York Times*, 28th June, 1984, A17.

²⁵⁴ Ronald Reagan, 'Remarks on Signing the Bill of Rights Day and Human Rights Day and Week Proclamation', 9th December, 1983, *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1983 Book II – July 2 to December 31, 1983*, 1674-6.

²⁵⁵ Ronald Reagan, 'Remarks at Eureka College in Eureka, Illinois', 176.

Reagan was particularly fond of Solzhenitsyn and spoke highly of the dissident, and as already shown made frequent references to him in speeches addressing US foreign policy and the Soviet Union as well as unsuccessfully reaching out to him for a public meeting in 1982.²⁵⁶ Reagan's fascination with Solzhenitsyn, however, concerned his advisors. Richard Pipes, for example, was 'disturbed by the influence Solzhenitsyn and his like exerted on the U.S. government', particularly the way in which they had apparently convinced Washington policymakers that Soviet citizens were by and large sympathetic to Russian nationalism.²⁵⁷ Furthermore, Solzhenitsyn was among the most controversial dissidents given his often-unacceptable views on race and apparent preference for theocracy. It quickly became apparent to Western critics following his expulsion from the USSR that the great dissident was equally as critical of capitalism and Western values as he was of communism.²⁵⁸ Even many conservatives held reservations about Solzhenitsyn, with Pipes calling him 'hate-filled' and Norman Podhoretz debating the 'terrible Question of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn' and his anti-Western opinions – Solzhenitsyn called Westerners a 'society raised in the cult of material well-being.'²⁵⁹

Reagan, however, chose to ignore these problems. Indeed, the fact that the President persistently referenced Solzhenitsyn as a respectable and Westernised figure, while many other conservatives chastised the dissident, highlights the extent to which Reagan sought to build and use an image of Solzhenitsyn, separate from the dissident in reality, to serve as a narrative tool in his anti-communist rhetoric. Yet while Reagan was able to easily exploit and further build the legend of Solzhenitsyn and other Soviet dissidents as beacons of Western liberalism and individualism, the situation for the Soviet papers was more complicated when creating individual heroes from the miners' strike.

With Soviet communism's emphasis on the collective over the individual – for Soviet leaders the miners' strike served as proof of the universality of orthodox communism – there existed the risk that in singling out one personality from the strikers' ranks the Soviet press might undermine its own strategy of demonstrating the mass unpopularity of capitalism.²⁶⁰ A frequent accusation made by

²⁵⁶ 'Solzhenitsyn to Reagan: Spasibo, Nyet', *Washington Post*, 16th May, 1982, C2.

²⁵⁷ Pipes *Vixi*, 187.

²⁵⁸ Solzhenitsyn, 'A World Split Apart', *National Review*, 7th July 1978, 836-41 and 855.

²⁵⁹ Pipes, 115; Norman Podhoretz, 'The Terrible Problem of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn', *Commentary* 79, Iss. 2 (February, 1985): 17-24; Lee Lescaze, 'Solzhenitsyn Says West Is Failing as Model for World', *Washington Post*, 9th June, 1978. For detailed discussion of Solzhenitsyn's reception in the West, see Kriza, *Alexander Solzhenitsyn*.

²⁶⁰ Kotkin, 'Modern Times', 139. As Krylova discusses, the individual could find more room for expression alongside this traditional conception of Marxism. See Anna Krylova, 'Soviet Modernity', 191. However, in

Thatcher's government, the miners' chief opponent, was that the NUM was being and run by its president Arthur Scargill in a 'dictatorial' manner and forcing workers to strike against the wishes of the majority of their union's members and the public.²⁶¹

By focussing on Scargill's leadership, the natural choice for Soviet editors to valorise given his strong Marxist credentials, Soviet coverage could obscure their own message of mass-dissent against capitalism. Western politicians' narrative on the Soviet dissidents did not risk such difficulties despite the dissidents' small numbers, as Western discourse focused on the triumph of the individual and the likes of Reagan were able to point to dissidents as representatives of the silent majority of Soviet citizens who longed for democracy.²⁶² The Soviet press, on the other hand, needed evidence of mass action to re-affirm the accuracy and universality of Marxist-Leninist theory which envisaged large-scale workers' uprisings with broad societal support. Indeed, this reflected a wider Soviet debate over how to define rights within a socialist society. Officially endorsed Soviet human rights concepts in the late socialist era were designed 'to serve as a socialist counterweight to ... "the cult of the individual" in Western-style human rights.'²⁶³ Instead, in the Soviet view, human rights were intended to lead to the improvement of each individual's consciousness and personality and, in so doing, lead to the betterment of society as collective rather than simply secure the rights and interests of individuals.²⁶⁴

One option in keeping with Soviet-style human rights available to Soviet editors seeking to make capitalise on the miners' strike was to instead highlight individual stories of average strikers afflicted by the machinations of capitalism, while another was to lionize the general struggle of the working class collectively.²⁶⁵ However, Scargill represented too good a propaganda opportunity to completely relegate him from focus, with the trade unionist being charismatic and always equipped with a memorable quote in response to government actions. Further, not only did Soviet officials consider

the case of the miners' strike the emphasising collective action was more important with the strike receiving support from the more conservative members of the Politburo.

²⁶¹ Political Staff, 'Scargill call to TUC for all-out war', *The Observer*, 12th August, 1984, 1; Ian Aitken, 'Thatcher raises terrorist spectre to attack miners', *Guardian*, 27th November, 1984, 1.

²⁶² Reagan, 'Remarks at a Ceremony Marking the Annual Observance of Captive Nations Week', 19th July 1983, *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1983 Book II – July 2 to December 31, 1983*, 1052-4.

²⁶³ Nathans, 'Soviet Rights-Talk in the Post-Stalin Era', 183.

²⁶⁴ Nathans, 183.

²⁶⁵ For an example of an interview with a strike participant, see 'Pravitel'stvo protiv svoikh. Reportazh iz n'yu-yorkskogo suda, bastuyushchikh aviadispatcherov', *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, no. 34, 19th August, 1981, 9.

they had a duty to assist the miners, according to the Soviet defector Oleg Gordievsky many in the ‘Soviet establishment...regard[ed] [Scargill] as an important ally of the Soviet Union in Great Britain’.²⁶⁶ So, Soviet press coverage included Scargill but usually with a focus on his popularity and representativeness, while quotes from him were featured within a bigger story with several other sympathetic voices to emphasise the scale of support for the miners. Yet at points the risks mentioned were clearly ignored by Soviet editors, who appear to have concluded that Scargill’s appeal was sufficient to employ a more celebratory style of reporting akin to Western heroization of the Soviet dissidents.

Arthur Scargill, the Solzhenitsyn of the Soviet press

Scargill was in fact featured in the Soviet press on repeated occasions even before the beginning of the 1984-85 strike, while he was still only head of a regional branch of the NUM in the English county of Yorkshire. Scargill featured in Soviet coverage, discussed at the end of the previous chapter, of the 1977 arrest of radical British trade union newspaper editor Maurice Jones, during which the latter was reportedly threatened by police. After Jones later claimed asylum in East Germany, Scargill was quoted by *Izvestiya* as having been ‘outraged’ at Jones’ treatment in an earlier example of how the Soviet press published stories about the persecution of trade unionists similar in style to those printed by Western publications about the forced exile of Soviet dissidents.²⁶⁷ Later, in 1980, *Izvestiya* reported on Scargill’s speech in which he stated he ‘would be prepared to go to prison’ if new legal restrictions on the right to strike were imposed by the Thatcher government.²⁶⁸

Scargill was then featured on numerous other occasions in *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* during the build up to the miners’ strike and the implementation of the new laws that curbed strike action throughout 1982-84.²⁶⁹ Clearly, his opinion was seen by editors as a useful way of demonstrating to Soviet readers the universality of orthodox Marxism and the popularity of communism in capitalist

²⁶⁶ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 267; Oleg Gordievsky, interview with Lorraine Hennessey, *Dispatches*, Channel 4, 1991 quoted in Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 278.

²⁶⁷ V. Ovchinnikov, ‘Pochemu uyekhal Moris Dzhons?’, 5; ‘Proizvol i zhestokost’, 1.

²⁶⁸ V. Skosyrev, ‘Zamorozki v avguste’, *Izvestiya*, 19th August, 1980, 5.

²⁶⁹ V. Skosyrev, ‘Pis’mo iz Londona tori podkrashivayut fasad’, *Izvestiya*, 1st March, 1982, 5; A. Maslennikov, ‘V zashchitu profsoyuznykh prav’, *Pravda*, 9th September, 1982, 5; A. Maslennikov, ‘Vesomoye slovo shakhterov’, *Pravda*, 27th February, 1983, 1; ‘V bor’be za svoi prava’, *Pravda*, 22nd June, 1983, 5; A. Maslennikov, ‘Zashchishchaya zhiznennyye prava trudyashchikhsya’, *Pravda*, 19th August, 1983, 5; A. Maslennikov, ‘Diskussii v Blekpule’, *Pravda*, 12th September, 1983, 5; ‘Zabastovka ob’yavlena’, *Izvestiya*, 1st March, 1983, 4.

countries. Furthermore, the Soviet press was already attaching Scargill's name to its narrative that far worse abuses of human and workers' rights were taking place in the West than were alleged against the Soviet Union. For example, in 1982, *Pravda* printed a lengthy excerpt from a Scargill speech condemning the Conservatives' commitment to nuclear weapons spending when hospitals lacked funding under the section heading 'Society of Violated Rights'.²⁷⁰

Initially, the trade unionist was featured in the form of quotes, giving his reaction as leader of the NUM to the opening events of the strike. Scargill's voice, as a committed communist who had risen to a prominent position in British society, was used to lend weight to the Soviet narrative that Marxism was both popular and universal, much in the same way as Anglo-American conservatives used the Soviet dissidents' voices to add moral weight to their anti-communist rhetoric. As the scale of the walkouts escalated and encounters with police sent to manage strikers' demonstrations became more hostile, however, Scargill was increasingly depicted as fighting a heroic struggle for the British working class' fundamental rights.

One of the most significant events was Scargill's arrest and prosecution following a demonstration in May 1984 in Rotherham, a major mining town in Northern England. On its front page, *Izvestiya* described how Scargill was arrested by police during a 'peaceful' demonstration following which fights broke out among miners and police, with the former being forced to 'flee' from the 'persecution' across nearby fields.²⁷¹ Later coverage of the NUM president's arrest included the publication of a now iconic photo of Scargill being escorted by police to a waiting van, printed in *Pravda* under the sub-heading 'Society of Violated Rights', a tagline that was a recurring motif in Soviet coverage of the strike, along with the claim that the arrest of the strike's leader was designed by the police as an attempt to 'intimidat[e]' and 'shake the resolve of the strikers', with Scargill himself alleging in court the arrest was pre-planned.²⁷²

Pravda also focused on the wider reaction to Scargill's arrest. A report by the paper described how the 'arrest of the popular trade union leader outraged the striking miners to the core', while *Izvestiya* was pleased that the whole incident was captured and broadcast on television so that it would be clear

²⁷⁰ 'Pushki vmesto bol'nits', *Pravda*, 12th September, 1982, 5.

²⁷¹ V. Skosyrev, 'Poboishche v Rotereme', *Izvestiya*, 31st May, 1984, 1.

²⁷² 'Obshchestvo poprannykh prav', *Pravda*, 5th June, 1984, 5; Malcolm Pithers, 'Scargill claims police planned his Orgreave arrest in advance', *Guardian*, 14th December, 1984, 2.

to the British public how Scargill had been persecuted.²⁷³ It was important for the Soviet press to depict Scargill as a recognised and popular personality among the British public. By highlighting Scargill's role as an influential political figure in Britain, the Soviet press were able to present Marxism itself as popular by showing that a figure with such strong Marxist views as him could rise to a position of power in a capitalist state. To this end, *Izvestiya* picked up on the story that a BBC poll completed in January 1985 had seen Scargill voted by the British public as 'Man of the Year' for 1984.

The Soviet paper's characterisation of this award, however, differed from its intended meaning. The title reflected who the public considered to be the man who had made the most significant impact on British life that year rather than carrying an implicitly positive meaning; a parallel poll was held to find the 'Woman of the Year' who in 1984 was Scargill's arch-enemy Margaret Thatcher. In fact, many people who voted for Scargill in the poll said they had actively disagreed with him but nonetheless cast their ballot for him in recognition of the undeniable influence he had exerted on British politics throughout 1984.²⁷⁴ *Izvestiya*, though, ran the story under the title 'Most popular' declaring that the award showed 'broad support for striking miners in the UK' while neglecting to mention the women's poll won by the Prime Minister.²⁷⁵

Izvestiya's coverage of the BBC poll highlights the efforts to which the Soviet press went to depict Scargill and the strike he led as popular in the UK and to use his image as confirmation of the popularity of Marxist politics and politicians in the West. Already, though, the Soviet press had begun to escalate the creation of a dissident figure for public consumption based upon Scargill. In September 1984, *Izvestiya* reported on its front page how Scargill's speech to the British Trades Union Congress was well received by delegates, making two separate references to the fact that the trade union leader was greeted with rapturous applause.²⁷⁶ A month earlier, *Izvestiya* had printed a detailed profile of Scargill, in the style of *Who's Who*, featuring a photograph of the trade unionist dressed in a suit. Its introduction read:

His name is present in every report by the British press on the continuing, already five month-long, miners' strike. For some, it represents the unflinching determination to defend the right

²⁷³ A. Maslennikov, 'Politsiya protiv piketov', *Pravda*, 1st June, 1984, 5; V. Skosyrev, 'Poboishche v Rotereme', 1.

²⁷⁴ Dennis Barker, 'Listening post gives 1984 to Scargill', *Guardian* 3rd January, 1985, 2.

²⁷⁵ 'Samyy populyarnyy', *Izvestiya*, 3rd January, 1985, 4.

²⁷⁶ 'Podderzhka gornyakov', *Izvestiya*, 4th September, 1984, 1.

to work of colleagues in the profession. For others, he is dangerous as a popular and uncompromising leader of workers.²⁷⁷

The profile continued by detailing Scargill's long history in the trade union movement and how he had gained the 'respect of working people' through his leadership during previous strikes.²⁷⁸ The feature also discussed how the British media had been given orders to carry out a character assassination that depicted Scargill as an extremist, priming Soviet readers to discount any Western reports they might encounter offering a critical account of the trade union leader.²⁷⁹ The profile concluded with a story of how Scargill was approached in the street by desperate mothers with young sons threatened by unemployment due to Thatcher's proposed closures who told him he had to win the strike to save their future, before stating that while the British edition of *Who's Who* did not feature the trade unionist the 'whole of working Britain' knew Arthur Scargill.²⁸⁰

That *Izvestiya* printed such an article, explicitly highlighting Scargill's approachability, humanity, formidable nature, popularity, and respectability, reflected a carefully constructed effort by the Soviet press to build a media image of Scargill that would at once find favour with the Soviet public but also convey the universality of Marxism. The extent of the media campaign to promote Scargill in the Soviet press was reflected in the fact that by January 1985, *Pravda's* London correspondent Arkady Maslennikov had begun to on occasion refer to the NUM leader simply as A. Scargill or just Scargill, omitting the references to his first name which had usually been printed.²⁸¹ Clearly, Scargill had become a sufficiently recognisable and familiar figure to Soviet readers that Maslennikov felt able refer to him by surname only, much the same as the two most well-known Soviet dissidents were referred to as simply Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov.²⁸² Even following the conclusion of the strike, a documentary was aired on Soviet television featuring the union leader, a film which Scargill watched when he visited the USSR in 1985.²⁸³

Scargill and the Soviet dissidents were similarly deified by their respective allies and the former's relationship with the Soviet media during the strike was a transnational dissident-promoting coalition

²⁷⁷ 'Kto est' kto: Artur Skargill', *Izvestiya*, 4th August, 1984, 5.

²⁷⁸ 'Kto est' kto', 5.

²⁷⁹ 'Kto est' kto', 5.

²⁸⁰ 'Kto est' kto', 5.

²⁸¹ McNair, *Glasnost, Perestroika, and the Soviet Media*, 144; A. Maslennikov, 'Taktika ul'timatumov', *Pravda*, 24th January, 1985, 5; Maslennikov, 'Gorniyaki ne sdayutsya', *Pravda*, 3rd February, 1985, 5.

²⁸² See for example, 'Exiled--but not to Gulag', *Guardian*, 14th February, 1974, 12.

²⁸³ Martin Walker, 'Scargill's coal comfort in Russia', *Guardian*, 26th March, 1985, 1.

and also emblematic of dissidentism. Establishing that heroization and exaggeration took place helps to support the case for dissidentism in the case of Scargill and the Soviet Union by highlighting the fact that the image-making aspect of dissidentism was occurring. Dissidentism typically saw individuals selected out and transformed into dissident figures. These figures were often detached from reality and deliberately overlooked any ideologically unsuitable views the perceived dissident may have had. Therefore, similarly important in highlighting the image-making aspects of the relationship between the miners and the USSR, is investigating any overlooked ideological differences or criticisms raised by Scargill as to his media depiction as these illustrate how images of Scargill as a dissident were being created that were detached from his actual personalities.

