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SOME VIEWS OF THE GORBACHEV ERA

by Kevin Devlin

Summary: From 1950 to 1955 Zdenek Mlynar, Secretary of the Czechoslovak CP Central Committee during the ill-fated "Prague Spring," which was ended by the Soviet-led invasion of August 1968, studied in Moscow, where he formed a close friendship with another rising young official named Mikhail Gorbachev. Now an exile, Mlynar has written two articles on the new Soviet leader, for the Italian CP's newspaper and for an Austrian magazine. Gorbachev, he suggests, is a pragmatist who may be expected to recognize the need both for reforms in the Soviet system and for different communist regimes to follow their own paths of development. Andreu Claret, a Spanish CP leader, has also commented on the prospects for the Soviet regime in "the Gorbachev era." He suggests that the advent of this relatively young leader to power is itself a sign that forces are working in the Soviet Union and other East European countries toward social and political change and economic modernization. Other comments on the implications of Gorbachev's rise to power have been made by Italian and French communist observers.

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One of the leading figures in the "Prague Spring," the short-lived movement of democratic reforms brought to an end by the Soviet-led invasion of August 1968, has made a contribution of exceptional interest to the current wave of speculation about the policies that may be followed by the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev. He is Zdenek Mlynar, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak CP in 1968 and, as such, one of the leading champions of the course of "socialist democratization." Subjected to various kinds of harassment by

the "normalized" Husak regime, he was allowed in May 1977 to emigrate to the West; and before settling in Vienna he established warm relations with the Italian communist leaders, who had supported the Czechoslovak reforms and condemned the invasion.

As it happened, during one stage of his career within the Czechoslovak party apparatus Mlynar became closely acquainted with the man who now represents a new generation of leaders in the CPSU. From 1950 to 1955 he studied law at Moscow University together with an up-and-coming young Soviet official named Mikhail Gorbachev, who was to become General Secretary of the CPSU at the age of 54. In an article written for the newspaper of the Italian CP, Mlynar says of their relationship at that time:

We lived in the same quarters for five years, belonged to the same study circle, prepared together for the examinations, and finally both obtained our degrees *cum laude*. We were more than just fellow students: we were known to all as a pair of close friends.¹

Gorbachev was too young to have fought in World War II, Mlynar explained, but the war had nevertheless been a formative experience for him; he had spent it near the Caucasus front and had seen war without romanticism as a source of suffering for the civilian population. After the war, as a reward for "exceptional" work in a kolkhoz, he was sent to study in Moscow. When they were studying "kolkhoz law," Mlynar learned from Gorbachev "how small a part that law played in everyday life and, on the other hand, how great the role of ordinary violence was in 'guaranteeing work discipline' in the kolkhozes."

In those days Gorbachev's pragmatic temper was reflected in his favorite quotation from Hegel, that "the truth is always concrete," which he liked to cite when a lecturer in Marxist philosophy was babbling away about general principles, "regardless of how little they might have in common with reality." At the same time, Marxism was for him not just a collection of axioms to be memorized but rather an instrument for getting to know the world; "and I do not think that for him, even after thirty years, it can be reduced to a matter of political pragmatism."

Certainly, today Gorbachev knows from experience what power is, what political practice is, and in what ways their world differs from the world of theory. I do not, however, think that he is a man for whom politics and power have become ends in themselves. He had never been a cynic; by character, he was a reformer who considered politics a means and the needs of the people the end. What importance that can have in the office that he holds today is, however, a complex question and one that remains open.

"Heretical" Views. In 1952, when Stalinism reigned unchallenged, the two friends were studying the official history of the USSR, "which imposed on us the view that any idea that was different from the line laid down from above was an 'antiparty deviation' whose supporters had to be liquidated, sentenced, canceled from the pages of history." It was at that time that Gorbachev remarked to Mlynar: "But Lenin did not have Martov arrested, he let him emigrate." Nowadays, Mlynar observed, such remarks did not have any flavor of heresy, even in the Soviet Union.

