

PERESTROIKA, GLASNOST, AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: A Behavior Analysis

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ABSTRACT: Gorbachev's perestroika has altered the behavioral contingencies governing the responses of the Soviet people by instituting a dominant metacontingency intended to foster economic efficiency. The program consists of a domestic initiative, glasnost, and an international agenda of increased cooperation and interdependence. A behavior analysis of perestroika reveals that glasnost is an environmental program designed to teach controlling and countercontrolling skills while international cooperation is designed to maintain and increase the environmental resources necessary for sustaining high rates of productive behavior.

Perestroika is an economic policy that attempts to increase the efficiency of material production through "market socialism", the introduction of selected capitalistic economic relations within a foundation of social ownership of the natural resources and means of production. It thus establishes one dominant metacontingency (Glenn, 1988; see introduction to this section) with the desired cultural outcome of enhanced economic efficiency. The efficiency that is the goal of perestroika involves improved quality rather than quantity of goods, increased cost-effectiveness in production, and a reduction of resource consumption. Major political initiatives to achieve this goal include the implementation of price reforms, the alteration of the capital investment process, the development of new banking and credit systems, the utilization of emergent science and technology, the introduction of wholesale trade among suppliers, the establishment of a uniform tax rate on profits for all enterprises in a given industry, the imposition of direct responsibility for output on both management and labor, and the encouragement of some private enterprise and ownership. It is clear that "sub-metacontingencies" could be articulated for each of these innovations, but this would violate the spirit and intent of perestroika as an all-encompassing revolutionary program. Therefore, my analysis will simply focus on the primary metacontingency of *economic efficiency*.

The achievement of this cultural outcome is based on the simultaneous implementation of two broad policy initiatives. The first is *glasnost*, a domestic

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program designed to directly influence individual behavior through the establishment of new behavioral contingencies. The second is *international* cooperation, a foreign policy intended to permit the reallocation of resources from defense purposes to consumer ones and to expand the economic opportunities for efficient production.

GLASNOST

Glasnost, or openness, achieved visibility in the West long before anyone could pronounce perestroika. Glasnost encompasses efforts aimed at the democratization of all aspects of Soviet society. Western leaders, in typical self-righteous fashion, welcomed this initiative as belated acknowledgement by the Soviets that socialism cannot suppress the natural strivings of people to be free to enjoy Western rights, usually conceptualized as the individual political rights attendant to capitalistic democracies. To Western leaders, glasnost signified the death of socialism. The political brilliance of Gorbachev is evident in his decision to begin advertising the changes occurring in the Soviet Union in terms of glasnost: Western political leaders, having acquired a very limited repertoire of political behaviors, could only respond positively to such a policy. In reality, however, glasnost is a much more ambitious vision of democracy than simply Western-style political rights, though to be sure, variants of those are encompassed within it. *Glasnost is the behavioral foundation of perestroika*, in other words, the basis for the development of an efficient and effective socialism. Far from heralding the death of socialism, it signifies recognition that people must be directly involved in that which they own, that is, the country's resources. People must be able to emit controlling and countercontrolling responses within their environment so that effective discriminative stimuli are established, and potent reinforcers are selected, from the pool of stimuli available for use in contingent relationships with socially desired responses. Aganbegyan, a leading economist and architect of perestroika, said it this way:

It must be noted that in contemporary society the role of the individual has greatly increased, as the basic force of production and the conduit through which these productive forces are developing. With the scientific and technological revolution the creative potential of individuals has begun to play a key role...In these conditions a great deal more depends on a worker's qualifications and attitude to work than before when technical levels were much lower. Also, contemporary production is collective in character. People...work in a single production system. Therefore failure in one place, inadequate organization and bad coordination of work, lead immediately to loss in pace and efficiency (1988, p 195).

Thus, workers must acquire advanced skills, emit them competently, and evidence constructive attitudes toward work.