On the question of ideological differences, despite their mutual enthusiasm for one another during the strike, Scargill and the Soviet leadership were not a perfect match. As late as 1983, Scargill had voiced criticisms of the Soviet Union's human rights policy in an interview with the *New Left Review* (*NLR*), saying:

No one has more criticisms than I do of the situation in the Soviet Union ... I think the way they treat the writers is very bad. These people who want to leave should be allowed to leave. They should not deny basic freedom in the Soviet Union, which is the first Communist state. This is the condemnation I have of Eastern Europe. This gives people a false idea of socialism.²⁸⁴

A year earlier, Scargill had personally intervened in a human rights case involving a Soviet miner, Alexei Nikitin, who was 'forcibly confined for 12 years to a psychiatric hospital for his efforts to publicise the grievances of Soviet miners'.²⁸⁵ Scargill criticised the lack of action on the part of Mikhail Srebny, chairman of the Soviet coal industry union, in response to a previous overture made by the NUM on behalf of Nikitin who while interned was reportedly administered dangerous quantities of drugs which damaged his sight.²⁸⁶ The case of Nikitin was also taken up by Amnesty International, while Scargill additionally wrote to Srebny stating his hope that 'no miners or workers anywhere in the Soviet Union have or will be subject to the sort of treatment alleged of A. Nikitin'.²⁸⁷ It should be noted, though, that political scholar Taras Kuzio also reported in 1985 that Scargill was eventually persuaded by Soviet officials that Nikitin was 'unstable' at an international miners'

²⁸⁴ Scargill, 'The New Unionism', 32.

²⁸⁵ Taylor, 'Scargill acts on Soviet miner', 4.

²⁸⁶ Taylor, 4.

²⁸⁷ Taylor, 4.

conference attended by Soviet delegates in Newcastle upon Tyne, England and that Scargill later distanced himself from the case in 1983.²⁸⁸

However, the same year Scargill also made comments potentially damning to a future relationship with the Soviet Union in the aforementioned interview with *NLR*, when he expressed doubts that real communism could ever manifest in the USSR. Scargill was asked why he thought there was an ‘absence of workers’ democracy in the Soviet Union’.²⁸⁹ In reply, he said:

My experience is that there are a number of restrictions there which are alien to Marxism. At the same time I would say that the problems you have there are more to do with Russian history and Russian tradition than anything to do with Marxism or Communism. They have very deep roots. You can even go to the ordinary miner or engineer and in his everyday life he will adopt, on a very minor scale, the sort of philosophical outlook on life that the Kremlin will adopt. This worries me, because it shows a weakness in the whole education process that’s taken place in the Soviet Union. It’s a weakness that’s got to be put right because until you do there’s not going to be a socialist system, a Marxist system, operating effectively there. That’s basically what’s wrong in the Soviet Union.²⁹⁰

Scargill continued, saying that Cuba, aside from one or two issues, was his preferred model of socialism calling the system erected there ‘much more advanced’ and a ‘100 per cent improvement on what you have in the Soviet Union’.²⁹¹

Despite such comments, enthusiasm for Scargill was high among the Soviet press as already shown and these ideological criticisms were evidently overlooked throughout 1984-85. However, the eagerness of Soviet journalists to make use of the strike and Scargill’s personality also caused problems at times, as it led them to occasionally overstate the extent of similarity between his ideological outlook and that of the Soviet leadership, leading to criticism from Scargill. For example, in April 1984 a Soviet journalist based in London, Vissarion Sisnyov, had printed an interview that quoted Scargill as saying words to the effect that the miners were fighting a ‘class war’.²⁹² Inflammatory language such as this was damaging to the miners’ cause as it played into the Thatcher government’s narrative that the miners represented the ‘enemy within’ Britain, forcing the NUM to avoid any association with ideological positions which could be portrayed as extremist.²⁹³ Thus, the NUM leader rejected Sisnyov’s characterisation of his comments, and the union denounced the

²⁸⁸ Taras Kuzio, ‘British and Ukrainian Miners: Comparisons’, *Ukrainian Issues* 1, no. 4 (1985): 20.

²⁸⁹ Scargill, ‘The New Unionism’, 33.

²⁹⁰ Scargill, 33.

²⁹¹ Scargill, 33.

²⁹² Richard Dowden, ‘Russian journalist coy about Scargill “class war interview”’, *The Times*, 5th April, 1984, 3.

²⁹³ Ian Aitken, ‘Thatcher leads charge at “enemy within”’, *Guardian*, 20th July 1984, 1.

content of the interview as misrepresentative.²⁹⁴ Similar incidents of misrepresentation occurred in the West with the Soviet dissidents, with Solzhenitsyn rejecting an invitation from Reagan's White House to attend a meeting of Soviet dissidents with the President. Solzhenitsyn cited the Reagan administration's misrepresentations of his views on Russian nationalism – Solzhenitsyn denied being a 'nationalist' as was claimed and insisted he was simply a 'patriot' – as among the reasons he had for turning down the invite.²⁹⁵

Other problems, affecting the miners' domestic image, also arose even when Scargill was openly supporting Soviet policy or benefitting from Soviet support. The NUM leader's denunciation of *Solidarność* and adoption of pro-Soviet positions undermined his attempts to mobilise more right-leaning miners during the build-up to the strike, especially in Nottinghamshire where the majority of miners defied Scargill's calls to walk-out and whose refusal to support the NUM leader was a serious blow to the entire strike movement.²⁹⁶ In fact, the whole British trade union movement, within which many individual unions had built strong links with communist trade unions in the Warsaw Pact throughout the era of détente, was deeply divided over the question of supporting *Solidarność*.²⁹⁷

The Trades Union Congress of Great Britain (TUC) tried to cut a middle course by maintaining dialogue with the Polish authorities whilst stating its support for free trade unions.²⁹⁸ Others, meanwhile, like the anti-communist Frank Chapple of the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications, and Plumbing Union (EETPU) who would later advocate for Soviet dissidents, were solidly pro-*Solidarność* and often critical of the TUC.²⁹⁹ Scargill, meanwhile, continued attacking *Solidarność* as anti-socialist even after the imposition of martial law in Poland in December 1981, which led to visceral criticism from British supporters of the Polish union.³⁰⁰ Scargill would later unsuccessfully lobby the Polish government to cease exporting coal to the UK when the miners'

²⁹⁴ Dowden, 'Russian journalist coy about Scargill "class war interview"', 3.

²⁹⁵ 'Solzhenitsyn Lectures Reagan', *Los Angeles Times*, 13th May, 1982, A2.

²⁹⁶ Robert Taylor, 'Now Scargill upsets NUM rank and file', 4.

²⁹⁷ Stefan Berger and Norman LaPorte, 'Britain: Between Avoiding Cold War and Supporting Free Trade Unionism', in *Solidarity With Solidarity: Western European Trade Unions and the Polish Crisis, 1980-1982*, ed. Idesbald Gooddeeris (Lanham, MD and Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010), 129.

²⁹⁸ Berger and LaPorte, 'Britain', 133.

²⁹⁹ Berger and LaPorte, 'Britain', 132-3; Hurst, "'Gamekeeper Turned Poacher'", 313-37.

³⁰⁰ Berger and LaPorte, 'Britain', 138.

strike began, with a *Solidarność* leader reminding Scargill of his former criticism of the free trade union by which time it had been banned by the new hard-line Polish government.³⁰¹

At the same, exclamatory Soviet coverage of the strike, especially claims that miners were starving and regularly victims of ‘police brutality’, led to criticism from the leader of the Labour Party, Neil Kinnock, on his 1984 visit to Moscow.³⁰² This worsened the growing rift between the strikers and the main socialist party in Britain as Kinnock tried to re-build his party’s credibility with the British electorate.³⁰³ Similarly problematic for the miners was the endless, often speculative but no less damaging press coverage regarding the possible transfer of Soviet financial support to the NUM which had the effect of depicting the union as a foreign agent under the sway of Moscow.³⁰⁴ The USSR certainly did attempt to send money to aid the union, though in the end none of it reached the NUM directly. Nevertheless, the affair was deeply damaging to the public image of miners on strike in an episode given greater attention in the following chapter.

Nonetheless, it must be noted that despite the consequences to the miners’ media presentation the NUM did repeatedly lobby for Soviet funds ‘insistently invoking the spirit of [the] 1926 [general strike]’ throughout the strike so dire was the union’s financial situation following the passing of a sequester order against it by a British court.³⁰⁵ Scargill also overlooked what seem to have been significant ideological reservations about the Soviet Union in his requests for funds from Soviet officials. This too, though, is suggestive of dissidentism, with Scargill seeking Soviet help despite his own criticisms of Moscow and his portrayal in a manner that did not always reflect his full ideological palette, mirroring the ways in which many Soviet and East European dissidents overlooked their own misrepresentation by and political differences with their Western supporters in order to benefit from publicity and practical assistance.³⁰⁶

These aspects of Scargill’s relationship with the USSR are also consistent with the definition of a transnational dissident-promoting coalition, a concept introduced by this thesis, whereby political differences are set aside by a dissenter to attract the support of a powerful political actor from abroad

³⁰¹ Berger and LaPorte, 138.

³⁰² Richard Owen, ‘Russians “misled” about strike’, *The Times*, 24th November, 1984, 1.

³⁰³ Owen, ‘Russians “misled” about strike’, 1.

³⁰⁴ For an overview of this affair, see Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 292-301.

³⁰⁵ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 266.

³⁰⁶ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 190-2.

to achieve a mutually sought-after political purpose. At the same time, though, despite his aforementioned concerns over Soviet human rights abuses expressed in 1983, comments on human rights made by Scargill in 1984 two months before the strike began suggest that he had by then moved closer to a Soviet position on human rights. Whether this was a strategic move to smooth the path to gaining Soviet support is impossible to surely know but in January 1984 in a speech, made during a public event in the UK organised by the group ‘Solidarity with El Salvador’ to support persecuted El Salvadorian trade unionists, Scargill accused Western states and papers of hypocrisy and of distorting the picture of human rights globally by deliberately focussing on abuses in communist countries and overlooking those which took place in right-wing regimes such as El Salvador. Summing up the situation to his audience and directly referring to the representatives of the anti-NUM British tabloid press present at the event, the Yorkshire trade unionist asserted that:

...if there [was] a trouble spot in Eastern Europe involving three people it [would] be serialised for four months. There have been more people killed in a week in El Salvador than possibly in ten years in other parts of the world. But the issue at stake for this bunch [the anti-NUM press] is an issue of class. It’s because the power[?] of American imperialism is threatened, that these apologists for Thatcher are prepared to come and support any regime propped up by the United States government.³⁰⁷

Furthermore, by 1984 Scargill had decisively distanced himself from the Nikitin case. In August 1984, Scargill claimed that the letter to chairman Srebny had been leaked to the press against his wishes and questioned the veracity of claims about Nikitin’s treatment when approached for details of what actions the NUM was taking to help the Soviet miner by the producer of a documentary on Soviet abuse of psychiatry, Geoffrey Seed.³⁰⁸ Scargill resisted Seed’s questions about what the NUM was doing to pressure the Soviet mining authorities and also proceeded to lecture the producer about what he saw as the unfair focus of the press on Eastern European human rights issues compared to right-wing regimes in South and Central America; Scargill’s telephone conversation with Seed was recorded and published in the *Spectator* that year.³⁰⁹

Scargill clearly had a complex and sometimes contradictory view of Eastern European human rights which despite the somewhat pro-Soviet attitude expressed above also allowed for criticism of the USSR. But evidently, a transnational coalition was formed between Scargill and the Soviet Union

³⁰⁷ Arthur Scargill, ‘Interview with Arthur Scargill and a meeting of Solidarity with El Salvador’, 23rd January, 1984, *John Clements Oral History Collection*, Murdoch University, Perth, Audio File 54409.

³⁰⁸ Richard West, ‘Arthur’s Seat’, *The Spectator*, 25th August 1984, 12.

³⁰⁹ West, ‘Arthur’s Seat’, 12.

which was accompanied by a process of image-creation that depicted the former as a dissident in the Soviet press, in a similar way to the campaigns put in motion by Western politicians and papers towards Soviet dissidents. Stories featuring the miners and Scargill ignored the discord between and within unions and overlooked Scargill's criticisms of the USSR. The only information that reached Soviet readers was that anti-capitalist dissent consistent with the predictions of Marxist materialism was occurring in the West, that individuals with strong traditional Marxist beliefs reached positions of influence in the West, and that one of the leading capitalist states was in a state of crisis.

Such evidence points towards dissidentism as having occurred between the USSR and the miners. To make a further assessment, the criteria of dissidentism can be applied to their relationship: 'open, legal, and non-violent action under a repressive sanction (dissidence), Western attention, as well as domestic recognition'.³¹⁰ Overall, there is a strong case to suggest Soviet dissidentism if we replace 'Western attention' with 'Soviet' attention and apply the concept to the British miners' strike.³¹¹ Taking Szulecki's criteria one-by-one, the case for dissidentism between the miners and the Soviet Union becomes clear. On the question of 'open, legal, and non-violent action under a repressive sanction' there are certainly some issues to address. The miners' decision to go on strike was in violation of laws that required a ballot approving a national walkout to be held among unionised workers. That, the leading union, the NUM, did not do.³¹²

However, the laws that the NUM violated were recently introduced by the incumbent Conservative government, were highly politicised in their use, and explicitly directed by the government at curbing the unions' power following the experience of a previous Conservative administration's collapse, or 'defeat', under union pressure during the 1972 and 1974 strikes.³¹³ The legality or illegality of the strike in technical terms was also fiercely contested at the time, leading 'to considerable ambiguity about where actions related to the strike stood within the letter of the law', and remains unclear.³¹⁴ Rulings by courts in different parts of the UK gave different verdicts – Scotland's High Court declared the strike legal, while a decision by the High Court of England & Wales ruled against the

³¹⁰ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 3.

³¹¹ Szulecki, 3.

³¹² Arthur Scargill, 'We could surrender – or stand and fight', *Guardian*, 7th March, 2009; 'NUM fights on without a ballot', *Guardian*, 13th April, 1984, 14.

³¹³ R. Darlington, 'There is no alternative: Exploring the options in the 1984-5 miners' strike', *University of Salford* (2005), 8-9 published in *Capital & Class* 29, no. 3 (2005): 71-95.

³¹⁴ Michael Atkin, 'The 1984/85 Miners strike in East Durham, A study in contemporary history' (PhD diss., University of Durham, 2001), 55.

NUM; striking miners, meanwhile, often took the view that they had a fundamental right to strike as they saw fit which no government legislation could curb.³¹⁵ Given this lack of clarity on the question of legality, which continues to be debated, it cannot therefore be treated as an obstacle to establishing the existence of dissidentism.

There was certainly violence during the miners' strike, which makes a direct comparison to the Soviet dissident movement inappropriate as it was almost exclusively non-violent on principle despite the examples of the more extreme elements of the Soviet New Left or the Kuznetsov-Dymshits hijacking.³¹⁶ However, the violence which did occur did not result in intentional deaths on the part of miners and it was ultimately inadvisable for the miners to seek battles, knowing the damage it could do to the public image of the strike, and they strongly argued that the police were the instigators of violence, not strikers.³¹⁷ Furthermore, at the most violent clash of the strike, the Battle of Orgreave, campaign groups claim that it was the police who 'instigated the violence and later fabricated its account of events.'³¹⁸ It is in fact increasingly suggested that many of the charges brought against miners were bogus and that there were serious miscarriages of justice; in Scotland, miners charged during the strike have since received pardons out of recognition of the fact that 'most of the miners' actions would be unlikely to result in prosecution today'.³¹⁹ Scargill, meanwhile, though reluctant to publicly denounce violence on the picket lines because this might have deflected responsibility away from the police, certainly did not condone violence and also went on the record to denounce overt

³¹⁵ Jim Phillips, 'Strategic Injustice and the 1984–85 Miners' Strike in Scotland', *Industrial Law Journal* (2022); Keith Harper, 'Miners' writ leaves Scargill defiant', *The Observer*, 2nd October, 1984, 1; Tony Weir, 'A Strike Against the Law?', *Maryland Law Review* 46, no .1 (1986): 144.

³¹⁶ Weir, 'A Strike Against the Law?', 134. Judith Cummings, 'Leningrad Hijacking: A Desperate Act', *New York Times*, 30th April, 1979, Section A, 12.

³¹⁷ There were only a handful of deaths throughout the strike, each occurring in different and exceptional circumstances and caused by various parties, with one of those deaths being a suicide by miner Jim Clay which followed a harassment campaign against him and another death, that of taxi driver David Wilkie who died after rogue striking miners dropped a concrete brick on his car from the top of a bridge while he drove a working miner, eventually being legally termed manslaughter. See Weir, 'A Strike Against the Law?', 134; Mark Oliver, 'Minister's secret role in miners' strike death inquiry', *Guardian*, 26th January, 2004; David Conn, 'We were fed lies about the violence at Orgreave. Now we need the truth', *Guardian*, 22nd July 2015; David Conn, 'The Scandal of Orgreave', *Guardian*, 18th May, 2017.

³¹⁸ 'Battle of Orgreave inquiry 'green light' welcomed by campaigners', *BBC*, 15th September, 2016, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-37373797>.

