TITLE: MOSES'S WAR MEMORIAL: 
THE STORY OF A NATIONAL SYMBOL

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My Final Report is a draft of the fourth chapter of my book, *Russia Remembers the War: The Soviet Memorialization of World War II*. The report tells the story of the national monument to the victory of the Soviet people in the "Great Patriotic War," a monument that has been in the planning stage for more than thirty years. I was drawn into the subject because war memorials are the most powerfully evocative symbols commemorating the Soviet victors and victims of the Second World War. Why, I wondered, has the USSR's central war memorial never been built? How have the Soviet people felt about their country's main memorial complexes -- the cathedrals of the organized reverence for an idealized memory of the Soviet wartime ordeal -- and what does this tell us about how they view their past? What does a close study of one major monument reveal about the behind-the-scenes production of officially sponsored political symbols? In particular, how have the recent calls for *glasnost* (public criticism) and *demokratizatsiia* (popular input into many areas of public life) affected the sphere of culture? I found that through the seemingly narrow prism of a fantasy war memorial I was able to unearth a dramatic story with a long and strange history of dreams, plans, competitions, personal rivalries, bureaucratic inertia, wounded egos, and delusions of grandeur. It spans almost a half-century and provides a case study in the politics and economics of culture in the USSR.
The ritualized remembrance of the dead is a powerful component of Soviet spiritual life. And with more than twenty million dead in the Second World War it is no wonder that war memorials should tug at the heartstrings of a bereaved nation. Even young people who appear unmoved by self-congratulatory stories of wartime exploits will exhibit appropriate affect at war memorials. Soviet people tend to welcome the savoring of intense emotions and (unlike Americans) do not look for ways to shield themselves from experiencing grief. This propensity in part explains the success of even the clumsiest monument to fallen fighters, at which one can invariably find solemn visitors bearing small bouquets of flowers.

A peculiar characteristic of the memorialization of the "Great Patriotic War" has been its decentralized quality. Compared, for example, to the Lenin cult, which has a central shrine in the Lenin Mausoleum, the commemoration of the war has tens of thousands of local shrines but no national one. During the very last years of Leonid Brezhnev's tenure as General Secretary of the Central Committee, an effort was made to centralize the symbols and rituals celebrating the war's victory and human losses. One indication was the 1985 commemoration of the victory (planned under Brezhnev, Andropov, or Chernenko) which was a centrally organized propaganda extravaganza culminating in the first Victory Day military parade held in Moscow since the original one that filed through Red Square in 1945. The other centralizing focus was the decision to revive a plan, dormant
since the mid-sixties, to build on Moscow's Poklonnaia Hill a memorial to the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War. Both of these efforts were part of an attempt to exploit Russian emotionalism and an enormous store of real past suffering in order to bolster the legitimacy of the Communist Party at a time when its credibility could hardly have been lower.

The attempt was badly mistimed. By the time the fortieth anniversary was celebrated and the ground was broken for the monument, Mikhail Gorbachev had assumed the post of General Secretary. His campaign of glasnost' ran exactly counter to the spirit of brittle centralization of his predecessors. During the nearly twenty years of Brezhnev's rule, the construction of war memorials had turned into an immensely lucrative business riddled by corruption and run by cronyism. At the same time, the General Secretary, evidently eager to bolster his own prestige by inflating his personal wartime history, visibly linked himself with the erection of costly and flamboyant memorial complexes in many parts of the Soviet Union. The commission for the enormously expensive architectural and sculptural ensemble on Poklonnaia Hill was for a long time the object of infighting within a small community of influential artists. Finally, not long before Brezhnev's death, a knot of powerful architects and sculptors won the coveted commission, but their creative efforts were stifled by Brezhnev's ally Victor Grishin, a powerful and feared Moscow bureaucrat. For Grishin, who was ousted not long after the accession to power of Mikhail Gorbachev, the monument was
primarily a tribute to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—and to himself.