Behavior analysts recognize that such outcomes are a function of behavior that produces contingent positive and negative reinforcement. While Western

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leaders cheer glasnost as a triumph of Western values, its significance for Soviet citizens lies in its hypothesized lawful relationship to an improved socialist economy. Glasnost, in actuality, establishes conditions that presumably will prompt a wide variety of behaviors intended to influence the work, social, and political environment in ways that produce tangible reinforcers, thus increasing the individual's investment in the smooth functioning of the society. Two general areas are targeted for democratization: the workplace and the social-political environment.

The problem in the workplace in a socialist economy is that individual responsibility for, and involvement in, productive behavior is often decreased by the communal contingencies and bureaucratically mandated rule-governed behaviors that are characteristic of centrally planned economies (Rakos, 1988b, 1989, in press). Worker self-management is, therefore, a critical element of democratic socialism, in fact, "the most important means of strengthening the feeling of ownership, so that the workers themselves feel that they are in charge of the socialist property allotted to the collective, something that is theirs and not someone else's" (Aganbegyan, 1988, p. 197).

Feelings, such as "feelings of ownership", are understood by behavior analysts to be the by-products of consequences produced contingently by behavior. In their own terms, Soviet leaders well recognize this, and have implemented contingencies designed to reinforce active involvement in the workplace. Material incentives and the allocation of some public property to enterprises and collectives are important mechanisms (see below), yet these widely publicized perestroika reforms are themselves founded in glasnost, given that their effectiveness is "indivisibly bound up with the efficient use of socialist property" (Aganbegyan, 1988, p. 196). Moreover, socialist property can only be used efficiently when the workers themselves have primary control over the communal resources.

Thus, worker self-management has been prompted by the Law on Socialist Enterprises, passed in 1987 (Aganbegyan, 1988). The enterprise now must develop its own plans, goals, and implementation procedures without approval of higher authorities. It determines how its income will be utilized for technological research and development, social projects, and worker incentives. The democratic process as Westerners understand it is employed for an unfamiliar effect: working collectives elect, via contested elections and secret ballot, managers at several levels to represent their interests to the entire enterprise. The development program of an enterprise is, therefore, a relatively direct function of worker input. The Soviet Union has already experienced this process of worker self-management in several hundred enterprises:

Success is assured whenever this is carried out not as a mere formality, but where competition is guaranteed, where time is given and conditions are created for the preparation of imaginative programmes of development for the working collective, and where people really feel they are participating in the advancement of their enterprise at the management level (Aganbegyan, 1988, p. 199).

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It is clear that this form of organization bears little resemblance to the former "command" plans delivered from central ministries. It is also apparent that such conditions will prompt and reinforce very different behaviors. Further, as Gorbachev (1987) notes, it is the necessary accompaniment of the shift from what have been called "administrative methods" (centrally issued production directives) to "full cost-accounting", or economic (bottom line, profit) management. Full cost-accounting will be discussed later, but Gorbachev makes it clear that a society can only expect its members to bear the responsibility for the bottom line if it confers on its members the right to self-manage. And conversely, the right to self-manage legitimizes the establishment of bottom-line criteria. In Gorbachev's view, one cannot exist without the other in a just society.

Glasnost in social and political spheres cannot be separated from democratization in the workplace, according to Aganbegyan (1988). This is because people must participate in all levels of society so that they then feel that they have a stake in it. Individuals must be able to emit countercontrolling responses, be they at the ballot box, in the mass media, or in the street. They must be informed of the complexities of the situations that they face, exposed to criticism and counterarguments, and taught to engage in self-criticism. Glasnost in this context is partly a pragmatic recognition that information in the post-modern environment cannot effectively be restricted by what media technology renders as arbitrary geographic and political boundaries (Rakos, 1988b, 1989, in press). The new contingencies have already dramatically altered the behavior of Soviet citizens. Verbal and written expression on social and political topics has increased in frequency and diversity (Hochschild, 1989; Vanden Heuvel, 1989), and countercontrolling responses at the ballot box have been prompted and reinforced (Singer, 1989).