³¹⁹ Jenny Chryst, 'Miners' strike: "Police fitted me up"', *BBC Radio 4's The Report*, 2nd January, 2014, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25550053>; 'Scottish miners convicted during strike to be pardoned', *BBC*, 28th October, 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-54713414>.

acts of violence by individual rogue miners.³²⁰ Ultimately, the goal of the strikers was non-violent and not insurrectionary, but to defend their economic interests and as they saw it their rights. Neither was Scargill himself violent despite accusations to the effect that he had manhandled police during his 1984 arrest, claims which his defence called ‘a lie’; the police officers carrying out the arrest were described in their actions as ‘brazen, almost brutal’.³²¹ With regard to the prerequisite of ‘repressive sanction’ by the state, there is substantial evidence that the government overstepped the mark in its attempts to defeat the strike, with suggestions of covert infiltration by police and improper direction and use of the security services’ utilities.³²² According to allegations made by intelligence sources printed in *The Guardian*, the intelligence services ‘broke rules’ protecting bank transfers and oversaw the ‘misuse of surveillance facilities’ in order to carry out the campaign against Scargill and the miners.³²³ The Soviet press also picked up on these allegations, and highlighted alleged ‘eavesdropping’ by the security services.³²⁴

The miners’ ‘domestic recognition’ and infamy, meanwhile, was complicated in some regards, suffering from a lack of solidarity action by other trade unions.³²⁵ However, the strike did receive widespread public recognition and support from some other trade unions as well as limited support from the Labour Party, though the party’s leadership disavowed some strikers’ tactics; the press worked to promote Scargill’s infamy.³²⁶ On the question of Soviet attention, this chapter’s findings clearly illustrate that Moscow offered support to the miners on multiple levels, from finance to propaganda. The Soviet leadership were able to give more unequivocal support to the miners than they had been able to give the New Left, as the miners’ leadership, especially Scargill, sympathised with key Soviet policies. Not only was the scale of Soviet attention evident in the archives of *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, CIA analysis of the content of Soviet media broadcasts also shows that across radio

³²⁰ Political Staff, ‘Scargill call to TUC for all-out war’, 1; Peter Hetherington, ‘Strikers boo Willis attack on violence’, *Guardian*, 14th November, 1984, 1; Peter Hetherington and David McKie, ‘Kinnock demands end to violence’, *Guardian*, 1st December, 1984, 1

³²¹ Malcolm Pithers, ‘Scargill accepts “political” obstruction fine’, *Guardian*, 15th December, 1984, 1 and 24.

³²² Darlington, ‘There is no alternative’, 8; ‘Did police spy on Welsh miners during strike?’, *BBC News*, 8th March, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-47358632>.

³²³ ‘Security services “broke rules to spy on NUM”’, *Guardian*, 22nd May, 1991, 6.

³²⁴ A. Maslennikov, ‘Dzhentl’meny u zamochnoy skvazhiny’, *Pravda*, 22nd February, 1985, 5.

³²⁵ Darlington, ‘There is no alternative’, 14.

³²⁶ Darlington, 7.

and print, the miners' strike featured heavily in international Soviet news reports.³²⁷ Meanwhile, the available National Archives records show that the British government was deeply concerned by Soviet support for the strike and lobbied Soviet officials in advance of Gorbachev's 1984 visit to refrain from any public displays of solidarity with the miners to avoid any potential diplomatic problems; Cabinet Minister Norman Lamont called on the PM to tell the Soviet Union to 'stop meddling in our internal affairs'.³²⁸

On this basis, this thesis argues that dissidentism, though with notable discrepancies, did exist between the miners and the USSR, and particularly between the Soviet press and Arthur Scargill. Within this, the key finding is not that it might be possible to suggest the miners can be considered dissidents akin to the Soviet dissidents – though they were arguably victims of political repression – but that the Soviet press actively portrayed the miners, and especially their leader Scargill, as just and peaceful anti-capitalist dissidents taking part in a struggle for workers' rights which served as confirmatory evidence that Marxism-Leninism's predictions were accurate and images of the miners' struggle were broadcast to Soviet domestic and international audiences to achieve this. Moscow saw the supporting the miners' strike and reframing it as a human rights disaster as a vital way to compete with the West ideologically, and as such devoted significant resources in support of this endeavour.

Conclusion

The evidence introduced by this chapter highlights that the Soviet Union engaged in a dynamic and multifaceted media campaign in support of Scargill and his strike. More than this, though, the evidence shows that the Soviet press sought to create images of dissent in the West similar to those created by Western papers and politicians regarding Soviet dissidents, with Scargill becoming a celebrated dissident hero in the Soviet media. Soviet support went far beyond what had ever been

³²⁷ For examples, see CIA, 'Commentary List: Moscow Consolidated', 13th December, 1984, General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. CIA-RDP94-01353R002501880011-3, 11 or CIA, 'Commentary List: Moscow Consolidated', 21st December, 1984, General CIA Records, FOIA ERR, Document no. CIA-RDP94-01353R002501890005-9, 1. The reading room can be searched by key word to bring up a full list of broadcasts that mention the strike: <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/search/site/%22MINERS%20STRIKE%22> (accessed 8th September, 2022).

³²⁸ Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to Prime Minister, 'Soviet Assistance to the NUM', 20th November, 1984, *TNA, Kew*, PREM19/1335, f10; Charles Powell to FCO, 'Supreme Soviet Visit', 26th November, 1984, *TNA, Kew*, PREM19/1578, f337. The primary issue of concern for British ministers was the inclusion of Strelchenko, the top pit-foreman in the USSR, in the Soviet delegation who they feared might make a public address to a rally of miners. For further discussion, see Rawsthorne, 'Thatcher's Culture of Conformity: The Disintegration of Party/State Distinctions and the Weaponisation of the State in Response to the Miners', 88.

given to the New Left and even Angela Davis, with the miners' strike being more ideologically suitable in building a narrative of anti-capitalist dissent that supported the dominant concept of Soviet modernity. Scargill's valorisation is also another strong case to support the existence of Soviet-West dissidentism.

Establishing the case for dissidentism between the miners and USSR and comparing it with that between the New Left also illustrates how ideological tensions were of greater significance in Soviet-West dissidentism.³²⁹ Evidently, a greater level of support was given to the miners by the USSR compared to that given to the New Left for how their movement correlated with typical Marxist expectations for revolution and Soviet preferences for left-wing movements predicated on traditional socialist principles of organised labour and mass action.³³⁰ At the same time, though, the extent of the embrace of the miners in 1984 also contrasts with and puts into focus the suddenness of the shift initiated towards reform by Gorbachev from 1985 onwards, and the high levels of confidence which existed in the leadership before his arrival that the traditional form of Soviet socialism and socialist internationalism still had global potential.³³¹ Gorbachev, of course, would abandon this worldview and with it the miners as he pursued his reform program and better relations with the West. This strategic and disingenuous aspect of dissident-promoting coalitions and dissidentism will be explored in greater detail in the final following chapter which covers the worsening relationship between the miners and the USSR, as the latter once again reformulated its approach to dissidentism during 1985-91 as a result of *perestroika*'s introduction.

³²⁹ Peterson, 'Wielding the Human Rights Weapon', 25.

³³⁰ Krylova, 'Soviet Modernity', 191.

³³¹ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 291.

CHAPTER V: THE ‘END OF HISTORY’ AND TRANSNATIONAL DISSIDENT-PROMOTING COALITIONS, 1985-91¹

[Soviet miners] don’t like Arthur’s attitude, they say he’s a Marxist²

– NUM member Idwal Morgan, 1990

Gorbachev was totally unprincipled, an unmitigated disaster³

– Arthur Scargill, 1992

Introduction

Since 1979, the rhetorical manufacture and exploitation of dissident figures had continued to occur with increasing intensity in the USSR and West. Attacks upon the opposing Cold War bloc were sharp and often uncompromising. Yet, from 1985 onwards, within the space of a few years, this war of words had significantly de-escalated and evolved. As a result of the reforms towards international peace and domestic pluralism initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev from 1985 until 1991, the USSR’s former allies in the British trade union movement disappeared from Soviet discourse, at least in positive terms, while Reagan and Thatcher began to soften their criticism of Soviet human rights issues and distance themselves from right-wing Soviet dissidents’ attacks on Gorbachev. Once East-West cooperation became the priority rather than confrontation, many dissident figures traditionally considered key allies by the US and UK – the right-wing Soviet dissidents – and USSR – the hard-left trade unionists – lost much of their strategic relevance in the late Cold War and were side-lined in favour of dissident figures whose politics were compatible with the new international political and human rights order that was emerging.⁴

¹ Francis Fukuyama, ‘The End of History?’, *The National Interest*, 1989, no. 16: 3-18.

² Seumas Milne, ‘Scargill ‘too Marxist’ for the Soviets’, *Guardian*, 4th September, 1990, 4; Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 293.

³ Seumas Milne, ‘Class warrior squares up to the City: Now that his greatest enemies’, *Guardian*, 1st August, 1992, 25.

⁴ The exception to this rule were the dissidents of communist Central Europe, who in many cases led or formed part of post-1989 administrations such as Václav Havel (President of Czechoslovakia 1989-92; President of the Czech Republic 1993-2002) and Lech Wałęsa (President of Poland 1990-95). Those dissidents continued to accrue fame and political legitimacy as democratic alternatives to the intransigent socialist dictatorships of the region throughout 1985-89. See Szulecki, *Dissident in Communist Central Europe*, 197-203. By comparison, the drive for democratisation in the USSR was led from the top of government by Gorbachev. The dissidents, therefore, lacked an authoritarian opponent against which to build their political authority in the eyes of the public. Instead, the most influential dissidents became those who supported Gorbachev’s reform efforts, such as Andrei Sakharov. The dissident movement itself, meanwhile, had

The events covered in this chapter serve to illustrate the temporary and strategic nature of transnational dissident-promoting coalitions and dissidentism itself. Both the reaction of the dissident figures to their abandonment by their allies and the ideological causes of it are analysed. The chapter seeks to highlight how the long-established worldviews held by the likes of the British miners and right-wing Soviet dissidents were left behind and came into opposition with the new cooperative mainstream initiated by Gorbachev and discusses how these groups continued to fight their own respective Cold War battles until 1991. Finally, the chapter looks at the alternative targets for dissidentism and human rights narratives considered by Moscow in this period, as well as the revival of the Soviet New Left, highlighting the final chapter in the varied and complex relationship the USSR had with radicals in the West and their ideas. The analysis ultimately illustrates how, right up to the end of the USSR's existence, the press and leadership of the Soviet Union continued to invest in the exploitation of dissident figures and human rights issues in the West and confidently went about competing with Western human rights' interpretations and creating their own dissident figures and narratives on dissent, but also highlights how this was an ever-changing process dependent on the needs of Soviet policy and its ideological priorities.

Old mould dissidents go out of fashion

Gorbachev's reforms were in the end responsible for the Cold War ending. Only comprehensive reform of the Soviet Union, especially its hawkish military establishment, could have facilitated the relaxation of East-West tensions.⁵ Reagan, however, also played a significant role. His second term was marked by a much more conciliatory approach to relations with the Soviet Union. A similar stance was taken by his successor, George H. W. Bush (1989-93). The sources of this move had much to do with the facts that the American 'military buildup was taking hold, US nuclear missiles had been deployed to Europe, the American economy was recovering, and the Western alliance appeared to be unified'.⁶ Reagan also sought to avoid further near misses such as the Able Archer

effectively been repressed by the time Gorbachev was in power, with many of the most prominent dissidents living in exile in the West. See Archie Brown, 'The Gorbachev Era', in *The Cambridge History of Russia, Volume III*, 337.

⁵ Archie Brown, 'The Gorbachev revolution and the end of the Cold War', in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume III: Endings*, eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010), 244.

⁶ Beth A. Fischer, 'US foreign policy under Reagan and Bush', in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume III*, 274.

crisis of 1983; the President had a personal aversion to nuclear weapons.⁷ This shift towards reconciliation had begun as early as January 1984, when Reagan publicly signalled a desire to improve superpower relations in a major speech. The administration did not, however, expect much immediate enthusiasm from the Soviet side.⁸ The USSR was still rocked by the successive deaths of three leaders in as many years and unable to respond to any American overtures about a significant change in policy.⁹ It was not until Gorbachev was fully established in his place as General Secretary that relations began to warm.

Gorbachev was unlike his predecessors in almost every regard. He was notably younger, aged 54 upon coming into power in March 1985 when the average age of Politburo members was 67.¹⁰ He was also cultured, charismatic, had spent time in the West, and mastered the political machinations of the Soviet bureaucracy in a successful career marked by rapid promotion. Most crucial of all, though, was the fact that he brought with him a fresh set of ideas designed to reform and improve Soviet society. Guided by a personal neo-Leninist ideology, Gorbachev's program centred around *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring); two strands of reform respectively, designed to open up political society to encourage a freer exchange of ideas and reframe the political and economic apparatuses to boost democratic participation and productive efficiency.¹¹ Gorbachev's reforms would eventually result in the abolition of the communist party's monopoly on political power and its role as the guiding force in Soviet society in an attempt to democratise the Soviet Union.¹² On top of his domestic reforms, Gorbachev also sought a radical improvement of Soviet relations with the West. The nuclear arms race that had escalated throughout 1980s was both costly to the Soviet treasury but also abhorrent to the violence-averse Gorbachev.¹³ By 1989, following the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the Cold War had effectively come to an end. Gorbachev's twin desires for a modernised Marxism at home and less aggressive foreign policy,

⁷ Fischer, 274.

⁸ Fischer, 'US foreign policy under Reagan and Bush', 275-6.

⁹ Yuri Andropov had succeeded Brezhnev in 1982 but only served until February 1984, dying in office. See Fischer, 'US foreign policy under Reagan and Bush', 275.

¹⁰ Archie Brown, 'Gorbachev: New Man in the Kremlin', *Problems of Communism*, no. 34 (May-June, 1985): 3.

¹¹ Brown, 'The Gorbachev Era', 323 and 317.

¹² Brown, 328.

¹³ Brown, 337.

along with Western support for these initiatives, had serious implications for East-West and West-East dissidentism in the USSR, Europe, and the United States.

In the case of Reagan and Thatcher's public rhetoric, Soviet dissidents were referenced less frequently and the reasons for citing them became increasingly constructive. Like Reagan, Thatcher had begun to consider a more co-operative relationship with the USSR by 1984, particularly following a series of seminars she held with Foreign Office and academic experts on the Soviet bloc which suggested that a co-operative policy could yield significant results in reforming socialist countries.¹⁴ These shifts ultimately helped prepare the two leaders for the arrival of Gorbachev and provides additional explanation as to why they so quickly and fervently moved to support him.¹⁵

In terms of Thatcher's discussion of dissidents, the cooperative shift was reflected in the cautious tone that she used when discussing the exile and potential release of Sakharov and Yelena Bonner during 1984-86. Both were subject to internal exile in the closed city of Gorky between 1980 and 1986 and suffered from frequent health problems.¹⁶ The Soviet Union repeatedly obstructed Bonner's treatment – it required trips to America – which Sakharov protested by going on hunger strike.¹⁷ The affair drew opprobrium from conservatives, but also the Anglo-American press at large, and Reagan and Thatcher were repeatedly pressured to intervene. Following a meeting of the G7 leaders, Thatcher provided a statement on East-West relations and faced questions from the press, including why she had failed to mention Sakharov and Bonner. She replied:

I do not think we need to mention Andrei Sakharov in a statement to give greater exposure to his case, because we all of us frequently mentioned it and have done everything we can to make representations that he should be properly treated and his wife should have the requisite medical treatment. So I do not think we needed to deal with it in this statement. This, after all, is an economic statement and it did not seem appropriate to mention specific cases in one on East-West relations without also mentioning many other cases.¹⁸

Reagan was similarly cautious in other instances. The discussion of dissidents by the two leaders was more frequently used to highlight both Gorbachev's achievements in the field of human rights and

¹⁴ Archie Brown, 'The Change to Engagement in Britain's Cold War Policy: The Origins of the Thatcher-Gorbachev Relationship', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 10, no. 3 (Summer 2008): 4; Ledger, 'From Solidarity to "Shock Therapy"', 99-118; Gábor Bátonyi, "'Creative Ferment in Eastern Europe": Thatcher's Diplomacy and the Transformation of Hungary in the Mid-1980s', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 29, no. 4 (2018): 638-66.

¹⁵ Brown, 'The Change to Engagement in Britain's Cold War Policy', 42.

¹⁶ Serge Schmemmann, 'Wife of Sakharov on a Trip to West', *New York Times*, 3rd December, 1984, Section A, 11.

¹⁷ 'Scientists Plead for Sakharov', *New York Times*, 26th May, 1984, Section 1, 3.

¹⁸ Margaret Thatcher, 'Press Conference at London G7 Summit', 9th June, 1984, 6, *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*.

to encourage him to go further; as matter of policy, Reagan also agreed not to take credit for positive steps taken by the USSR on human rights.¹⁹ In 1988, the President praised the release of some notable dissidents, including Sakharov.²⁰ Thatcher and Reagan did not go so far as to abandon the use of dissident figures in their rhetoric in more directly critical terms, though. Reagan still levelled criticism at the USSR for its:

... continued suppression of those who wish to practice their religious beliefs[.] Over 300 men and women whom the world sees as political prisoners have been released. There remains no reason why the Soviet Union cannot release all people still in jail for expression of political or religious belief, or for organizing to monitor the Helsinki Act.²¹

Reagan had also explicitly called on the ‘Soviet leadership to end the isolation of Dr. Sakharov and his wife’, calling the ‘human rights situation in the Soviet Union ... bleak’.²² However, there was greater emphasis on using quiet diplomacy, addressing human rights in meetings with Soviet officials reflecting the shift in strategy towards conciliation and overall both leaders’ tone on human rights softened.²³ Meanwhile, the USSR’s allies in the West were also affected by the new spirit of cooperation, but more decisively so. Most of all, the reforms affected the striking British miners and their leader Arthur Scargill and would lead to the end of the dissident-promoting coalition between them and the USSR.