In 1952, however, those words signified that the student Gorbachev doubted that men could be divided into supporters of a given line and criminals. He knew that there could also be dissidents, critics, and reformers who were not on that account criminals and that this applied also to Socialists and Communists. Moreover, to confide an opinion of that sort to a fellow student, and a foreigner at that, was not by any means a common occurrence at that time. A man inclined to opportunism, whose own convictions were not the decisive factor in his politics, would certainly not have behaved like that.

The tone was significant: here and in other passages the Czechoslovak exile gave a distinctly flattering portrait of his old acquaintance. For, example, the Gorbachev whom he knew as a young student was

not only very intelligent and talented but was an open person whose intelligence never led him into arrogance; he wanted to hear the views of others. Loyal and personally honest, he won for himself a spontaneous and not just formal authority.

The last time the two men met was in 1967, less than a year before Mlynar became a prominent actor in the drama of the "Prague Spring." On a study trip to Moscow, he spent a few days with Gorbachev at Stavropol, where the latter was then party secretary. Among the subjects they discussed was the ouster of Nikita Khrushchev as top leader of the CPSU in 1964. For Mlynar and like-minded Czechoslovak Communists, Khrushchev was the man who "opened the door to consistent criticism of the Stalinist stage in Soviet history," while they themselves were about to embark on a new course aimed at overcoming their own Stalinist past; they knew nothing much about his domestic record. The visitor found that Gorbachev did not regret the fall of Khrushchev and did not consider it an event that could signify a return to the past. Assessing Khrushchev primarily in terms of

From Brezhnev he expected greater autonomy and responsibility for lower-level officials, and "considered that [this was] necessary for real change in the system of economic and political management in a country as vast and varied as the USSR." In his own area of responsibility, Gorbachev had shown the ability to introduce autonomous reforms emphasizing initiative and incentive at the expense of bureaucracy.

More interesting, however, was their discussion during that 1967 meeting of Gorbachev's ideas about the reforms needed in Czechoslovakia:

We discussed this with mutual understanding, both being well aware of the fact that the Soviet Union was not Czechoslovakia; we knew that my ideas concerned the precise situation and possibilities of Czechoslovakia. Just as he was in favor of greater autonomy and responsibility for the republics and regions of the USSR, so was he also in favor of the different countries having the possibility of following their own, specific paths of development. Neither he nor I knew, of course, what was really going to happen in Czechoslovakia a year later.

That discussion of possible Czechoslovak reforms in 1967 was their last meeting. When Gorbachev came to Prague with a CPSU delegation in 1969, Mlynar and other members of the Dubcek team had already been ousted from the CPCS Central Committee. Life has led the former fellow students along very different paths. Mlynar's judgment of the other's course is consistently kind:

His experience tells him that anyone in political life in a society of the Soviet type who has the interests and needs of the people at heart can do important, reasonable, and realistic work for those interests and needs only within the communist party, by taking part in the development of its policies.

Chance of Change? Hence, Mlynar does not agree with the opinion of the Soviet dissident Zhores Medvedev (in an interview with the PCI daily *L'Unita*) that Gorbachev's rise to power will bring no great change:

Certainly, to bring about in the life of the Soviet society those fruitful changes that the needs of development itself have made necessary for years will not at all be an easy task; and there is no guarantee that the effort will succeed. It is equally certain that that does not depend on individuals, however high their position. Nevertheless, I believe that the very choice of Gorbachev has brought something new: socialism has been offered a new chance.

Mlynar went on to express the view that Gorbachev's advent to power had ended a policy orientated predominantly toward the

past, a policy that produced stagnation by putting off solutions to pressing problems. He and other leaders of the new generation had been formed politically in the post-Stalinist era. Their experience, however, had been marked by the failure of various and successive attempts at reform.