What, then, in behavior analytic terms, does glasnost do? It provides the instructional stimuli (see Cerutti, 1989) that promote controlling and countercontrolling responses, which in turn, also as a function of glasnost, now produce a variety of positive reinforcers. These reinforcers will, presumably, maintain the involved behavior at a high frequency, produce associated feelings of "social investment", and then prompt additional constructive behavior, such as increased verbal expression or high quality labor. If sufficient tangible reinforcement is acquired through this interactive process, it is likely that the concept *socialism* will become itself a conditioned reinforcer, a status it frequently fails to achieve (cf. Rakos, 1988b, 1989, in press). When productive behavior is partly under the control of such an abstract value, socialism partially will have achieved its goal of influencing behavior through so-called "moral incentives". But clearly, moral incentives can only be conditioned through direct experience with material and social reinforcers, not through the proclamation of various rules, such as slogans and propaganda.

The success of glasnost is critical, in more ways than one, for the success

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of perestroika. There is significant resistance on the part of the elite and the privileged to fundamental change (Gorbachev, 1987; Lamal, 1991), and Gorbachev will need massive popular support to push his program forward. The behaviors that are promoted under glasnost are likely to enhance Gorbachev's popularity, that is, to increase his potency as a conditioned reinforcing stimulus. This is, as Gorbachev (1987) emphasizes, a revolution initiated from above but sustained from below.

Glasnost also is essential for the success of a key reform of perestroika, the replacement of administrative methods of management by economic ones. The command economy, central allocation of resources, and emphasis on quantity of output resulted in manufacturers who produced obsolete and poor quality merchandise and who failed to be responsive to consumer demand while stockpiling unwanted goods (Aganbegyan, 1988). Bureaucratic control resisted change that would have widespread benefits but would be disadvantageous to a sub-group such as a ministry. Technology, which provides delayed benefits due to necessary preliminary investment, research, and development efforts, was underutilized and resources squandered in an attempt to boost immediate quantity of output. Efficiency was meaningless: an enterprise that lost money or produced useless goods was bailed out by the state, and workers got paid independently of quantity and quality of output (Lamal, 1991). The result of these factors was a society rigidly entrenched in a cycle of ubiquitous shortages of desired goods combined with lackadaisical management and a poorly motivated work force. Money, under such circumstances, ceases to function as a reinforcer: there is little to spend it on. Consequently, work also ceases to have much value, even if it was contingently related to the acquisition of money.

Perestroika is intended to eliminate these stable counterproductive behavioral contingencies and replace them with new ones. Through glasnost, it is reengineering the entire functional relationship between an individual's work behavior and his or her environment. The first, most urgent, priority is to change agricultural and manufacturing behaviors of all involved persons so that ample quantities of high quality, desirable products are available to both industrial and personal consumers (Aganbegyan, 1988). This goal cannot be accomplished without the strengthening of glasnost behaviors, because there has to be a replacement for the directives previously issued through central ministries. The myriad of these economic reform policies are all interwoven and interdependent, as a careful reading of Aganbegyan (1988) makes clear. But in essence, glasnost is principally a shift from rule-governed behavior to contingency-shaped behavior. Effective compliance with externally imposed rules requires the development of a limited and perhaps rigid set of responses (Hayes, Brownstein, Zettle, Rosenfarb, & Korn, 1986). Efficient adaptation to direct contingencies in an environment that contains a variety of potential reinforcers, on the other hand, requires a much broader behavioral repertoire, because the contingent consequences of behavior alter the environment

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in less predictable ways and thereby provide a wider variety of potential discriminative stimuli to guide further responding. Thus, the policies of perestroika demand that the individual develop a sophisticated repertoire of behaviors that will influence a relatively rapidly changing environment. These controlling responses are to be developed through the contingencies established by glasnost, several examples of which are detailed below.

The economic management system of full cost-accounting, under which enterprises are responsible for making a profit, will require glasnost-developed competencies because the workers will need to emit self-management skills in the wholesale acquisition of supplies, in the selection of production items, and in the allocation of resources. If output is to be sold to make a profit, effective responses to consumer demand and efficient use of resources, technology, and labor will be essential.

Consumer demand for a variety of quality goods will be partially discriminated through the feedback mechanisms of the market economy, but it may also be discerned through the behaviors prompted by glasnost: verbal and nonverbal expressions of discontent and desires can provide rules and other discriminative stimuli by which to guide production decisions.