What had made Scargill and his supporters so useful to the Soviet Union compared to the New Left in 1984 – their more orthodox Marxism, militancy, and disruptive anti-capitalist activities – after 1985 transformed them into an obstacle to achieving the goals of Soviet foreign policy. No longer did the USSR seek to use Scargill’s ‘dissidence’ to undermine the West as it had done before. Doing so would have instead undermined Gorbachev’s own attempts to better relations with the West, and the politician would go to exceptional lengths to distance himself from the miner.²⁴ This process

¹⁹ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1981-88, Volume VI, Soviet Union, October 1986–January 1989*, eds. James Graham Wilson and Adam M. Howard, (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2016), Document 35.

²⁰ Ronald Reagan, ‘Remarks to the Paasikivi Society and the League of Finnish-American Societies in Helsinki, Finland’, 27th May, 1988, *The Public Papers of Ronald Reagan, Book I – January 1 to July 1, 1988* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1990), 656-61.

²¹ Reagan, ‘Remarks to the Paasikivi Society and the League of Finnish-American Societies in Helsinki, Finland’, 656-61.

²² Ronald Reagan, ‘Statement on the Exile of Andrei Sakharov and Human Rights in the Soviet Union’, 15th May, 1985, *The Public Papers of Ronald W. Reagan* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1988), 617-8.

²³ See Sarah B. Snyder, ‘“No Crowing”: Reagan, Trust, and Human Rights’, in *Trust but Verify: The Politics of Uncertainty and the Transformation of the Cold War Order, 1969-1991*, eds. Martin Klimpke, Reinhild Kreis, and Christian F. Ostermann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 42-62.

²⁴ Chernyaev, *The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1985*, 9.

began even before Gorbachev officially took up office as General Secretary. Gorbachev, by 1984, had become the second-most influential politician in the Politburo after Chernenko. His influence extended to foreign policy where the rising star of Soviet politics began to make moves. Most important of all was Gorbachev's visit to London in December 1984.

The visit was taken seriously by both the British and Soviet sides. Throughout November that year, Downing Street extensively strategized for the upcoming meeting as to how the government could take the opportunity to study and leave an impression on the politician who, in Whitehall's view, could well have been the man to lead 'the Soviet Union into the 21st century'.²⁵ The UK government aimed to display the 'sincerity' of the West's desire for increased dialogue with the USSR and to teach Gorbachev 'something about how a Western democracy works and what a free market economy can achieve'.²⁶ The British also warned Soviet officials that there would be consequences if their delegation failed to give a convincing account of state involvement in attempted transfers of funds to support the miners in 1984 or if there were any public displays of solidarity by members of the Soviet delegation, particularly by the prominent Soviet trade union activist Ivan Strelchenko, with the striking miners.²⁷

The Soviet side evidently took note of this warning. Despite Strelchenko still being included in the final list of delegates, importantly no meeting with Scargill took place.²⁸ The visit was a great success and established Gorbachev's reputation as a statesperson with whom Thatcher could 'do business'.²⁹ The Prime Minister, however, during her personal meeting with Gorbachev, still demanded confirmation as to whether an official order had been given by the Politburo to fund the NUM. Gorbachev denied the allegation to Thatcher's face. This was despite the fact that only months earlier, he had indeed authorised a transfer of funds to support striking British miners. Gorbachev was willing to lie to keep his newfound partner in the West.³⁰

²⁵ FCO to No.10, 'Gorbachev's Visit: UK Objectives', 19th November, 1984, *TNA, Kew*, PREM19/1394 f260, 1.

²⁶ FCO to No.10, 'Gorbachev's Visit: UK Objectives', 2-3.

²⁷ FCO to No.10, 'Soviet Assistance to the NUM', 20th November, 1984, *TNA, Kew*, PREM19/1335 f10; Trade Department to Charles Powell, 'Soviet Assistance to the NUM', 21st November, 1984, *TNA, Kew*, PREM19/1578 f360.

²⁸ Hella Pick, 'Gorbachev visit affirms "standing" of Thatcher', *Guardian*, 14th December, 1984, 6.

²⁹ Archie Brown, 'The Gorbachev revolution and the end of the Cold War', 247.

³⁰ Richard Sakwa, 'The Soviet collapse: Contradictions and neo-modernisation', *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 4, no. 1 (2013): 69.

In the aftermath of his successful meeting with Thatcher, Gorbachev and fellow travellers in the Soviet establishment began to cool towards direct support for the NUM. The operation to support the miners financially became entirely hidden from view even within the USSR's London embassy and went largely undiscussed among its staff.³¹ Some communist hardliners still emotionally lobbied on behalf of the miners in late 1984 and early 1985, such as Shalaye, and Soviet trade unionists like Vsyevolod Mojaye and Boris Avryamov.³² However, a growing number of government figures came out against the strike. Among them were Yuri Mazur, responsible for Soviet relations with the British Communist Party, and Anatoly Chernyaev, who feared damaging the USSR's improved relationship with Britain as well as undermining the Labour Party's chances in an election by associating socialist politics with Soviet influence.³³ This inevitably led to clashes, as the committed ideologues of the Politburo began to come into conflict with the more pragmatic reformists. In his diary, Chernyaev captured the divide over the miners' strike that had gripped the Politburo by January 1985:

Shalaev [sic.] (VCSPS [All-Union Central Labor Union Council]) insists on the resumption of the million-rouble transfer to English miners, even though Gorbachev told Thatcher: we have not and will not transfer. I made him go to the CC [Central Committee]. I am in doubt myself, and that is how I composed the memo. Because our million is a drop in the bucket (less than the miner's week's spending), and [is given] in secret at that (so it does nothing for the internationalism); and if it comes to the surface, Maggie will drag the person, with whom she talked and whom she liked so much, through the mud. It is not worth it. We shall see how the CC Secretaries and M.S. [Gorbachev] himself will treat this.³⁴

Nevertheless, the policy of solidarity with the strikers was not fully abandoned. However, any practical assistance would be directed to the NUM indirectly through an international solidarity fund, meaning Gorbachev could distance himself from the strike and Scargill.³⁵ In the end, 94% of the money arrived in this fund only after the end of the strike meaning the NUM did not benefit as intended.³⁶ The Soviet shipping embargo on fuel exports to the UK was also eventually lifted around the end of the strike 'under direct pressure from...Gorbachev'.³⁷ Still, Soviet press coverage

³¹ Oleg Gordievsky, interview with Lorraine Hennessey, *Dispatches*, Channel 4, 22nd May, 1991 quoted in Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 279.

³² Milne, 272.

³³ Milne, 272.

³⁴ Chernyaev, *The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1985*, 9-10.

³⁵ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 284.

³⁶ Milne, 284.

³⁷ Milne, 265

remained supportive of the miners till the end of the strike in March 1985.³⁸ Gorbachev exercised influence in foreign policy, but it would not be until after the launch of *glasnost* in 1985 that the miners ceased to receive support from Soviet propaganda and instead became a target of it.³⁹

Despite British Foreign Office assessments indicating that the ‘extent and frequency’ of Soviet reportage on the miners’ strike began to diminish around December 1984, coinciding with Gorbachev’s visit, what coverage there was continued to be overwhelmingly supportive and articles on the miners appeared even following their decision to end the strike in March 1985.⁴⁰ A *Pravda* piece, published under the title ‘The Unconquered’ immediately after the strike was called off, sought to re-assure Soviet readers of the health of British Marxism by writing that ‘the miners [we]re returning to their jobs’ only ‘in the interests of maintaining unity’, and they did ‘not intend to stop fighting against Tory plans to reduce coal production’.⁴¹

Scargill also continued to feature in reports on the British mining industry. A later article from July, published under the heading ‘The Miners’ Voice’, reported how NUM members had ‘passed a vote of confidence in their leader, chairman of the trade union Arthur Scargill’ and that the ‘decision of the trade union forum was a demonstration of miners’ solidarity and condemnation of the Tory cabinet’s course...’⁴² A further 1986 report on an anti-war rally in Yorkshire where Scargill was due to speak, continued the narrative of emphasising the trade unionist’s continued popularity, saying:

The persecution of this militant union leader by the bourgeois press does not reduce, but only increases his popularity. The miners are one of the leading detachments of the British working class. For this reason, the Tory government does not give up trying to crack down on the miners, as well as on the organized labour movement in general.⁴³

Yet once *glasnost* came into effect, even though the Soviet media continued to capitalise on other UK strikes especially in the public sector, the dissident media figure of Scargill would eventually

³⁸ A. Maslennikov, ‘Edinstvo—zalog pobedy’, *Pravda*, 26th February, 1985, 5; V. Skosyrev, ‘Gorniyaki prodolzhayut bor’bu’, *Izvestiya*, 26th February, 1985, 5; A. Maslennikov, ‘Bor’ba prodolzhayetsya’, *Pravda*, 5th March, 1985, 5.

³⁹ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 277.

⁴⁰ Ian Sutherland to FCO, ‘Miners’ Strike: Soviet Press Coverage’, 12th December, 1984, *TNA, Kew*, FCO 28/6513, f4.

⁴¹ A. Maslennikov, ‘Nepokorivshiyetsya’, *Pravda*, 8th March, 1985, 5.

⁴² ‘Golos gorniyakov’, *Pravda*, 6th July 1985, 5.

⁴³ Vikentny Matveev, ‘Vetry nad Yorkshirom’, *Izvestiya*, 27th June, 1986, 5.

disappear from the Soviet press despite his continued activism, as would any mention of him in significantly positive terms.⁴⁴

Pravda and Izvestiya turn on Scargill

International reporting certainly took the longest of all sectors of Soviet journalism to respond to the changes initiated by Gorbachev. Given the historic ‘lack of separation’ between party and press any article printed in the Soviet papers was deemed by foreign audiences to represent official policy, so Soviet journalists had to tread carefully in what they reported on to avoid provoking diplomatic spats even though *glasnost* was working to lessen the censorship of the press and allow journalists independence from the party.⁴⁵ Yet even so, more positive stories on the West still began to appear after 1985 meaning coverage no longer exclusively focused on dissent and events which confirmed the accuracy of Marxism-Leninism’s projections. By 1989 there were even significant areas of alignment between Western and Soviet reporting on key issues, coinciding with Gorbachev’s acceleration of *glasnost* throughout 1987-88.⁴⁶ Under *glasnost*, the Soviet journalist’s job was no longer just about finding examples of class strife and evidence of Marxism-Leninism’s predictions being realised. Scope even emerged for journalists to reflect on the ‘successes’ of capitalism and how Western practices might be transferred to the USSR to improve society there.⁴⁷

This new drive in Soviet journalism may have been partly responsible for the decreasing Soviet support for Scargill and his allies’ struggle against British capitalism. However, it is important not to overstate this, given that strikes continued to feature prominently in Soviet reportage on the UK. In the late 1980s, Soviet correspondents based in London continued to promote a narrative of ever-increasing dissent and unrest in the UK as a result of the Conservative government’s repression of workers’ rights and mismanagement of the economy. For example, Soviet journalists homed in on a strike by NHS nurses in 1988 for better pay which, as Brian McNair says, was ‘used to refute Thatcherite claims of the end of effective trade unions and working-class radicalism in the United

⁴⁴ McNair, *Glasnost, perestroika and the Soviet Media*, 142; Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 14.

⁴⁵ Brian McNair, *Glasnost, Perestroika, and the Soviet Media*, 101-2 and 121.

⁴⁶ McNair, 121 and 157; Brown, ‘The Gorbachev Era’, 322.

⁴⁷ McNair, *Glasnost, Perestroika, and the Soviet Media*, 157; Jonathan A. Becker, *Soviet and Russian Press Coverage of the United States: Press, Politics and Identity in Transition* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1999), 136.

Kingdom'.⁴⁸ Pointing to examples of socialist political organisations and unions holding influence in the West continued to be important to the Soviet press. Scargill, however, despite his profile as one of the most influential trade unionists in Britain and indeed Europe, no longer fitted into this narrative.

The significant factor was not a change in Soviet journalism's reporting style, but rather that Scargill's specific politics and activities in global trade unionism were beginning to come into direct conflict with the USSR's own revised ambitions for exercising influence in international unions. However, the damage to Scargill that resulted from *glasnost* was greater than just losing Soviet support. For the intransigence of his more orthodox Marxist worldview, continued involvement in the international union movement over which the reformed USSR sought to exercise influence, and the potential for stories of past secret dealings with him to undermine the new positive world image the Soviet leadership was trying to create for their state, Scargill in fact became an active target of Soviet propaganda and the Soviet press took part in a vitriolic 1990 media campaign against the NUM begun by the union's conservative opponents in Britain.⁴⁹ The NUM leadership was of course attacked in pro-government papers throughout the strike, but this did not cease following its end. Conservative media and government figures saw the opportunity to undermine the reputation of the previously formidable trade union further by going after the NUM when it was weak, both financially and politically, in the aftermath of the failed strike. A principal weapon used to attack the NUM in the press, was the rumour that Scargill had embezzled funds raised in the Soviet Union to support the union to serve his own political goals by financing a new international miners' front led by him. Scargill had certainly approached the Soviet Union in secret for funds to support the NUM and his request had initially been approved in 1984. Around one million roubles from the All Union Central Council of Trade Unions were reserved for the NUM.⁵⁰ However, after the attempt to transfer this money failed for technical banking reasons, in 1985 Soviet political support for the miners had dampened and it was decided the money would be sent to an 'international miners' solidarity fund' of the Miners' Trade Union International (MTUI), of which the NUM was just one beneficiary; as

⁴⁸ '24 chasa planety. Velikobritaniya', *Pravda*, 9th January, 1988, 5; McNair, *Glasnost, perestroika, and the Soviet Media*, 140.

⁴⁹ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 292.

⁵⁰ Milne, 273.

already stated, in the event the majority of the funds arrived after the strike ended.⁵¹ However, questions among the British public and press still persisted as to what had happened. The very secrecy and lack of reliable information about the outcome of various Soviet attempts to finance the NUM, necessitated by the need to avoid British surveillance, no doubt contributed to the circulation of rumours that funds had been misplaced. But the reality was that no money was ever embezzled or even directly sent to the NUM. The stories were factually incorrect and that they gained traction was the result of a calculated media campaign.

Central to the affair was the International Miners' Organisation (IMO), founded in 1985 with Soviet-backing and Scargill as its president as a replacement for the MTUI which had been used to channel Soviet money into the international solidarity fund that the NUM had hoped to benefit from. In the aftermath of the 1984-85 strike's end, the IMO continued to service an international solidarity fund which could be used to financially support strikes worldwide.⁵² It was falsely alleged in the British press, however, that the NUM had already received hardship money sent by Soviet unions during 1984-85, and that Scargill had embezzled one million pounds of the cash to serve his own political designs in the IMO.⁵³ This rumour and Scargill's orthodox Marxist politics would be capitalised upon by Soviet officials and trade unionists seeking to discredit Scargill and the IMO.

The Soviet Coal Employees Union (CEU) was a key part of the IMO which Scargill led. The British trade unionist, however, throughout 1985-90 attempted to take the IMO in a more orthodox Marxist ideological direction. By this time, as Milne says, 'Gorbachev, Alexander Yakovlev [senior Soviet politician and *glasnost* architect], and Edward Shevardnadze [Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1985-90] were increasingly hostile to international policies based on working-class solidarity, while the Soviet miners themselves were demanding more independent unions and with them less involvement in internationalist solidarity'.⁵⁴ Indeed, despite official Soviet coverage suggesting extensive solidarity between Soviet trade unions and the NUM, Taras Kuzio had reported in 1985 that Ukrainian miners

⁵¹ Milne, 284.

⁵² Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 293.

⁵³ Milne, 286; Soviet unions' donations did reach the Miners' Solidarity Fund which specifically functioned to assist striking miners' families, as did donations from unions around the world. However, the direct payments to the NUM Scargill requested from the USSR, to pay the NUM's legal fees and support its infrastructure did not arrive. The only Soviet money which ever became available to the NUM was in the international MTUI fund, of which the NUM was just one beneficiary and the majority of what it received arrived after March 1985.