It is here that I find the novelty of the present situation: substantial reforms have become an inherent necessity in the country of origin of the Soviet system and are no longer a necessity just for the minor East European countries. . . . It is certain, however, that there is no satisfactory "model" for a reformist development in the Soviet Union. The elements of a pluralistic political democracy, traditionally linked with the historical development of Czechoslovakia, for example, certainly will not provide a solution for the Soviet Union today; nor can one expect a Soviet development similar to that taking place in China today. . . .

It is, however, important that China, Hungary, and all the other countries be able to follow their own paths, without this being proclaimed antisocialist and "inadmissible."

In this situation, Mlynar said that he derived "certain hopes" from his personal knowledge of Gorbachev:

He is a man who attributes more importance to his own experience, lived and felt, than to what he has read. At the same time, he is capable of assessing his own experience with great rationality and of developing it with help from other sources. He is capable of acting in a pragmatic manner but also of theoretical reasoning. In his life permanent values have an importance beyond temporary successes, and he has enough confidence in himself to give up a course that he himself has not found to be correct.

Among the hopes that Mlynar vested in his old acquaintance was the thought that he might become the first top Soviet leader since the break of the early 1960s to visit China and that he might help the world to see itself as it really is, instead of through the distorting mirror of superpower polarity.

This buoyant mood, however, abruptly gave way to one of bleak realism in Mlynar's closing sentence, in which he noted tersely that his natural optimism had been modified by "very ugly experiences." Perhaps the thought had come to him that, just as he himself had undergone radical changes since those student days in the Moscow of the early 1950s, so might Mikhail Gorbachev well have changed during his ascent through the Soviet hierarchy of power and that it would be prudent to let time tell the story.

"A Chance--And Not Only For the Soviet Union." This was the title of another article by Mlynar about Gorbachev, this time for the Austrian independent-leftist *Wiener Tagebuch*.²

According to this article, for Mlynar, the significance of Gorbachev's appointment as General Secretary lay not only in the advance of a new generation to positions of power but also in the fact that this occurred at a time when "reforms and changes in the existing economic and sociopolitical system have become a vital necessity for the homeland of 'real socialism.'" He went on:

A series of problems that necessitated attempts at reforms in the Central European countries, 20 years ago and more, today demands changes in the Soviet Union itself.

The parallel between the two sets of circumstances justifies the conclusion that the USSR today finds itself in a situation similar to that [of other regimes] three decades ago. There thus opens up a chance for a change in the course of development, which--if it is really exploited--can mean a chance not only for the Soviet Union but for the cause of socialism. I say this in full awareness of the bitter experiences that we have had in the past thirty years.

In spite of these experiences, Mlynar was of the opinion that the question of whether the Soviet system could be changed through reforms had not yet been finally answered:

The years 1956, 1968, and 1981 showed only that attempts to change the system, when undertaken in a smaller country of the Soviet bloc, end in failure. What is possible or not possible if the Soviet Union itself is obliged to attempt internal reforms remains, however, an open question. It seems that the answer to a considerable degree depends upon Mikhail Gorbachev.

New Generation. The new Soviet leader, the Czechoslovak exile went on, had "the real prospect of decisively influencing developments in the Soviet Union until about the year 2000. It was in this possibility, and not just in the fact that he represented a younger generation of leadership, that the significance of his appointment lay.

Yet the generational change had its own significance. The Soviet party members of Gorbachev's generation, already entrenched in the lower and middle levels of the pyramid of power, had now reached the summit. The overwhelming majority of them had not been victims of Stalinism; and, although the foundations of their ideological development had been laid under Stalin, their decisive political experiences came in the period after Stalin's death. These included Khrushchev's unsuccessful attempts at reform and his insufficiently radical and

comprehensive critique of the Stalinist past. They also included unsuccessful efforts in East European countries to bring about changes in the system:

Gorbachev's generation . . . remembers the years 1956, 1968, and 1980 as a period when hopes and fears went together, and it was finally "necessary" to repress by force what from the Soviet point of view were too radical and dangerous attempts at change. This generation will hardly want to repeat such an experience.