The efficient use of resources must replace the previous method utilized to increase the quantity of output -- to simply increase both the consumption of resources and the number of workers employed to produce more of the same undesired product (Lamal, 1991). Efficiency presumably will be increased partly by permitting the costs of resources to more accurately reflect their value (Aganbegyan, 1988), thus enhancing their reinforcing properties. But resources should also be conserved through scientific and technological innovation and high quality labor. Technological application, in turn, should be fostered by efficient and organized management and a shift to investment policies that take a long term view of profitability rather than a short term focus on quantity. The determination of how much, and in what, to invest would become partly a function of worker self-management. Furthermore, worker efficiency would be necessary to implement technological innovation: workers with higher education, skill, initiative, and discipline would be required to operate new and complicated machinery and computers. Such worker behaviors could be shaped by the reinforcers produced by participation in the general decision-making process (i.e., self-management) as well as by material incentives, which now are contingently related to quality of work output by full cost-accounting. Even material incentives involve self-management in that each enterprise determines what proportion of its earnings will be reserved for such use (Aganbegyan, 1988).

Thus, as Aganbegyan (1988) outlines, the daily operation of the enterprise would be solely the responsibility of the workers and their elected managers. Some guidelines and constraints are still imposed by the government, but these are now restricted to functions that are national in scope or to major long-term projects that

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can only be accomplished by governmental bodies. Yet even governmental functions are to be affected by perestroika. And here too, glasnost is projected to play a major role -- in fact, two roles.

First, regional authorities, who in the past exploited enterprises for their own gain, now will be dependent upon them: local governments will be funded by a portion of the profits earned by the enterprises within the region, in exchange for use of the local resources such as land and labor. Therefore, the income for the local council will be a function of the efficiency of its enterprises, which as just discussed, is dependent upon glasnost.

Second, as Aganbegyan (1988) observes, this arrangement provides local authorities with many opportunities for the creative encouragement of economic and social development in their region. To date, a few isolated local councils have implemented innovative programs designed to protect the environment, stimulate housing construction, improve nutrition, and increase the supply of goods in shops. But as Aganbegyan notes, many local authorities do little due to the bureaucratic control and lack of a fully developed democracy. When citizens learn how to emit countercontrolling responses, the creative problem-solving behavior of local officials -- including trial and error, generalized, and imitative responses -- will be prompted and then shaped. For local government spending, as with its income, glasnost is thus the underpinning for the reinforcement potential of perestroika. Gorbachev (1987) and Aganbegyan (1988) acknowledge that in the past centralism was given priority over democracy. Now, it is clear that democracy must be the primary consideration.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Perestroika also requires the implementation of the second major policy initiative mentioned earlier, that of international cooperation. Gorbachev (1987) emphasizes that peace is not only a necessity for *social existence* in a nuclear age, it is also a necessity for *social progress*. Clearly, the Soviet Union's political isolation from capitalistic states has impeded its economic development in at least two ways.

First, significant resources have been allocated to armament production, which of necessity reduces investment in consumer goods production. Thus, a policy of arms control and reduction will free copious resources for programs to meet domestic social needs (Aganbegyan, 1988). While the Soviet Union still will maintain adequate defensive systems, it has embarked on numerous unilateral, as well as bilateral, efforts to reduce such socially nonproductive resource consumption. For example, the Intermediate-range Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty was negotiated with the U.S. in December 1987, and the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan was completed on February 15, 1989.

Second, Gorbachev (1987) is clearly aware that the global environment is

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an interdependent one that will require international collaboration for the maximization of reinforcers, that is, the production of consumer goods. On the negative side, threats to the integrity of the environment must be contained and eliminated so that essential resources such as clean air and water are still available in the future. Because the effects of nuclear war and pollution do not adhere to political boundaries, this problem can only be solved by international cooperation. Moreover, the Soviet Union needs to become an active participant in global commerce if it is to achieve economic efficiency. It needs to increase exports and imports of both goods and technology, and to form partnerships with foreign production units that will expand its income potential. Aganbegyan (1988) stresses that increased international cooperation will not compromise the Soviet Union's ability to provide for its own defense, even if most of its initiatives are unilateral. On the contrary, he states that a more efficient economy will also produce a more efficient defense industry.