⁵⁴ Milne, 292-3.

were made to forcibly donate part of their wages to support the 1984-85 strike and quoted a miner from a *Radio Liberty* report who said: ‘as far as I’m concerned, the English miners can strike as long as they want to and the hell with them. It’s not our problem’.⁵⁵

Senior figures in the Soviet trade union apparatus were therefore keen to end their participation in IMO and instead join the less militant Brussels-based Miners’ International Federation (MIF). This required a media campaign to be launched against the IMO to discredit it and to prepare the political path to joining the MIF, which began when Soviet officials sent compromising documents to Scargill’s right-wing rivals in the NUM detailing his conversations with Soviet representatives in which he begged for financial support and criticised Neil Kinnock’s performance as Labour leader.⁵⁶ Members of the Soviet trade unions also began to publicly criticise Scargill’s old-fashioned ideological outlook in his leadership of the IMO, as he simultaneously came under increasing pressure in Britain from critics in the unions and Labour party.⁵⁷ The Soviet press, meanwhile, assisted in the media character assassination of Scargill and pushed false stories that Scargill had embezzled Soviet donations destined for miners’ hardship funds.⁵⁸

Though *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* were not always quite as sensationalist as the British press, they nonetheless commented on the story in a way that abstained from defending Scargill and left his guilt an open question. In a fairly general article on the affair that mainly stated the details of the case, *Izvestiya* nevertheless took the opportunity to speculate that the money might have ended up in the IMO for Scargill’s personal use.⁵⁹ A *Pravda* piece meanwhile, took a more emotional tone, with a reference to how Soviet miners had possibly been betrayed by Scargill, saying:

[The] money was not received by the miners and their family members, instead it was transferred to a fund belonging to the Paris-based International Organization of Miners. The president of this organization is the leader of the British Miners’ union, Arthur Scargill. According to the head of the four-person Soviet delegation, the miners who collected money for the starving families of British miners feel cheated.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Radio Liberty, *Area Audience and Opinion Research*, SBN 5-84 quoted in Kuzio, ‘British and Ukrainian Miners’, 18.

⁵⁶ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 296.

⁵⁷ Milne, ‘Scargill “too Marxist” for the Soviets’, 4; Tim Jones, ‘Embattled Scargill is urged to resign post’, *The Times*, 11th July 1990, 2.

⁵⁸ ‘Soobshchayut zarubezhnyye agentstva. Velikobritaniya: dadut pokazaniya’, *Pravda*, 7th September, 1990, 4.

⁵⁹ ‘Razgovor v Skotland-Yarde’, *Izvestiya*, 7th September, 1990, 4.

⁶⁰ ‘Soobshchayut zarubezhnyye agentstva. Velikobritaniya: dadut pokazaniya’, 4.

The content of this reportage may arguably reflect the effect of *glasnost* on Soviet international journalism, representing an attempt at balance by the Soviet press. Yet it is notable that the press barely sought to defend Scargill at all. Senior Soviet officials were well-aware of the true details of the saga.⁶¹ Soviet papers, however, persisted in writing inaccurately about the money never getting to the NUM and asking where it went, this was despite the Soviet leadership knowing the money had bounced back to USSR after the first attempt at transferring it failed for technical reasons and eventually landed in an international solidarity fund they approved of, of which the NUM was just one beneficiary.⁶²

Furthermore, a *Pravda* piece published shortly after these initial reports was completely sensationalist, akin to that of the British tabloids, describing a ‘detective story unfolding’ in Britain over the Soviet money controversy.⁶³ The article asked, ‘where did the Soviet miners’ aid go?’ and ‘where’s the money, Arthur?’⁶⁴ Scargill himself, meanwhile, previously a hero of the British working class by Soviet accounts, was now described in unflattering terms as a ‘rather colourful figure’.⁶⁵ The article also questioned why and for what purpose Soviet workers had sacrificed and donated some of their own money which could have instead benefitted their own families and children, reflecting the anger reported by Kuzio in 1985 regarding Soviet miners’ resentment at being forced to donate some of their wages to help the miners’ strike.⁶⁶ Additionally, the article sought to amplify growing calls for Scargill’s resignation, saying ‘regardless of whether he cheated or not with the money six years ago, the scandal around them could threaten his resignation. When the pro-union movement in Britain is already going through hard times, such stories are another pinch of salt on its wounds’.⁶⁷ Eventually, *Izvestiya* published a piece that was more supportive of Scargill, but by this time the damage had already been done.⁶⁸

Perestroika transformed both the politics of the Soviet Union and the international labour movement.

Scargill would later condemn Gorbachev for his reforms, saying in a 1992 interview:

Gorbachev was totally unprincipled, an unmitigated disaster. The need for change was overwhelming but that doesn’t mean you destroy the positive things you’ve achieved. Now

⁶¹ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 290.

⁶² A. Lyuty, ‘Skotland-Yard interesuyetsya’, *Pravda*, 9th September, 1990, 7.

⁶³ Lyuty, ‘Skotland-Yard interesuyetsya’, 7.

⁶⁴ Lyuty, 7.

⁶⁵ Lyuty, 7.

⁶⁶ Lyuty, 7.

⁶⁷ Lyuty, 7.

⁶⁸ A. Krivopalov, ‘Nesostoyavshiysya skandal’, *Izvestiya*, 16th September, 1990, 5.

they've got the destruction not only of everything negative but of all that was positive as well. And there's the re-emergence of racism and fascism.⁶⁹

The majority of world opinion disagreed with Scargill who was ultimately left behind by *perestroika* and eventually became irrelevant, then an active irritant to the Soviet leadership under Gorbachev. Likewise, old right-wing Soviet dissident favourites of Reagan and Thatcher suddenly found themselves adrift in the shifting ideological landscape of 1985-91 – Robert Horvath offers an excellent account of former dissidents' involvement of dissident in the establishment of democracy in Russian the 1990s, as well as right-wing dissidents' political evolution.⁷⁰ Unlike Sakharov, who supported Gorbachev, others such as Solzhenitsyn and Sharansky attacked the new General Secretary. Sharansky doubted the sincerity of Gorbachev's desire for reform on human rights while Solzhenitsyn criticised *perestroika* and eventually called for the formation of a Slavic Union in place of the USSR.⁷¹ Vladimir Bukovsky, however, was particularly critical and his case highlights how despite the sweeping changes brought about throughout the Gorbachev era, some continued to fight the Cold War unchanged.⁷²

In cooperation with some fellow dissidents, in 1983 Bukovsky had formed an independent anti-communist organisation, Resistance International (RI), under the auspices of which he and his allies sought to publicise communist human rights abuses and fund anti-communist activities globally.⁷³ RI also offered practical support to dissidents, attempting to support *samizdat* publishing.⁷⁴ This was followed by the foundation in 1984 of The American Foundation for Resistance International (AFRI), in which Bukovsky was supported by a number of conservative politicians and businesspeople.⁷⁵ Its stated goals were to inform the American public about the threat posed by communism and educate US citizens about the USSR's true nature as they perceived it.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Milne, 'Class warrior squares up to the City', 25.

⁷⁰ See Horvath, *The Legacy of Soviet Dissent*, 130-204.

⁷¹ Edward J. Boyer, 'Don't Be Misled by Gorbachev's False Image, Shcharansky Warns West', *Los Angeles Times*, 29th January, 1987, B6; Francis X. Clines, 'Russia Gets Call By Solzhenitsyn For Slavic State', *New York Times*, 19th September, 1990, Section A, 1.

⁷² Paul Marcotte and Nancy Blodgett, 'ABA-ASL Pact Affirmed', *ABA Journal*, 1st October, 1987, 42; Nigel Hawkes, 'Overtaking the Thatcherites on the Right', *The Observer*, 24th March, 1985, 10.

⁷³ Boobbyer, 'Vladimir Bukovsky and Soviet Communism', 470-1; Robert R. Reilly to Vladimir Bukovsky, 9th August, 1983, *Vladimir Konstantinovich Bukovskii Papers (VKBP)*, Hoover Institution Library and Archives (HILA), Stanford, California, Box 22, Folder 1.

⁷⁴ Olgierd Swida to Eduard Kuznetsov, 12th December, 1983, HILA, VKBP, b22, f18; Ülo Ignats to Vladimir Bukovsky, 8th February, 1983, HILA, VKBP, b22, f10.

⁷⁵ Boobbyer, 'Vladimir Bukovsky and Soviet Communism', 470.

⁷⁶ Albert E. Jolis to William E. Simon, 3rd August, 1986, HILA, VKBP, b22, f12.

The organisation was successful for a while, enjoying generous donations from conservative businesses, foundations, and grassroots fundraising.⁷⁷ RI eventually set up branches in Poland and Sweden.⁷⁸ It also organised press events to publicise Soviet defectors during the Afghanistan conflict (1979-89), published anti-communist books and papers, pressured Congress to support the Contras in Nicaragua, and attempted to organise an anti-communist radio station to broadcast to the USSR from Sweden.⁷⁹ The group even attracted a number of prominent figures to sit on AFRI's board, including Jeane Kirkpatrick, Richard Perle, and Armando Valladares who were at one point or another senior members of the Reagan administration, while the President himself also praised the efforts of the organisation in a letter to AFRI's chairman Albert Jolis.⁸⁰ Bukovsky, however, by 1984 was losing faith in Reagan.

Bukovsky retrospectively said his views and those of the Reagan government only aligned properly for a brief time. The dissident reflected he had been most optimistic during the early 1980s, while he felt the Reagan Doctrine outlined by Jeane Kirkpatrick, as he interpreted it, was being fully implemented, describing his and US conservatives' purpose as:

...if they [the USSR] spend so much money on external expansion, we need[ed] to make it even more expensive. The more expensive it costs them, the sooner they will go bankrupt, the sooner they will go bankrupt, the sooner they will have to change something here and the sooner this publicity and perestroika will begin here. And this idea of ours, my friends who worked for Reagan, made it a doctrine, and so they called it the 'Reagan doctrine'. But this was, however, the only time in my life when my interests and the interests of Western governments completely coincided.⁸¹

A failed 1983 attempt to get government funding from the US's public diplomacy body, the United States Information Service (USIA), likely contributed to Bukovsky's growing disillusionment with Reagan's administration. Bukovsky had approached USIA with a request for funding which was initially well received and taken on board by Robert Reilly, USIA's Director of the Office for Private

⁷⁷ Jolis to Michael S. Joyce, 7th September, 1984, *HILA, VKBP*, b22, f11; Jolis to Michel Smidof, 28th November, 1990, *HILA, VKBP*, b22, f13. The organisation, however, received criticism from other dissidents. Stanislaw Grocholski, a Polish London-based dissident, wrote in 1984 to Bukovsky at length regarding his and other dissidents' concerns about the intentions of RI. Grocholski relayed to Bukovsky the feeling among many dissidents that RI 'was an American agency financed to fight pacifism and neutralism in Western Europe and anti-Americanism in the Third World', as well as anxiety that Bukovsky had been 'taken over by the Anglo-American right'. See Stanislaw Grocholski to Bukovsky, 26th January, 1984, *HILA, VKBP*, b22, f6.

⁷⁸ Boobbyer, 'Vladimir Bukovsky and Soviet Communism', 471.

⁷⁹ Boobbyer, 470; Ülo Ignats to Vladimir Bukovsky, 8th February, 1983, *HILA, VKBP*, b22, f10.

⁸⁰ Boobbyer, 'Vladimir Bukovsky and Soviet Communism', 469; Ronald Reagan to Albert E. Jolis, 23rd October, 1985, *HILA, VKBP*, b22, f23.

⁸¹ Nikolaya Mitrokhina, "'Internatsional Soproivleniya'", Interv'yu s Vladimirom Bukovskim', *Panorama* 30, no. 3 (December, 1991): 11.

Grants Programs.⁸² Before serious progress was made, however, Reilly was demoted in a politicised reshuffle as USIA sought to respond to liberal criticism of its activities and replaced him with a more moderate figure.⁸³ Later, Bukovsky began to openly criticise US foreign policy. The dissident said that America had become ‘effeminated’ by its prosperity, with liberals proposing absurd disarmament-reconciliation policies and conservatives, who he argued disliked modern politics, refusing to accept the need to engage in a political campaign to counter liberals.⁸⁴ Bukovsky stated that there was an ‘absence of any defining concept’ in US foreign policy and as a result the USSR was being allowed to dominate Eastern Europe and trample on human rights unchallenged.⁸⁵ The dissident also criticised Gorbachev, writing an article on *glasnost* entitled ‘Glasnost More Shadow Than Substance’.⁸⁶

Bukovsky suggested that Gorbachev’s reforms were just the ‘guise of a democracy’ under which the old Soviet elite could hang onto power.⁸⁷ The dissident doubted that there was any real difference between Gorbachev and his two predecessors – Andropov and Chernenko.⁸⁸ Bukovsky was particularly bemused as to how Gorbachev had managed to convince the West he was a genuine democrat and secured the fervent support of Thatcher and Reagan, the two Western politicians Bukovsky had admired most for their consistent anti-communism.⁸⁹ During this time, Bukovsky joined those remaining Western conservatives still committed to waging the Cold War.⁹⁰ Through his organisations RI and AFRI, Bukovsky and fellow Soviet dissidents Eduard Kuznetsov and Vladimir Maksimov were involved in supporting anti-Soviet activity like anti-communist radio broadcasts until 1991, including broadcasting messages in support of Boris Yeltsin on his way to becoming the first president of Russia (1991-99).⁹¹

As well as reflecting on how such activities made Bukovsky, like Scargill, increasingly irrelevant in the *glasnost* era of the Cold War unlike more *glasnost*-friendly dissident figures, there is an

⁸² Reilly to Bukovsky, 9th August, 1983, *HILA, VKBP*, b22, f1.

⁸³ Reilly to Bukovsky.

⁸⁴ Bukovsky, ‘America’s Crack-Up’, 14-17.

⁸⁵ Bukovsky, 17.

⁸⁶ Vladimir Bukovsky, ‘Gorbachev’s Glasnost More Shadow Than Substance’, *Human Events*, 12th December, 1987, 6 and 19.

⁸⁷ Bukovsky, *Judgement in Moscow*, 582.

⁸⁸ Bukovsky, 583.

⁸⁹ Bukovsky, 584-7.

⁹⁰ Hawkes, ‘Overtaking the Thatcherites on the Right’, 10.

⁹¹ Albert Jolis, *A Clutch of Reds and Diamonds* (New York: East European Monographs, 1996), 376.

interesting comparison to be made between the former's work in AFRI and the nature of Soviet trade unions' support for the latter in terms of analysing the different forms of dissident-promoting coalitions that were possible in the Anglo-American and Soviet contexts. AFRI was a private initiative of exiled Soviet dissidents and US conservatives, who chose to work together to pursue mutually agreed anti-communist objectives. Though at times there were disagreements between the dissident and American members, they effectively cooperated.⁹² Furthermore, though AFRI benefitted from a network of contacts with links to the US government, the enterprise was seemingly independently run and funded through charitable donations.⁹³

AFRI was the product of genuine grassroots support for the Soviet dissidents among US conservatives and the organisation gained significant publicity, as well as donations, in its public campaigns to pressurise the US government to take a hard-line on the Soviet Union's human rights abuses, benefitting from its image as a group of concerned citizens who had independently taken the decision to advocate on behalf of anti-communist dissidents.⁹⁴ Their work contributed to the powerful narrative pushed by many US conservatives since the 1970s that communism was bankrupt and that there were ideological symmetries between themselves and Soviet dissidents, who were representative of the opinion of the silent majority of Soviet citizens who yearned for US-style political and economic freedoms. This message ultimately acted as an expression of solidarity and supposed ideological unity between conservatives and dissidents.

The Soviet media, meanwhile, attempted to push a similar narrative with regard to the miners' strike led by Scargill, whereby Soviet trade unionists expressed their solidarity with striking miners including by donating some of their wages to contribute to the strikes' hardship funds. As already discussed, rumours surrounding the final destination of such donations had a damaging effect on Scargill and the NUM. Yet there is another layer to the relationship between the Soviet trade unionists and Scargill which deserves to be explored for how it can reveal differences between Anglo-American and Soviet dissidentisms, namely the question of whether grassroots support for Western

⁹² Albert Jolis to Bukovsky, 16th October, 1985, *HILA, VKBP*, b22, f1.

⁹³ AFRI, 'Annual Report 1991', *HILA, VKBP*, b21, f5.

⁹⁴ 'Display Ad 13 -- No Title', *Washington Post*, 20th June, 1988, A11; 'Display Ad 42 -- No Title', *New York Times*, 18th April, 1985, B28.

strikers the Soviet press depicted as dissidents in the Soviet press can be established to have definitively taken place in Soviet trade unions.

The miners' strike assisted the Soviet press not only in terms of providing a momentous example of a labour strike in the West and aiding the Soviet media in its mission of portraying capitalism as afflicted by constant crises. It was also important for Soviet news outlets to show solidarity between Soviet trade unionists and the miners in order to highlight the superior status of workers' rights in the USSR. The Soviet media contrasted the Soviet miners' situation with that of their British counterparts, pointing out that the former did need to go on strike because they already enjoyed sufficient protections and pay and instead were able to charitably support Western trade unionists in their struggle to attain Soviet-style rights. The Soviet media therefore capitalised on Soviet trade unionists' donations of parts of their wages to support the miners' strike. In an exemplary story, *Pravda* published an account of how Soviet workers at the Baydayevskaya mine in Kemerovo, a city in the Siberian Kuzbass (Kuznetsk Basin) region, had exceeded their production targets and decided to donate their excess pay to the British miners and support their 'courageous fight for the right to work and to live'.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, in other instances, Soviet workers' donations funded holidays for British miners and their families with the Soviet Mineworkers' Union paying for a three-week stay by several miners' families in Pitsunda, a resort on the Black Sea coast.⁹⁶

Yet the question remains as to whether this was comparable to the work of AFRI, which received voluntary donations, given that Soviet trade unions lacked real independence. CPSU leaders certainly asserted the centrality of workers' rights to Soviet policies and following the death of Stalin, who suppressed trade unions, devoted significant resources to building up a comprehensive national network of unions of different professions.⁹⁷ However, Soviet trade unions essentially 'were pliant institutions that served as "transmission belts" between the ruling communist party and the workers' rather than being genuinely representative and active defenders of workers' rights, with strikes and collective bargaining beyond the remit of their de facto permitted activities.⁹⁸ Of course, many Soviet

⁹⁵ 'Fond rabochey solidarnosti', *Pravda*, 6th September, 1984, 4.