This generation of Soviet Communists had experienced the rise of the USSR as a military superpower but also the rift with China and the end of the monolithic world movement. Most important of all, however, in Mlynar's view, was the fact that experience had taught them that the most serious problems of national development could not be solved through a policy that simply postponed attempts at solutions and covered up the problems. They had learned both to mistrust reform attempts and to recognize that the rejection and repression of such attempts led only to a new dead end. They had been accustomed to waiting, but now the responsibility had passed to them: in the USSR and elsewhere in the world people faced the difficult challenge of giving up habits of comfort and caution and accepting the necessity of change.

The advent of the Gorbachev generation to positions of power would not, indeed, give any opening to advocates of radical revolutionary concepts.

It does, however, offer the real hope that in practice official policies will be based not on the classical conservative principle of "one step forward, two steps back," but on the principle of prudent reformers: "two steps forward, one step back." In the long run, that would mean movement forward instead of stagnation and, after the experience of the past decade, that would represent great progress.

If a reform movement in the Soviet Union was to have any chance of success, however, it was above all necessary that the convinced supporters of reform should become "an influential and ultimately the decisive force within the official political power structure," which in turn could only happen when the idea of the indispensability of reform and change had become an official idea. Andropov had given the impulse in that direction, said Mlynar, and Gorbachev could develop it. The preparations for the 27th CPSU Congress, involving the rewriting of the party program, would provide an ideal opportunity for that. Given the widespread dissatisfaction with stagnation, "if the reform signals of the new leadership were clear and convincing, the necessary support of all important sectors of the population would be easily achieved."

Mlynar went on to discuss some sociological aspects of this putative reform movement, such as the need for free debate on reform proposals among professional circles. He stressed the need, as part of this social process, for "the Soviet power elite to be subjected to the criteria of a performance-oriented society." This would not in itself produce a democratic structure but "it would be the precondition for any possible democratization in the future." Similarly, preparations for effective reforms would also require changes within the ruling party: its influence as a social organism should grow, while its influence as a apparatus of power should diminish. "The indispensable dialogue with society, without which any real reform of the system is unthinkable, could thus begin within the communist party." He expressed the optimistic hope that the first visible steps in this direction could be taken within the framework of preparations for the party congress.

Other Regimes, Too. Discussing the international effects of a possible movement of internal reform in the Soviet Union, Mlynar noted signs that both sides were interested in an improvement in Sino-Soviet relations and said it was not beyond the bounds of possibility that these relations might in the future develop in much the same way as Soviet-Yugoslav relations had after 1955. He went on:

What seems already certain is that on the Soviet side there is no longer any obstacle to recognition of "the Chinese way to socialism," and that the time when that way could be rejected as "antisocialist" has gone. At the same time, one observes how strikingly the Soviet leadership expresses its support for Hungary. . . . At present there is no doubt that not only Hungary but also Poland, the GDR, and Bulgaria (to say nothing of Romania) have an intense interest in extending their possibilities of pursuing independent policies that need not follow those of the Soviet Union in every area. Only the present leadership in Czechoslovakia seems afraid of anything like that.

If the Soviet leadership were ready in practice and not just on paper to recognize, to a much greater extent, the right of each regime to follow its own specific path of development, this in itself would reduce tension within the Soviet bloc. Moreover, in contrast to the year 1956, when the explosion of popular discontent in Poland and Hungary strengthened conservative forces in the Soviet leadership, such a recognition of national ways elsewhere would strengthen the hand of reformers in the Soviet Union. The effects of Soviet reforms on other regimes would in turn, however, vary from one country to another:

In Warsaw, the crusader of the military regime would feel more secure with a "real socialism" of the old styler; in Budapest, the existing reformism [would continue]; in Berlin there would be hopes for a development of

inter-German relations. Overall, and in the long-term perspective, the possibilities for reform-oriented developments would be strengthened.

On the level of foreign policy, Mlynar suggested that the burden of the arms race might lead the Soviet Union to seek new political initiatives, perhaps through new approaches not only to Western Europe but also to China and Japan. This, he admitted, was premature speculation.