In behavioral terms, international cooperation is intended to provide the environmental resources -- hard currency, raw materials, scientific knowledge, technological sophistication -- that will enable individual citizens to emit efficient work behavior that produces desired, high quality consumer and social goods. Thus, international cooperation too is critical for perestroika, for without appropriate environmental stimuli, new work behaviors will not be prompted and hence will have no opportunity to be shaped and reinforced. International cooperation will also provide the conditions that contribute to the maintenance of efficient work behavior through the provision of additional material reinforcers in the form of imported goods. Finally, international cooperation has the long-range goal of establishing an environment that can continue to provide reinforcers through the maintenance of peace, the conservation of the world's resources, and the stabilization of the earth's fragile ecological balance. The increase in environmentally responsible behaviors is in actuality one of negative reinforcement -- the avoidance of aversive conditions. As with all delayed reinforcers, powerful control over behavior will require the imposition of rules and more proximate, short-term consequences to guide behavior in the interim. But Gorbachev correctly understands that these conditions must be imposed by all industrial nations, since the global long-term consequences will be a function of the policies of all these states.

CONCLUSION

Perestroika, which establishes the metacontingency of efficient economic production, requires two foundations. Glasnost is intended to prompt and reinforce the self-management skills and controlling responses that are either prerequisite behaviors to, or component responses of, efficient work behavior. International cooperation is designed to provide the environmental resources necessary for such efficient behavior.

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Perestroika constitutes a large scale behavior analytic experiment. Its success or failure will be evident by objective criteria, primarily economic ones. But the evaluation of economic data must be made from a perspective that recognizes that the democratic values motivating perestroika differ qualitatively from those operating in capitalistic countries. In the Soviet Union under perestroika, democracy is a means toward an end -- social justice. In the United States, democracy is an end in and of itself: the right to emit a wide variety of behaviors *without* state-imposed constraints in the pursuit of valued reinforcers. To be sure, democracy in the U.S. has major flaws, such as the inability of citizens to emit effective countercontrolling responses that force the shift of resources from arms production to the amelioration of social problems and to the provision of social needs. Further, it is clearly constrained by the dominant influence of multinational corporations.

The conception of rights in the two countries, therefore, is distinctly different. The Soviet Union places democracy within a broad social context while the U.S. foundation is a deified individualism. In the U.S., those persons with the skills and environmental resources can acquire material goods in continually increasing number and variety. But the flaws of this system are documented well. State-imposed constraints on behavior have been supplanted by the powerful control exerted by multinational corporations, which influence behavior without the obvious aversive contingencies that prompt avoidance and countercontrol responses. Consequently, the political process is compromised and "free" only to a limited extent. Further, obvious social costs are borne by those lacking the skills and resources that are essential to the maintenance and growth of the corporate culture: homelessness, unemployment, poverty, malnourishment, infant mortality, illiteracy. Clearly, the U.S. conception of democratic rights is focused narrowly on economic behavior, and secondarily, on limited political behavior. Obviously missing is an overriding concern with basic human rights. The Soviet Union, through perestroika, is attempting to foster democratic rights without sacrificing human rights. Perestroika is a grand experiment, and as always, history will determine which conception of rights has the greatest survival value.

POSTSCRIPT

Events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union continue to move at a rapid and accelerating pace. As this article goes to press, it appears that nationalist pressures and demands for a Western-style democracy and free market will force Gorbachev to significantly modify and perhaps even abandon his ambitious vision of perestroika (e.g., Cooperman, 1990). I leave it to the reader to decide whether the perestroika experiment failed or whether circumstances failed to provide a fair test of its propositions. Either way, the apparent preference of Soviet citizens for the Western political and economic system does not leave me sanguine that such

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relations possess sufficient survival value to meet the global challenges of the twenty first century.

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