⁹⁶ 'News In Brief', *Christian Science Monitor*, 2nd October, 1984; 'Miners get Free Soviet Vacation', *UPI*, 30th September, 1984.

⁹⁷ Andrea Graziosi, 'Stalin's Antiworker "Workerism", 1924-1931', *International Review of Social History* 40, no. 2 (August, 1995): 223-58.

⁹⁸ Adrian Karatnycky, 'Problems of Postcommunism: The Battle of the Trade Unions', *Journal of Democracy* 3, no. 2 (April, 1992): 43.

trade unionists likely felt sympathy for plight of the British miners, but given the lack of freedom within Soviet trade unions and the existence of evidence that some Soviet miners expressed apathy towards the British miners' strike and were being forced to donate some of their wages, it is difficult to establish true grassroots solidarity between the two.⁹⁹

Ultimately, the case of Soviet trade unions' solidarity with British miners acts to showcase the differences between Anglo-American and Soviet engagement with figures perceived and portrayed as dissidents in the opposing Cold War bloc. In many ways this simply reflected the differences between the two societies, whereby political freedom was significantly impinged in the USSR, but also illustrates how studying Cold War societies' engagement with dissent abroad enables historians to reflect on these societies from new angles and confirm or reassess pre-existing hypotheses about the differences between each. Eventually, as discussed, Soviet trade unionists became increasingly hostile to Scargill as *glasnost* and *perestroika* restored the power and independence of Soviet unions and they began to re-focus away from internationalism towards domestic issues.¹⁰⁰

Scargill, Bukovsky, and their fellow travellers were ultimately products of the Cold War and did not consider the defining conflict of the era, i.e. communism and capitalism's mutual struggle for supremacy, to have been positively resolved or transcended by the policies put in motion by Gorbachev and his Western supporters. Highlighting their cases shows that the events of 1985-91 did not immediately wash away the binary anti-communist and anti-capitalist outlooks that had defined the previous four decades of Russian, European, and US history.¹⁰¹ Scargill and Bukovsky's failure to conform to the new global political currents of Western thinking about the USSR and vice versa, when before they had been primary targets of East-West and West-East dissidentism, ultimately made them irrelevant both at home and abroad. The same cannot be said, however, for all dissidents or, for that matter, Western trade unionists.

Soviet-West dissidentism in the age of *glasnost*

Sakharov was among those dissidents who supported Gorbachev (though not unreservedly), eventually, after the General Secretary brought him out of exile in 1986, becoming a deputy in the

⁹⁹ Kuzio, 'British and Ukrainian Miners', 18

¹⁰⁰ Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 292-3.

¹⁰¹ Shorten, 'The Cold War as comparative political thought', 408.

new Soviet Congress of People's Deputies and the scientist continued to receive praise in the West until his death in 1989, but by then more often serving as an example of what Gorbachev had achieved not what the USSR had failed at.¹⁰² Meanwhile, Scargill's criticism of efforts to reform the USSR stood in contrast to the position of Frank Chapple, a former CPGB member and then prominent anti-communist British trade union leader, who participated in the 1985 Sakharov hearings to hold to account the Soviet state for historical and ongoing human rights abuses; as discussed in chapter four, he had also supported *Solidarność*.¹⁰³ Scargill's address to the 1989 NUM conference exhibited how he continued to support a traditional socialist interpretation of human rights, with the trade unionist saying to his audience:

Capitalism is a system which by definition exploits and oppresses. It is the historical task of our movement as a whole to expose and attack its evils. It is, in fact, the Tory Government and capitalist system which is now attacking our health service, education system, social services and trade union rights. It is this system which is attacking the very basis of democracy, civil liberties and human rights, and the trade union and Labour movement need a positive response to attacks which take away the very basis of our existence.¹⁰⁴

Such an attitude was becoming increasingly unfashionable and distanced Scargill ideologically from the USSR of Gorbachev. By contrast, in the same period, two old dissident favourites of the Soviet Union, Angela Davis and Leonard Peltier, featured positively in the Glasnost-era Soviet media.

After her trial Davis had continued to appear in the Soviet press, with *Pravda* reviewing her biography in 1978, though in many other cases she was only mentioned with reference to her status as the running mate to CPUSA leader Gus Hall in presidential elections in 1980 and 1984 – Hall was a hard-line communist who the Soviet press wanted to publicise – rather than featuring Davis in her own right.¹⁰⁵ Under Gorbachev, however, the dissident began to receive greater attention from the re-calibrated Soviet press. Davis eventually advocated reform of the CPUSA along similar lines to *perestroika*, coming into opposition with Hall whose hard-line faction maintained that before Gorbachev came to power in 1985 Soviet socialism possessed 'no "systemic problems"'.¹⁰⁶ Davis

¹⁰² 'Political Winds Shift In Sakharov's Favor', *New York Times*, 22nd March, 1989, Section A, 8; Michael Parks, 'Sakharov Calls for More Trust in Gorbachev', *Los Angeles Times*, 4th June, 1988, 1.

¹⁰³ See Mark Hurst, "'Gamekeeper Turned Poacher'", 313–337.

¹⁰⁴ Arthur Scargill, 'Presidential Address to the 1989 NUM Conference', 3rd July 1989, *NUM Conference Report: 1989*, 324.

¹⁰⁵ A. Tolkunov and E. Menkes, 'Nakanune golosovaniya', *Pravda*, 2nd November, 1984, 5; N. Kurdyumov, 'Volnuyushchiye stroki', *Pravda*, 13th June, 1978, 4.

¹⁰⁶ Walker, 'US comrades dump 60s icon', 1.

also spoke highly of Gorbachev's peace initiatives and the Soviet press highlighted her support for the General Secretary's policies.

In July 1985, *Pravda* reported on an address given by Davis in Moscow at the 12th International Festival of Youth and Students in which she praised the peace campaign of the USSR and, in the paper's words, 'attributed high value to the statement by General Secretary...Gorbachev' and said 'that the US administration should quickly respond to the Soviet initiative'.¹⁰⁷ An *Izvestiya* piece similarly highlighted her activism against nuclear weapons and her praise for Soviet peace efforts.¹⁰⁸ *Izvestiya* also ran an interview with Davis, which included, as well as a discussion on continued discrimination against African Americans, a chat about the activist's hobbies.¹⁰⁹

The question remains as to what motivated Soviet journalists to reference Angela Davis in these ways. Of course, just because *glasnost* made it possible to depict the US positively that did not mean images of dissent or capitalism's failures completely vanished. Davis repeatedly featured in this capacity, as did Leonard Peltier, in references to the continued abuse of Black and Native Americans' rights respectively.¹¹⁰ Even though 'Gorbachev and other reformers also made a conscious effort to move away from the crude Marxist-Leninist human rights propaganda of the past', they did not entirely abandon the established Soviet narrative that worse human rights violations were committed in the capitalist nations.¹¹¹ Yet there were other factors at play in the new style of commentary on Davis and the desire to re-install her as a feature of Soviet reporting on events in the West.

For one, as they began to take advantage of the loosening of restraints on their reporting, Soviet journalists stretched their coverage of Western affairs to include 'human interest' stories.¹¹² The relaxed, not exclusively political *Izvestiya* interview with Davis is arguably an example of this. It was also important, however, for Gorbachev and his allies to convince the Soviet public and intelligentsia to see his reforms as radically reforming the state's politics – some in the intelligentsia

¹⁰⁷ 'XII Vsemirnyy, den' chetvertyy', *Pravda*, 31st July 1985, 1; Seth Mydans, 'Doves and Gorbachev Open Soviet Festival', *New York Times*, 28th July 1985, 8.

¹⁰⁸ 'V interesakh mirnogo budushchego', *Izvestiya*, 14th September, 1985, 4.

¹⁰⁹ A. Kuvshinnikop, 'Andzhela Devis: "Ya v otvete za etot mir"', *Izvestiya*, 28th July 1985, 3.

¹¹⁰ G. Deynichenko, 'Dzho Khill i Amerika tolstosumo', *Izvestiya*, 19th November, 1985, 5; 'Marsh v zashchitu Kharrisa', *Pravda*, 6th July 1987, 1.

¹¹¹ Peterson, 'Wielding the Human Rights Weapon', 524; 'Standards', *The Washington Post*, 4th October, 1985, A22.

¹¹² McNair, *Glasnost, Perestroika, and the Soviet Media*, 130.

would eventually abandon Gorbachev as they grew frustrated with the compromises contained within his reforms and came to see rival Boris Yeltsin as the superior choice for the future of democracy.¹¹³

Associating Gorbachev and the USSR with a radical Western progressive communist, whom the public would have been familiar with after the extensive Soviet campaign supporting her during the early 1970s, and giving a more personalised, less political portrait of Davis, was in step with *glasnost's* intentions of reviving and refreshing the image of Soviet communism. Coverage of Leonard Peltier, meanwhile, continued to serve a more traditional function for the Soviet press under *glasnost*, with the Native American and the wider rights movement of which he was part being exploited to once again highlight the persistence of racism under capitalism compared with supposed racial tolerance under socialism. Gorbachev himself even made personal use of this narrative, responding to a question put to him in 1985 regarding Sakharov simply with a reference to Peltier.¹¹⁴ According to Serge Schmemmann writing for *The New York Times* in the same year, Peltier still appeared as one of the Soviet press' 'dissident heroes'.¹¹⁵ Peltier, and Davis, had also of course been part of the broader New Left movement which the USSR's press selectively 'tapped' for examples of anti-Western dissent.¹¹⁶

The New Left, as already discussed, was never fully embraced by the leadership and young Soviet citizens who ascribed to New Left values were persecuted by the KGB. Yet, in the new political environment of *glasnost*, the Soviet New Left, which seemed to have been killed off around the early 1980s along with much of the rest of the domestic dissident movement, re-emerged as a force in Soviet society during the late 1980s and early 1990s marking a final turn in the history of the tumultuous relationship between the Soviet Union and New Left politics. This episode is a worthwhile object of study for this thesis, in terms of developing further understanding of the USSR's relationship with the New Left and Western dissent, as well as giving insight into how the state's relationship with dissidents from abroad and their ideas continually developed and was affected by ideological tensions right up until the collapse of 1991.

¹¹³ Brown, 'The Gorbachev Era', 335; Zubok et al., 'A Cold War endgame or an opportunity missed?', 545.

¹¹⁴ Weiss-Wendt, 'Moscow Taps the New Left', 118; Elizabeth A. DiLauro, 'U.S. Must Look to Its Own Rights Abuses', *Los Angeles Times*, 20th January, 1986, B5.

¹¹⁵ Serge Schmemmann, 'Summit Parley Overshadowed By Rights Issue: Some Soviet Dissidents ...', *New York Times*, 13th November, 1985, A1.

¹¹⁶ Weiss-Wendt, 'Moscow Taps the New Left', 102.

The revival of the Soviet New Left

The nascent Soviet New Left had been effectively repressed by the early 1980s. The late 1970s had seen members of the Leningrad Group and Revolutionary Communards ruthlessly persecuted.¹¹⁷ This was followed by the destruction of the Moscow-based Young Socialists during the early 1980s. Though less concerned with New Left politics, the latter still represented part of the wider alternative-leftist scene in the Soviet underground and their persecution in 1982 seemed to end the prospect of radical-left ideas having an influence on Soviet politics.¹¹⁸ Yet only a few years later, a fresh opportunity for the revival of the Soviet New Left was provided by the introduction of *glasnost*.

An important pillar of *glasnost* was the practice of ‘criticism and self-criticism’.¹¹⁹ Gorbachev sought to encourage public debate and involvement in the political process to rejuvenate society. Journalists and citizens were permitted to criticise bad practices and debate alternative methods of reform to solve Soviet society’s problems.¹²⁰ This was part of a wider attempt to create a dialogue among Soviet citizens. Within this, the principle of ‘socialist-pluralism’ was also pursued, according to which the party line would no longer be so rigidly enforced and advocating alternative forms of socialism was permitted, with the view again of finding new remedies to society’s ills.¹²¹ Gorbachev consistently referred to the need for a ‘socialist pluralism of opinions’, particularly from 1987 onwards, and it was within this context that the radical Soviet left was able to make its voice heard once again.¹²²

Boris Kagarlitsky had been active in left-wing Soviet dissident circles during the late 1970s and early 1980s until his arrest in 1982.¹²³ After his release in mid-1983, followed by continued harassment from the authorities, the dissident returned to what his former co-conspirator, Mikhail Rivkin,

¹¹⁷ Amnesty, ‘Arrests, Searches, Interrogations’, *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 51: 33-6.

¹¹⁸ Wilson, ‘Young and Socialist at Moscow State University’, 77.

¹¹⁹ David E. Powell, ‘Soviet Glasnost: Definitions and Dimensions’, in ‘The Soviet Union, 1988’, special issue, *Current History* 87, no. 531, (October, 1988): 321.

¹²⁰ John M. Battle, ‘Uskorenie, Glasnost’ and Perestroika: The Pattern of Reform under Gorbachev’, *Soviet Studies* 40, no. 3 (July 1988): 372.

¹²¹ Thomas Remington, ‘A Socialist Pluralism of Opinions: Glasnost and Policy-Making under Gorbachev’, in ‘Gorbachev Reforms’, special issue, *The Russian Review* 48, no. 3, (July 1989): 278. It is important to note that these policies entailed significant limits. Liberal pluralism was never pursued. Socialist pluralism, a Leninist concept, had existed in the Soviet Union in one form or another; the division of Soviet society by national group, academic institution, and profession naturally led to different expressions of socialism. Further, as already explored, the leadership experimented with the New Left throughout 1969-72. Gorbachev, however, pushed for socialist pluralism more formally and forcefully than any of his predecessors. See McNair, *Glasnost, Perestroika, and the Soviet Media*, 73

¹²² McNair, 278.

¹²³ Amnesty, ‘The Case of the “Socialists”’, *A Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 64 (30th June 1982): 15-16; Wilson, ‘The generation of Allende and Solidarność’, 237.

describes as a ‘normal life’ until the ‘new winds [of *perestroika*] blew’.¹²⁴ Kagarlitsky took up a leading role in the revived Soviet alternative leftist movement and saw the movement gain international publicity as well as formal political representation and recognition. He helped organise the key event in the rehabilitation of New Left inspired ideas, the 1st Conference of Unofficial Democratic Clubs held 20th-23rd August 1987, which brought together representatives of the many small independent alternative-left political clubs that were being formed against the backdrop of *glasnost*.¹²⁵ The main participants were the left-wing ‘*Perestroika*’ group and Club for Social Initiatives (CSI).¹²⁶ However, a more radical left-group was also formed, the Federation of Socialist Clubs (FSC).¹²⁷ The event was a test for the reformist communist leadership. Although all the clubs present were broadly supportive of Gorbachev and opposed both communist hardliners and the Russian chauvinism of the nationalist movement *Pamyat*, they wished for the General Secretary to go much further in his reforms. Issues raised included demands for more political freedom, especially the right to form independent organisations.¹²⁸

A significant outcome, however, was that, after an initial period of media silence on the results of the conference, the journal *Ogonëk* published an article in September on its proceedings.¹²⁹ The publication of this article led to the opening of ‘the door to discussion in the official media about a Soviet “New Left”’, and further, ‘by recognizing the conference as fully legal, the article made it easier for groups that took part to gain access to the mass media and to recruit new members’.¹³⁰ This would later allow Kagarlitsky and other radicals to take part in the nascent Soviet democracy initiated by Gorbachev including the creation of the Socialist Party and Moscow Popular Front, the latter of which gained formal political representation, with Kagarlitsky playing a leading role in both groups whilst also joining Moscow City Council.¹³¹

¹²⁴ ‘Sud nad Mikhailom Rivkinym (21-1)’, *Vesti iz SSSR*, no. 21; Rivkin, Pyatkovskiy, and Perevozkin, ‘Interv’yu Alekseyu Pyatkovskomu i Marine Perevozkinoy ot 1990 goda, (S kommentariyami M. Rivkina ot dekabrya 2007 g.)’.

¹²⁵ Supplement, ‘August Conference of Democratic Clubs’, *Soviet American Review* 2, no. 9 (1987).

¹²⁶ ‘August Conference of Democratic Clubs’.

¹²⁷ ‘August Conference of Democratic Clubs’.

¹²⁸ ‘August Conference of Democratic Clubs’.

¹²⁹ ‘August Conference of Democratic Clubs’.

¹³⁰ Vladimir Yakovlev, ‘Proshchaniye s bazorovym’, *Ogonëk*, no. 36 (September, 1987): 4-5; ‘August Conference of Democratic Clubs’.