What is certain, however, is that on the level of foreign policy Gorbachev's accession to the highest political office is accompanied by chances, not a trace of which were to be discerned when Chernenko came to power.

One wonders, however, if Mlynar might not want to rewrite that guardedly optimistic conclusion after studying Gorbachev's speech of May 8, marking the 40th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany (a defeat, he declared, primarily due to Soviet power, which "proved [the] superiority" of the Soviet system). His attacks on the United States in particular and the Western democracies in general could perhaps be interpreted as an effort to move toward East-West negotiations in Geneva and elsewhere from positions of psychological strength. More significant, it seems, was his failure to make any reference to plans for social and economic reforms on the domestic level, coupled with his praise for the prewar development of the system under Stalin, whose crimes--denounced by Nikita Khrushchev almost three decades ago--went unmentioned.³ Time will tell; but it seems possible if not probable that the prospect of gradual reforms that would modify that system and affect the whole Soviet bloc exists more in the hopes of Zdenek Mlynar than in the intentions of Mikhail Gorbachev.

West European Communist Views of Gorbachev. Of all the foreign speculation on the probable or possible characteristics of "the Gorbachev era," the views of communist commentators representing the Italian, French, and Spanish Communist Parties are of special interest.

The most important of the three is the Spanish contribution, because it comes from a member of the top leadership of the PCE. He is the Catalan Andreu Claret, a member of the Executive Committee who has played a leading role as a supporter of Secretary-General Gerardo Iglesias in the internal struggle against the minority led by former Secretary-General Santiago Carrillo.⁴ The Iglesias leadership has also had to cope with a challenge on another flank, from a rival, pro-Soviet communist party set up in January 1984 with open Soviet support.⁵ While it protested at the time against this Soviet factionalist intervention, the PCE leadership has stressed its desire to maintain relations with other communist parties, including the CPSU. Under the circumstances, the article that Claret contributed to a Barcelona newspaper⁶ on the prospects

for the Soviet Union in the Gorbachev era takes on added significance.

Claret began his essay by noting that Mikhail Gorbachev now had to tackle the same problems that Yuri Andropov had inherited from Leonid Brezhnev (and had himself bequeathed to Konstantin Chernenko): "the relative stagnation of economic growth, the bureaucratization and inefficiency of the state and party machinery, and the danger of a new leap forward in nuclear escalation." He also said that the situation on all three "fronts" had deteriorated since Brezhnev's death. In dealing with this complex challenge, Claret suggested, Gorbachev's main advantage might be said to be "the inevitability of his promotion and now his appointment." Unlike the case of Andropov (and of Chernenko, one might add), his appointment seemed not so much the result of a compromise agreement within the Soviet leadership as an expression of "the desire for change that exists within some of the Soviet Union's most dynamic sectors." Acknowledging that any change in the CPSU leadership could only be the result of a decision at the top, he nevertheless believed that "an analysis that seeks an explanation of what has happened within the movements running through Soviet society and in the existence of forces of transformation struggling to eliminate the obstacles inherited from the past is more indicative."

Pressure for Change. Moreover, this pressure from below making for change was at work not only in the USSR but also in other East European regimes:

I know that this viewpoint contrasts with that of those who persist in regarding Soviet society--and East European society as a whole--as a fossilized world immune to the laws of history. I, however, am convinced that something is stirring in those societies, even in Soviet society, whether above or below the surface, in the positive direction of reform and innovation. Any attempt to understand what is happening in the socialist countries must proceed from an examination of these forces and their actions, however imperceptible, and a comparison of this with the capacity to channel them on the part of those who head the institutions.

In this perspective, what had been the social, cultural, and generational forces behind Gorbachev's appointment? The first factor, Claret suggested, was "the pressure, albeit passive, exerted by the vast majority of a people who aspire, almost 70 years after the October Revolution, to a harvest of everyday, tangible benefits, to a better life." This was an important factor making for the transformations required by Soviet society. Andropov, the Spanish Communist noted, had been one of the first to "incorporate it explicitly in the political and economic debate through systematic opinion polls." Despite the brevity of his reign, some of his measures against corruption had imparted a stimulus to society similar to that

that prompted the criticism of the Stalinist era at an early stage of Khrushchev's rule. Now, the elimination of obstacles to a new historical stage in the Soviet Union would to a large extent depend on Gorbachev's ability to "stimulate and channel these social energies."

Need for Modernization. The need for modernization was another factor making for change:

Another focus for change is found among top scientists who have reached the conclusion--more through "professional requirements" than through political convictions--that the USSR could miss the boat of the technological revolution unless it adopts fundamental economic reforms in line with those introduced by Hungary and other CMEA countries, namely, decentralization, the establishment of a closer link between incomes and output, and a simultaneous stimulus to the market and to the workers' and production units' commitment to plan fulfillment.

Pressure for modernization and change would also come from other countries of the bloc, affected by the burden of the arms race and the shortcomings of Soviet agriculture and industry. Although the cohesion of the Warsaw Pact was clear when it came to the military confrontation with the West, Claret went on,

this does not alter the fact that the economic reforms that are taking place at present in the majority of these countries demand a similar trend in the Soviet Union. Even the political cohesion of the Eastern bloc demands that attention be paid more and more to consensus and less and less to coercive methods.

Despite these various pressures for change and greater participation by citizens in social and political life, however, there remained two obstacles that had paralyzed Soviet society.

[These are] the rigidity of the political structure and the pressure to which the USSR is subjected as a result of the bloc and rearmament policy. So far as the former issue is concerned, the basic question is how a one-party system can harmonize the growing diversity of interests emerging in a society as complex as that of the Soviet Union.

These political obstacles had blocked previous attempts at economic, social, or cultural reform in the Soviet Union. Claret thought, however, that the experience of other regimes, including the transformation now taking place in China, showed that "so long as the people desire greater flexibility and greater involvement in the making of political decisions, it is possible to take positive measures without this necessarily causing a collapse in the system." He was more pessimistic about what he called the international context, saying that he thought the best allies of the status quo in the Soviet Union were those

in the US administration who advocated extensive rearmament. Not all the variables that would determine the immediate future of the USSR were subject to Gorbachev's control. Much would depend, Claret concluded, on the capacity of all countries, including Spain, to "contribute factors of detente to the international situation."

"Ossified" Ideology. An Italian communist commentator, Massimo De Angelis, has made some similar points in an article⁷ on the Soviet Union on the 40th anniversary of V-E Day. In the closing section he noted that this anniversary coincided significantly with the opening of "the Gorbachev era." Foreign observers noting signs of a new dynamism were also able to talk of "the persistent slowness and the authoritarian hold of the regime over society." What was certain was that, if there was a widespread trust in the dispositions of the new leadership, there was at the same time a conviction that "a phase of modernization, linked with the technological leap that we in the West are also experiencing, has now become unavoidable and can no longer be put off."

It was, De Angelis went on, impossible to foresee what effects this process would have on the country's political and social system. On the one hand, elements of economic and social liberalization seemed to be largely essential to such a process of modernization. On the other hand, history had shown that "processes of restructuring of such dimensions carry with them grave risks of authoritarian control." Finally, there was the question of how such a process could develop in a regime based upon an official ideology:

What, then, can the ideological and cultural "cement" of such a new phase be? What relationship can be created between an official ideology that today appears ossified and the innovations that have become pragmatically necessary? This, too, is a question of no little weight.

His concluding point was much the same as Claret's. Of decisive importance, psychologically, culturally, and politically, would be the question of

whether that process can develop in a climate of progressive detente or one of increased hostility, whether the breezes of peace or the harsh winds of war will blow over the frontiers of the Soviet continent.