¹³¹ Stephanson and Kagarlitsky, ‘Interview with Boris Kagarlitsky’, 159; Hans Asenbaum, ‘Imagined Alternatives: A history of ideas in Russia’s perestroika’, *Socialist History*, no. 42 (2013): 13; Alexander N. Darchiyev, ‘Where Left Is Right -- Farewell Perestroika: A Soviet Chronicle by Boris Kagarlitsky’, *Bulletin*

This did not represent, however, a direct revival of the Soviet New Left of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The Soviet radical left of the Gorbachev era encompassed a wide range of groups whose beliefs were not necessarily all comparable to the Western New Left, or either the Leningrad School or Revolutionary Communards, and advocated a range of radical reforms infused with different socialist ideas.¹³² However, the joint declaration of the 1987 conference certainly had a Marcusean flavour, stating the primary goals for the radical left to be the establishment of ‘independent social organizations as a principal contributor to the “development of socialist self-management and the supersession of the administrative-bureaucratic structures” inherited from the 1930s’.¹³³ Going into the specifics of how this would be done historian Andranik Migranian wrote in a ground-breaking *Voprosy filosofii* article of 1987, that went further in its radicalism than any before it, of the necessity of altering ‘the balance of forces between the bureaucracy and civil society in fav[our] of society’ and ‘nurturing of a civic consciousness and of voluntary associations, unions, and organizations for the realization of the creative energy and initiative of the people’.¹³⁴

Migranian’s proposals directly echoed those of the New Left SDS in the 1962 Port Huron Statement with his emphasis on ‘establishing a new civil society; the gradual limitation of state intervention in economic and socio-cultural life; the fostering of civic consciousness; and voluntary associations, unions, and organizations for translating creative energy and popular initiative into action’.¹³⁵ There is indeed a striking resemblance between Migranian’s ideas for the enrichment of Soviet democracy and SDS’s for America’s, particularly the Statement’s call for ‘[m]echanisms of voluntary association...through which political information can be imparted and political participation encouraged’.¹³⁶

The revival of New Left thought in the USSR, which took place as part of a wider renaissance of alternative socialist activism, could not lead to dissidentism, however, between the Western original’s representatives and either the Soviet opposition or government. The latter’s continued references to Leonard Peltier and Angela Davis took place in the context of projecting the USSR as

of the Atomic Scientists 47, no. 2 (March, 1991): 41; Wilson, ‘The generation of Allende and Solidarność’, 273.

¹³² Wilson, ‘The generation of Allende and Solidarność’, 280.

¹³³ Flaherty, ‘Perestroika Radicals’, 22.

¹³⁴ Flaherty, 26; Andranik M. Migranian, ‘Interrelations of the Individual, Society, and the State in the Political Theory of Marxism’, *Soviet Studies in Philosophy* 27, no. 3 (1988): 25 and 13.

¹³⁵ Patrick Flaherty, ‘Perestroika Radicals’, 25.

¹³⁶ *The Port Huron Statement*, 47.

an anti-racist state compared to a racist US that persecuted anti-racist human rights activists. Meanwhile, though contact between the wider Soviet left-wing movement and Western leftists increased, the former, like the Leningrad School before them, expressly focused on utilising New Left theory while the movement's great figures like Cohn-Bendit had faded from relevance along with New Left politics as a whole in the West.¹³⁷ However, under Gorbachev there was a new significant Soviet attempt to shift the balance in the ideological competition with the West over dissidents and human rights. While old allies like Scargill with traditional socialist views on human rights were forgotten, the Soviet state produced its own 'declaration of human rights' to rival the various Western equivalents, though principally the UN's, that still took inspiration from the class-based interpretation of human rights but offered a genuinely new formulation.

As Richardson-Little notes, though the Soviet Union and allied socialist states in Eastern Europe had long advocated the superiority of socialism as a means of organising society in a manner that achieved the fullest realisation of human rights since the 1960s, the USSR had not yet formally codified this interpretation or offered a direct response to the UN's own declaration on human rights.¹³⁸ It was only in 1984 that Soviet intellectuals began to take such an enterprise seriously, when a specialist in human rights law, Viktor Chkhikvadze, advocated drawing up the Eastern Bloc's alternative declaration as a way to respond to continued Western attacks on the Soviet Union's human rights record.¹³⁹ Though the project initially struggled to gain momentum, Gorbachev eventually promoted it to occupy a high place on his agenda.¹⁴⁰

The General Secretary, however, as well as seeking to counter Western criticism, saw promoting human rights within the context of his reform program and used their implementation to achieve democratisation in the Soviet bloc. As Richardson-Little says, the 1980s saw a 'fundamental split between those who saw human rights as the natural product of the socialist revolution and those who understood them as the foundation for socialist renewal through democratization'.¹⁴¹ So, a divergence transpired between the USSR and its more conservative allies like East Germany which, though it had long taken the lead on socialist human rights ideas, did not support the Soviet attempt to achieve

¹³⁷ See Wilson, 'The generation of Allende and Solidarność', 275 and 273-93 for an account of Soviet left-wing activism in the *glasnost* era.

¹³⁸ Richardson-Little, 'The Failure of the Socialist Declaration of Human Rights', 319 and 321.

¹³⁹ Richardson-Little, 323.

¹⁴⁰ Richardson-Little, 324.

¹⁴¹ Richardson-Little, 337.

‘democratization via the implementation of political human rights’.¹⁴² The enterprise lost momentum as the domestic situation deteriorated and the USSR found itself on the back foot in the ideological competition over human rights. Ultimately, the socialist state’s attachment of ideological importance to human rights, despite its intention to promote socialism as their superior guarantor, instead ‘provided a vehicle for reformers to challenge the status quo in the name of human rights by demanding greater democratization’.¹⁴³ Gorbachev eventually made ‘sweeping concessions’ on human rights which helped unleash the political forces which led to his and the Soviet Union’s downfall.¹⁴⁴

Gorbachev’s own attempt to formulate a convincing, alternative narrative on human rights that depicted the USSR as their greatest champion and defender was the last in a long line of Soviet propaganda campaigns aimed at projecting the Soviet Union as a beacon of justice. Though this aspect of Cold War history has often been overlooked, recently an increasing number of scholars like Richardson-Little, Weiss-Wendt, and Roman have begun to highlight the complexity of and scale of the resources devoted to the Soviet Union’s attempts to promote an alternative conception of human rights and highlight what it saw as the West’s repression of anti-capitalist dissidents.¹⁴⁵ The Soviet response to Western rights criticism was more than mere whataboutism. There was a consistent, sophisticated attempt by the USSR to compete on the fronts of human rights and dissidentism with the West that engaged several sections of Soviet society, including its media, academics, and foreign policy establishment. This policy, however, did not always produce political consensus and the contrasting views expressed by Soviet officials and writers on which of the different targets for dissidentism considered by the USSR were more suitable, in the New Left and Western trade union movement, highlight the existence of rival conceptions of socialism within the Soviet government and academia.

These findings illustrate the utility of studying Cold War states’ approaches to dissent abroad for what this can tell us about those societies’ understandings of themselves, particularly the significance

¹⁴² Richardson-Little, 327.

¹⁴³ Richardson-Little, ‘The Failure of the Socialist Declaration of Human Rights’, 318.

¹⁴⁴ Richardson-Little, 333.

¹⁴⁵ Richardson-Little, ‘The Failure of the Socialist Declaration of Human Rights’, 318-41; Roman, ‘Soviet “renegades”’, 503-19; Roman, “‘Armed and Dangerous’”, 87-111; Weiss-Wendt, ‘Moscow Taps the New Left’, 102-19. Also see Emma Gilligan, *Defending Human Rights in Russia Sergei Kovalyov, Dissident and Human Rights Commissioner, 1969-2003* (London: Routledge, 2004) for a study of how dissidents tried to challenge to state on human rights.

of dissidentism to rival states in shaping this understanding and the process of ‘othering’ in the Cold War.¹⁴⁶ This thesis’ work showcases the importance to Cold War states either side of the Iron Curtain of finding suitable dissident figures abroad and portraying them as evidence of one political system’s superiority over another across the political spectrum. As Szulecki says, this continues to be the case for Western politicians and journalists as they come to terms with the failure of certain post-communist states in Eastern Europe to transition to democracy, and the appearance of dissident figures interpreted as Western style-democrats, rightly or wrongly, in states like Russia and Belarus is taken as comforting proof that eventually liberal democracy will always triumph as reflected in Western commentary on the award of the 2022 Nobel Peace Prizes to human rights campaigners in both those countries.¹⁴⁷

From *glasnost* to *gibridnaya voyna*

The worrying question remains, however, with this thesis having established that the Soviet Union worked to counteract Western human rights narratives by cultivating dissident media personalities, whether the present-day Russian government will attempt to do something similar as part of its ongoing disinformation and hybrid warfare campaigns against Western democracies. Scholars recognise that Russian propaganda techniques frequently draw upon Soviet models and Western policymakers ought to look back to the Cold War period to understand the roots of modern Russia’s current propaganda strategies and to prepare to counter them, as some already have argued.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, since February 2022 Russia has extensively weaponised the language of human rights to try and justify its horrific invasion of Ukraine, promoting a false narrative that casts the Ukrainian government as a fascist regime which has been perpetrating a ‘genocide’ and mass human rights

¹⁴⁶ Konrad H. Jarausch, Christian F. Ostermann, and Andreas Etges, ‘Rethinking, Representing, and Remembering the Cold War: Some Cultural Perspectives’, in *The Cold War: Historiography, Memory, Representation*, eds. Konrad H. Jarausch, Christian F. Ostermann and Andreas Etges (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017), 8.

¹⁴⁷ Szulecki, *Dissidents in Communist Central Europe*, 33; Natalie Nougayrède, ‘A New Wave of Dissidents in the East Can Turn Back Europe’s Populist Tide’, *Guardian*, 22nd November, 2018; Pjotr Sauer, ‘Nobel peace prize given to human rights activists in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine’, *Guardian*, 7th October, 2022.

¹⁴⁸ Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews, *The Russian "Firehose of Falsehood" Propaganda Model: Why It Might Work and Options to Counter It* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2016), <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE198.html>; Nicholas J. Cull, Vasily Gatov, Peter Pomerantsev, Anne Applebaum and Alistair Shawcross, *Soviet Subversion, Disinformation and Propaganda: How the West Fought Against it. An Analytic History, with Lessons for the Present* (London: LSE Consulting, 2019).

violations against Russian-speakers in the Donbass region whom the Russian armed forces have stepped in to protect.¹⁴⁹

Rather than representing an attempt to portray Russia as a superior form of civilization – it merely seeks to portray the West as no different or better than Russia – this use of human rights language is part of a strategy to not only undermine global support for Ukraine and sanctions against Russia by Western states, but also faith in democracy at large.¹⁵⁰ Russia pushes a wider false narrative that the West is a declining society which, far from defending cultural and political freedom, is actively repressing dissenting opinions that support the ‘traditional values’ promoted by the Kremlin, while simultaneously portraying Russia as part of a new, more ‘just’ authoritarian world order that embraces ‘traditionalist’ ideas about race and gender.¹⁵¹ Western policy-makers ought to be wary that Russia may escalate of this strategy along the lines of that employed by the USSR detailed in this thesis, and identify supposedly anti-Western ‘dissidents’ in Europe and North America who support the nationalist and authoritarian worldview of the Kremlin, to cause further disruption in Western societies. Indeed, there are a growing number of far-right sympathisers of Putin in the US who could possibly fulfil this propaganda function, especially given that some of them already falsely portray and view themselves as dissidents facing repression for their views.¹⁵²

In particular, the case of Jake Teixeira, the US National Guardsman who leaked classified Pentagon documents on the US’s involvement in the Ukraine war, certainly provides an opportunity for Russia-West dissidentism. First of all, far-right Republicans, who are also supportive of Russia and Putin’s traditional values worldview, have heralded Teixeira as a patriotic truth-teller following his arrest by the FBI. The far-right Republican Marjorie Green-Taylor has stated that ‘Jake Teixeira is white, male, Christian, and anti-war. That makes him an enemy to the Biden regime’, while the far-right

¹⁴⁹ Mark Rice-Oakley, ‘Is there any justification for Putin’s war?’, *Guardian*, 13th March, 2022.

¹⁵⁰ Cull et al., *Soviet Subversion, Disinformation and Propaganda*, 52.

¹⁵¹ Pjotr Sauer, ‘Putin says west treating Russian culture like “cancelled” JK Rowling’, *Guardian*, 25th March, 2022; ‘Russian FM hails China as part of emerging “just world order”’, *France 24*, 30th March, 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220330-russian-fm-hails-china-as-part-of-emerging-just-world-order>; Ivana Kottasová, Sugam Pokharel and Radina Gigova, ‘Putin lambasts the West and declares the end of “the era of the unipolar world”’, *CNN*, 18th June, 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/06/17/europe/russia-president-vladimir-putin-speech-spief-intl/index.html>.

¹⁵² Anthony Faiola, ‘How Putin is weaponizing ‘traditional values’ to defend Russian aggression in Ukraine’, *Washington Post*, 23rd March, 2022; Sergio Olmos, “‘Key to white survival’: how Putin has morphed into a far-right savior”, *Guardian*, 5th March, 2022; Alexis Chapelan, “‘Swallowing the red pill’: the coronavirus pandemic and the political imaginary of stigmatized knowledge in the discourse of the far-right”, *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 19, no. 2 (2021): 283-8.

commentator Tucker Carlson has defended Teixeira, saying ‘he revealed the crimes, therefore he’s the criminal. That’s how Washington works. Telling the truth is the only real sin’.¹⁵³ The Kremlin’s official reaction so far has been cautious, with Putin’s spokesman Dimitri Peskov simply saying the Kremlin acknowledged the existence of the document but was waiting for its security services to ‘analyse this data, question its authenticity again and consider it thoroughly.’¹⁵⁴ The Russian leadership is possibly biding its time before making a decision about how to best exploit the case. However, the leak nevertheless serves Russia well and has been shared on pro-Russian *Telegram* channels, as does the support Teixeira has received on the US far-right.¹⁵⁵ Arguably, the potential exists for the Russian state to support the leaker along the lines of dissidentism, having already expressed support for Edward Snowden and Julian Assange to varying degrees, and portray Teixeira’s treatment by the US authorities as an attempt to repress the truth about the US’s involvement in the war which Russia has spread conspiracy theories about.¹⁵⁶

Conclusion

Across the period 1985-91, the USSR abandoned its old reliable allies on the hard-left of the British trade union movement as it pursued *glasnost* and *perestroika* just as the US and UK similarly gradually disengaged from their dissident allies on the hard-right of the Soviet dissident movement in favour of moderate dissident figures more suited to the co-operative environment facilitated by *glasnost*. While other more well-established narratives on anti-racism remained in place, the USSR pursued a new human rights strategy based upon a socialist declaration of human rights. At home, meanwhile, the Soviet New Left underwent a renaissance thanks to Gorbachev’s reforms but did not contribute to a reshaping of Soviet-West dissidentism.

The findings of the chapter illustrate once again that the Soviet Union had a complex and multifaceted relationship with dissidentism and human rights, that continued and evolved until the very end of the state’s existence – just as its Western rivals saw their relationship with Soviet dissidents evolve

¹⁵³ Chris Stein, ‘Pentagon leaks suspect wins praise from far-right US politicians and media’, *Guardian*, 15th April, 2023.

¹⁵⁴ ‘Kremlin aware of Pentagon leak, defers to intel agencies on issue’, *TASS*, 14th April, 2023.

¹⁵⁵ Edward Helmore and Julian Borger, ‘Jack Teixeira, suspect in Pentagon leaks, charged under Espionage Act’, *Guardian*, 14th April, 2023.

¹⁵⁶ Pjotr Sauer, ‘Putin grants Russian citizenship to US whistleblower Edward Snowden’, *Guardian*, 26th September 2022; ‘Russia Calls UK Decision to Allow Assange Extradition “Shameful”’, *The Moscow Times*, 10th December, 2021.

continually. Of course, the USSR's attempts to turn the tables against the West's powerful narrative on human rights, which ultimately claimed 'victory' in the Cold War, failed. Yet, as Kopeček has argued, the influence of 'the post-1989 liberal human rights triumphalism' on historians should not lead them to overlook the USSR's confidence in its ability to compete on human rights nor therefore the complexity of the Soviet Union's various attempts to produce counternarratives and create its own dissident heroes comparable to Solzhenitsyn in the West.¹⁵⁷

Moreover, scholars acknowledge the importance of the role played by Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov, and the Helsinki Act in undermining the Soviet Union's global image and contributing to its downfall by providing a common framework of human rights for dissidents and their supporters to mobilise around, as well as eventually persuading Soviet leaders that reforming human rights domestically was in the USSR's interests given how decades of '[t]ransnational activism had made Soviet human rights practices an obstacle to improving East-West relations' and trade.¹⁵⁸ The Soviet state and media apparatus recognised the threat posed by this coalition of Western activists, politicians, and Soviet dissidents and consistently attempted to overwrite the Soviet dissidents' and West's narratives by creating its own broad anti-Western coalition of anti-capitalist 'dissidents'. This strategy had mixed results and the USSR struggled to cut through to international audiences given the disunity and hostility of the Western left towards the USSR, and vice versa. Keck and Sikkink's East-West boomerang pattern, whereby in response to increased repression at home activists mobilise transnational allies to pressurise their repressive home government, was not replicated on the same scale in Soviet-West dissidentism.¹⁵⁹ There were examples of Soviet-West boomerang style patterns, namely Scargill and Davis' outreach to the USSR, but they were less widespread as the USSR's targets for dissidentism often did not actively want the support of the USSR and frequently opposed it. At the same time, the USSR's installation of human rights as a fundamental part of the promise of socialism to attack Western states' human rights records as inferior also gave the Soviet system's oppressed domestic opponents a framework by which they could attack socialism itself by pointing

¹⁵⁷ Kopeček, 'The Socialist Conception of Human Rights and Its Dissident Critique', 273.