Transition Over. A French communist contribution to the speculation on the Gorbachev era came from Jean Radvanyi, a student of Soviet affairs, in an article⁸ in the PCF weekly. He saw Gorbachev's advent to power as the end of a period of transition marked by the brief reigns of Andropov and Chernenko but suggested that a "profound movement of change" among party officials had already been talking place during this period. Far from bringing stagnation or retrogression, it had been

characterized by the continuation or even acceleration of the changes taking place, for example, in agriculture, or their extension to new areas, such as secondary education.

At the same time, however, observation of Soviet society during this period of transition also yielded another, contrasting impression that had to be taken into account.

It is a complex blend of irritation and dissatisfaction in the face of the slowness of evolution in certain areas, or the lack of movement in other fields. Among consumers . . . this led to apathy and a mistrust of all official decisions.

Hence, the widespread judgment that "there must be a radical change in the system of planning and management."

What, then, would Gorbachev's concerns be as the new head of the regime? Radvanyi put in first place, "incontestably," the will "to maintain detente and East-West relations." He thought that Gorbachev's second major preoccupation would be the development of the economy through increased access to new technology. A third important theme would be ideology and culture, and here the French author noted laconically that "polls show that, after housing and health, access to a more diversified culture and more news now ranks among the major concerns of Soviet citizens."

Of absolutely decisive importance would be the development (or otherwise, one might interject) of political life:

Here, too, fairly open debates have marked the last three years. There is, for example, the question of redefining the respective roles of the party, the soviets, the ministries, and the trade unions. Despite some declarations of intent, the same criticism is being expressed: the ubiquitous role of the party, the Soviets' failure to exercise their institutional rights (but is it their fault?)

Behind these questions lay more crucial ones: the nature of the party's relationship with the masses and the role of different sectors in making and implementing decisions. The preparations for the next party congress, changes in the party statutes, and the work on a new party program could perhaps offer an opportunity to deal with these questions, Radvanyi suggested rather hesitantly.

Gorbachev, the French commentator concluded, had some important things in his favor:

Apart from his age and the personal dynamism that it implies, he is the rallying point for various grassroots movements that have recently expressed support for

innovations in various sectors of Soviet life. He can count on the support of numerous leaders who, whatever their age and their function, are aware that certain obligations must be met, that certain questions are on the agenda. At the same time, apart from the presence of those who hesitate and fear the uncertain effects of too profound changes, there is the weight of the accumulated delays in certain areas that makes all change at once more urgent and more difficult.

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- 1 Zdenek Mlynar, "My Fellow Student Mikhail Gorbachev," *l'Unita*, 9 April 1985. The article was also published in two parts in the Vienna newspaper *Kurier* of 19 and 20 April 1985.
- 2 Zdenek Mlynar, "A Chance--Not Only For the Soviet Union," *Wiener Tagebuch*, May 1985, pp. 8-11.
- 3 See RL 150, "Gorbachev's Anniversary Speech: Internal Aspects," 9 May 1985.
- 4 Claret was coauthor, with the communist veteran Simon Sanchez Montero, of the PCE Secretariat's reply to the recent collective letter in which Carrillo and 18 of his supporters in the Central Committee challenged the decision by the pro-Iglesias majority to expel them from the party leadership. Texts in *Mundo Obrero* (Madrid), 25 April-1 May 1985.
- 5 In a recent interview with the Yugoslav daily *Borba* (Belgrade), 18 April 1985, Iglesias linked the two challenges in saying that the pro-Soviet party "continues to exist, thanks to Carrillo. Ignacio Gallego's group has no future; but as long as confrontation exists within the PCE, this pro-Soviet faction will be sustained precisely by these quarrels."
- 6 A. Claret, "Something Stirring in the Soviet Union," *La Vanguardia* (Barcelona), 13 March 1985.
- 7 Massimo De Angelis, "That Memory Is Still Present," *Rinascita*, 4 May 1985.
- 8 Jean Radvanyi, "The End of a Transition," *Revolution* (Paris), 15 March 1985.

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