¹⁵⁸ Hurst, "'To Build a Castle'", 32; Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War*, 12-13.

¹⁵⁹ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 12-13.

its failure to deliver on its human rights promises.¹⁶⁰ Both these factors ultimately played a significant role in Soviet communism's discreditation and ideological defeat in the Cold War.

The findings of this chapter once again illustrate the value of avoiding deterministic lenses and of reading Soviet and Cold War history forwards rather than backwards from 1989 or 1991, highlighting late-Soviet confidence in the power of social human rights critiques. At the same time, though, it also shows how the periods of the greatest Soviet interest in supporting traditional socialist dissident movements in the West coincided with the era of stagnation in the USSR, during the 1970s and 1980s, and the state's continual efforts to find evidence of dissent abroad to use as proof for domestic audiences that Marxist materialism was being proven right reflected the anxiety the leadership felt regarding the popularity and legitimacy of official ideology. This supports Yurchak's theory of the USSR as a state beset by a paradox, where confidence and insecurity about the power of its ideas existed simultaneously within the leadership and political establishment.¹⁶¹ The evidence produced by this study in support of Yurchak's argument additionally highlights the value of studying Cold War, and even contemporary, states' commitments towards supporting perceived dissidents in the societies of ideological rivals for what this can reveal about the nature of politics and political divisions within individual states.

¹⁶⁰ Roman, 'Soviet "renegades"', 514; Roman, "'Armed and Dangerous"', 100; Richardson-Little, 'The Failure of the Socialist Declaration of Human Rights', 318.

¹⁶¹ Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More*, 4.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has shown how the Soviet Union's political leadership and press were continually engaged in a process of creating media profiles of radicals in the West that depicted them as anti-capitalist dissidents and conveyed to domestic audiences the global popularity and universality of Marxism-Leninism. Throughout the period 1964-1991, the Soviet press exploited images of dissent in the West while the leadership made calculated decisions on which radicals to back and portray as dissidents. This was an ever-changing process, with different targets for dissidentism gaining and losing support from Moscow over time. To begin with, Soviet attention was focused on exploiting the civil rights movement in the US and anti-Vietnam war protests there and in Europe, rather than creating specific dissident personalities while Moscow lacked any real appreciation of the role of the New Left. However, as Western dissent intensified during and after 1968 under the influence of the New Left, accompanied by increasing repression by Western state security services, the Soviet leadership and academic establishment began to consider the utility of the New Left as a coalition partner in its Cold War struggle with the West.

At the same time, dissent in the Soviet bloc began to peak to which Moscow responded with escalating levels of repression, leading to growing Western criticism of the USSR's human rights record which proved damaging to Moscow's international reputation. Particularly concerning for the Soviet leadership, was the emergence of prominent leaders of dissent like Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov who gained international followings for their defence of political rights in the USSR. In response, the Soviet press embarked on propaganda campaigns in support of perceived New Left victims of Western repression, culminating in extensive media coverage of the trial of Angela Davis during 1970-72 and well as Leonard Peltier's case in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Soviet leaders, editors, and academics, however, struggled to decide whether to extend their support to other figures in the New Left, which was frequently critical of Soviet communism. Davis and Peltier may have been associated with the New Left, but they were primarily linked with anti-racist activism in the Soviet press and fitted in with the well-established Soviet propaganda narrative of the US as racially intolerant and the USSR as anti-racist. No other figures in the New Left were depicted as dissident heroes.

The majority of the Soviet leadership and academic establishment were too fearful of the New Left's potential to become an ideological rival for the mantle of leader of global radicalism to fully embrace the movement, instead preferring to focus on citing the 1968 revolts as examples of capitalism's unpopularity and asserting that the movement's appearance showed that history was on the USSR's side while simultaneously arguing that the New Left would inevitably revert to Soviet socialism. However, eventually, even this more moderate support became impossible after the New Left definitively diverged beyond the pale of what most Soviet officials were willing to tolerate in the mid-1970s and instead a new strategy was followed that focused on depicting Western trade unionists as dissidents, culminating in a wide-ranging campaign of support for the British miners on strike during 1984-85 centred on their radical leader Arthur Scargill. This approach was the most ideologically compatible one available to Soviet leaders seeking to create an answer to the West's veneration of Solzhenitsyn and other dissidents and as such significant media, diplomatic, and even financial resources were invested to support Scargill. Yet despite the initial suitability of trade unionists as targets of Soviet-West dissidentism, domestic political changes in the USSR saw this strategy abandoned as Mikhail Gorbachev pursued his *glasnost* agenda and promoted a new interpretation of human rights that was incompatible with the politics of Scargill as the best way to create an alternative to the West's own concept.

In terms of its public diplomacy, exploiting images of anti-capitalist dissent and creating ideologically suitable media profiles of dissident figures was equally as important to the USSR as it was for the US and UK throughout the Cold War. Historians have increasingly begun to present evidence in support of this hypothesis, and this thesis' findings confirm it in a comprehensive manner. Within these findings, however, another complex story is revealed in addition to drawing a significant parallel between the USSR and two of its Western rivals. What this thesis' analysis shows is the true value and importance to governments and societies of both Cold War blocs of creating ideologically re-affirming media images of dissent abroad. Finding and embellishing examples of dissent in the rival Cold War bloc was a key part of both Soviet and Anglo-American public diplomacy, and this thesis' long-term, holistic analysis extends historians' appreciation of the multifaceted and complex nature of this aspect of Cold War ideological competition. At the same time, it is also clear that dissidentism also played an important role in domestic politics, as different Western parties claimed perceived dissidents as supporters of their policies, while the Soviet press

used examples of dissent abroad to confirm the accuracy of Marxism's predictions of global revolutions to Soviet citizens.

Dissidents in the opponent's bloc served as proof of the home ideology's superiority and universality. What is interesting in the comparison between the US, UK, and USSR, is that dissidents became paramount for different political groupings when their confidence in the potential for their own ideology to succeed was shaken and coverage of dissent abroad served to reaffirm communism and liberal-democracy's, and their various interpretations', popularity in the eyes of respective domestic audiences. So, just as Western conservatives latched onto Soviet dissidents as beacons of liberalism at a time when they felt Western civilisation was in decline in the era of *détente*, the Soviet leadership sought dissident-promoting coalitions with Western radicals who corroborated Marxist predictions of world revolution and used them to convince domestic audiences of the health of Soviet Marxism during the 'era of stagnation' when the Soviet system was increasingly criticised as moribund. For the Soviet Union, however, the role of ideology was always a much more important factor in its approach to dissidentism compared to the US and UK.

American and British politicians frequently overlooked differences with Soviet dissidents to exploit their fame and co-opt their political messages, while the dissidents themselves made a tactical decision to accept this support despite how it might have obscured dissidents' messages. Often, dissidents had views incompatible with the kind of Western ideals upheld by Anglo-American politicians but the propaganda power that portraying Soviet dissidents as Western style democrats offered in terms of affirming to domestic and international audiences the universal popularity of liberal capitalism, was too valuable to allow ideological differences to get in the way. By contrast, eminent civil rights leaders and prominent New Left figures who could have been portrayed as evidence of Marxism-Leninism's popularity, albeit inaccurately, were only partially co-opted and sometimes criticised by the Soviet state-controlled media when their views did not fully align with Soviet ideology – meanwhile, many New Leftists were themselves anti-Soviet and did not welcome Soviet support. The Soviet leadership's fearfulness about left-wing rivals emerging abroad to challenge Soviet communism, given their experience of the Sino-Soviet split, made them much more hesitant to offer their full endorsement of radicals in the West with contrary views despite the propaganda potential they offered. Of course, many Western politicians distanced themselves from

Soviet dissidents in the 1970s while they sought to uphold détente, but this was typically a question of policy not ideology unlike in the USSR.

Soviet ideology was a defining factor and led to a much more fraught relationship with dissidentism. Yet Soviet ideology was not an uncontested concept. Reformers and conservatives within the Soviet hierarchy fought to promote competing visions of socialism. This conflict played out visibly in the Soviet Union's engagement with potential dissident coalition partners in the West and was evident in Soviet ideologists' debates over which figures in the New Left and trade union movement were suitable to support, in a chapter of Soviet history which has previously been overlooked. The key point of division was the debate over the primacy of the working class to the prosecution of revolution, as well as the continued relevance of key traditional Soviet principles of modernity, like the need for an organised vanguard party and unified mass-movements, in the aftermath of the scientific-technological revolution of the mid-20th century. Equally, the issue of how great a role the state should play in the life of the individual and whether the intelligentsia ought to have greater freedom divided Soviet officials over which dissidents to support.

The rise and fall of different factions in these Soviet ideological debates, who were subsequently attracted to different forms of dissent in the West, explains why the targets of Soviet-West dissidentism constantly changed over time. Officials and analysts who were more open to the individual and intelligentsia playing a greater role in society were more likely to consider the New Left as possible allies in the Cold War, while a small number were arguably attracted to the idea of applying New Left ideas to the USSR. Reformists had some room for manoeuvre in publishing, academia, and even government policy during the late 1960s and early 1970s and some seemed to have entertained hopes of fusing New Left ideas, especially about subordinating the working class' role within socialist society, with Soviet socialism, while a significant number of Soviet writers expressed sympathy with the New Left. Conservatives, meanwhile, clung to traditional socialist ideas of mass-action and militant labour and viewed orthodox Western trade unions as the more deserving recipients of Soviet support, which ultimately became the reality after conservatives established full dominance in the leadership by the mid-1970s. Yet the situation changed once again when new reformers became ascendent in 1985 and the USSR's old unionist allies were abandoned. However, it was not only ideological shifts within the leadership that accounted for the multiple changes in

which Western radicals were supported as dissidents by Moscow. The Soviet relationship with dissidents abroad was influenced by the paradox which Yurchak identifies as having been at the heart of the Soviet system.

Soviet ideology simultaneously demanded that citizens become politically enlightened, independent thinkers while conforming to Soviet socialism. The Soviet state expended significant efforts and resources trying to police these processes in line with its needs and prevent rivals emerging. The Soviet leadership hoped for the same process to occur abroad, whereby Western citizens would realise their oppression by capitalism and see Soviet socialism as its superior replacement. The dilemma for the leadership and its ideological experts was their inability to exert control over this process and they were repeatedly frustrated when left-wingers in the West adopted non-Soviet socialist views, facing a difficult choice as to whether a dissident movement abroad could be supported when it held views incompatible with Soviet ideology, despite the propaganda value it offered, for the fear that this might legitimate a rival form of socialism and inspire Soviet citizens to support it. Thus, the differing degrees of support given to various left-wing groups abroad reflected the leadership's constant calculation of judgement as to whether a movement in the West could serve a propaganda function along the lines of dissidentism without undermining the USSR's objectives to maintain a domestic ideological monopoly. Ultimately, the Soviet state failed in this endeavour and in fact indirectly contributed to this failure, with the leadership's conduct of a wide-ranging study of the New Left during 1969-72 unintentionally acquainting young Soviet citizens with the ideas of the movement and leading them to form a Soviet New Left.

Thus, the relationship between Moscow and the New Left was permeated with anxiety on the part of the leadership who, even though they allowed modest experimentation with the New Left, were too frightened of the New Left's potential to spread among the Soviet youth to ever fully back the revolutions of 1968. This reflected another paradox inherent to the USSR, identified by Yurchak also, in that the leadership, despite their confident belief in the superiority of Soviet socialism, were persistently worried about the levels of support that official ideology enjoyed. As late as 1984, texts were being published designed to justify the most basic aspects of the Soviet system.¹ The perennial focus of the Soviet press on highlighting examples of dissent in the West was a product of this

¹ Yurchak, *Everything was forever, until it was no more*, 13-14.

concern in the leadership and one which remained at the heart of Soviet propaganda strategies and ideological debates throughout the Cold War. Yet at the same time, this Soviet propaganda also reflected the high levels of confidence that the predictions of Marxism-Leninism for world revolution would be realised that existed simultaneously alongside doubt over the popularity of official ideology. As late as 1985, members of the Politburo expressed their views that the Soviet Union ought to support the British miners financially in their strike despite the serious diplomatic ramifications that would result if their activities were uncovered. Studying the relationship between the USSR and its dissenting allies in the West exposes further how much these paradoxes were a defining feature of the Soviet system. Yet the findings of this thesis also have wider implications for historians' understandings of Cold War history, and international relations more broadly.

Evidently, finding perceived dissidents who affirmed the superiority of a state's political system was a fundamental part of public diplomacy and ideological competition during the Cold War, irrespective of ideology. In this, the value of reading Cold War history forwards is clearly demonstrated. By looking towards 1991 rather than backwards from it, it has been possible to outline the piecemeal and complex development of the Soviet relationship with dissidentism in a detailed and comprehensive manner. Historians have already confirmed the importance of Soviet dissidents to Western states, while others have argued the former made a significant contribution to the USSR's downfall and that the coalition of East-West support which emerged around Soviet dissidents and the Helsinki Act worked to undermine the legitimacy of the Soviet state. The Soviet state attempted to counter this process with a narrative that depicted the West as a site of more punitive political repression. The Soviet Union ultimately failed in its endeavour to compete with the West on the issue of human rights and dissidents, and arguably its failure to build a similar coalition of support around a dissident movement abroad was a factor in Soviet communism's ideological and 'moral' 'defeat' and global discreditation in the Cold War.² Despite investing significant diplomatic and propaganda resources to compete with the West on human rights, the USSR struggled as it had too few supporters to sufficiently undermine the West's image globally while its own record on human rights was visibly abysmal.³ Furthermore, Soviet leaders were too ideologically rigid to build a broad church of support

² Boobbyer, *Conscience, Dissent and Reform in Soviet Russia*, 1.

³ Edward A. Kolodziej and Roger E. Kanet, *The Limits of Soviet Power in the Developing World. Thermidor in the Revolutionary Struggle* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1989), 443.

around an alternative, socialist human rights concept, and alienated potential supporters in the New Left. Nevertheless, it is vital to understand what this alternative was in order to appreciate the full development of human rights throughout history.

Even though the USSR ultimately failed in its attempts to outflank the West on human rights, it is important to examine these attempts and place them into their proper context to fully understand the history of human rights and the public diplomacy, information warfare, and ideological competition which surrounded them during the Cold War. As Stephen Cohen says, 'history written without defeated alternatives is neither a full account of the past nor a real explanation of what happened'.⁴ This study illustrates that the failure of the Soviet alternative was not a forgone conclusion, supporting increasing calls by historians to avoid writing histories of the Cold War from a deterministic point of view. Across the entire period from the mid-1960s, when the 'antecedents' to the human rights discourses and movements of the 1970s emerged, to the early-1990s, by which time dissidents and human rights became key concerns in the international relations of the Cold War, the USSR aggressively contested Western attempts to monopolise and weaponize human rights and dissidentism.⁵ This included right up until the end of the Soviet Union's existence, and the suddenness of its abandonment of Scargill serves to support historians' calls to re-evaluate the inevitability of the Soviet Union's official ideology changing, and its collapse taking place, when and how they did. The Soviet Union's relationship with the NUM illustrates how even in 1985, confidence, as well as doubt, existed in the Politburo as regards Soviet communism and international Marxism's futures.

As Zubok argues, the Soviet collapse only became likely once the decision was made to remove the key pillars of Soviet power: the party's economic and political monopoly, police repression, and ideology. Indeed, Soviet ideology still possessed genuine influence as a binding national idea that could 'hold the country together' even if dreams of utopia were forgotten.⁶ The discrediting of these traditional Soviet ideas was a direct result of the decision to implement *glasnost*, not an inevitability, and the sudden abandonment of old allies in the international labour movement with orthodox

⁴ Stephen Cohen, *Soviet Fates and Lost Alternatives: From Stalinism to the New Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), xi.

⁵ Samuel Moyn, 'The Return of the Prodigal: The 1970s as a Turning Point in Human Rights History', in *The Breakthrough*, 4.

⁶ Zubok et al., 'A Cold War endgame or an opportunity missed?', 9.

Marxist views puts this process into sharper focus. The Soviet Union took its commitments to internationalism seriously and lost global supporters as well as gaining them through its embrace of *glasnost*.

This thesis ultimately illustrates the value of studying Cold War dissidentism and the relationships its targets had with transnational supporters, showing how which activists rival political groups and states chose to support as dissidents said as much about them as it did the activists themselves. The USSR's frequent shifts in its targets for Soviet-West dissidentism, reflected the Soviet leadership's own shifting priorities and evolving ideological composition. Meanwhile, in its comparison with Britain and America, this study has shown how dissidentism was a key part of ideological competition in the Cold War on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Studying the USSR's relationship with the Western radicals it depicted as dissidents using a comparative focus places this relationship into the broader context of Cold War politics. The 20th century's defining ideological conflict was permeated by an intense war of words, information, and ideas, in which a crucial weapon for its participants was finding examples of dissidents, real or invented, in the rival bloc's camp that affirmed the universality of their preferred ideology, as well as human rights abuses that exposed the moral bankruptcy of their rivals. This thesis significantly extends historians' knowledge and appreciation of how human rights were and remain a contested concept between rival ideologies. Indeed, this continues to be the case in the 21st century, with a similar kind of ideological conflict, between the contemporary West and Putin's Russia, having emerged in which forming coalitions with dissidents, perceived or real, in the rival camp will only become an ever more important feature.

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