By the summer of 1986 a maelstrom fueled by both popular initiative and personal intrigue erupted around the planned monument. Its story had turned into a case study of how the broadly publicized campaigns for glasnost' and demokratizatsia were actually functioning. Powerful individuals tried to rally around the banner of glasnost' to mobilize public support for projects they had dreamed up, only to find themselves the victims of the critical process that they had begun. In particular, A. Polianskii, head of the national Union of Architects and chief architect of the memorial complex sponsored by Grishin, tried to use the glasnost' mood to inspire public attacks on the proposed main monument, which he thought was ruining his architectural design. But in the end the criticisms destroyed Polianskii's whole complex and lost him his exalted position. For more than a year beginning with the summer of 1986 the national monument on Poklonnaia Hill was the subject of a passionate public debate. The open discussion of what was to be a cathedral to the national spirit evoked intense populist feelings in a public unused to the privilege of appropriating its own symbols, and even more important, its own dramatic past. Suddenly Soviet citizens were saying, it's our past, and our money, why are they making all the big decisions?

To dismiss this recent open public debate as being "merely" about culture and history is very wrong. The Soviet people care
very much about their past and about their cultural heritage. Many of them doubtless believe -- together with Mr. Gorbachev -- that the Soviet Union will not truly progress until it confronts its own past. Along with Stalin, whose depiction is currently being revamped, the Great Patriotic War is the pivotal event of the Soviet past. The victory over the nazis remains the Soviet Union's greatest success, and the twenty million war dead represent an aggregate of suffering on which the Communist Party and Soviet government have made many claims during the near half-century that has elapsed since the war's end. The saga of the war is the great legitimizing myth that the Communist Party calls upon again and again to demonstrate its superior capabilities, to provide moral exemplars for today's cynical and apathetic populace, to bolster national pride, to provide a vision of a powerfully united nation, to inspire respect for the Soviet armed forces, to demonstrate the superiority of a socialist economy, to legitimize foreign policy positions. In addition, the official remembrance of the war must, in some measure, represent a real attempt on the part of Soviet authorities and their supporters to grapple with the political, cultural and psychological impact of a collective experience that was a national trauma of monumental proportions.

My policy recommendation is that our high level officials--including the President when he visits Moscow for the next summit--take very seriously the meaning stored in Soviet war memorials and more generally in the official remembrance of the Second World War. Mr. Reagan must lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown
Soldier, and both he and his deputies should take advantage of every opportunity to pay ritualized homage to the Soviet experience in the war. It will cost us nothing and buy us much goodwill.
In the western part of Moscow, along the old Smolensk Road, there once stood a hill, called Poklonnaia Gora, Hill of Prostrations. From its grassy height travellers and pilgrims approaching Moscow from the west first caught sight of the magnificent panorama of the "city of churches." Seeing the hundreds of gleaming golden domes, they would prostrate themselves in reverence.

The city's most unwelcome visitor, Napoleon Bonaparte, came upon this hill on Monday, September 2, 1812. At the time it was four miles from the gates of Moscow. Witnesses report that he and his officers were stunned by the city's beauty and size.1 Most Russians know of Napoleon's encounter with Poklonnaia Hill from Tolstoy's War and Peace. First we see General Kutuzov, commander of the Russian forces, approach the hill, dismount, and convene a council of war during which he lets his officers babble on to each other about possible strategies for battle, while he himself ponders deeply and concludes that the city will have to be abandoned to the French. Then, five days later, fresh from his Pyrrhic victory at Borodino, Napoleon appears with his troops. "A town occupied by the enemy is like a maid who has lost her honor," he thinks to himself as he gazes greedily upon the city whose countless

1Istoriia Moskvy: Period razlozhenija krepostnogo stroia (Moscow, 1954) p. 100.
cupolas are "twinkling like stars" in the early autumn sunlight. He sends his adjutants galloping off to Moscow to fetch the boyars who will enact the formal surrender of the city. While awaiting the deputation, he strolls back and forth along the hill, composing in his mind the dignified and magnanimous speech he will make to the vanquished boyars. But none are found by the French officers. The emperor, impatient and irritated, rides off towards the city only to find it empty and in flames. This marks the beginning of his defeat.

When I visited Poklonnaia Hill on June 11, 1987, I saw only a low plateau on which reposed a nearly completed curved building and a vast expanse of mud and rubble, punctuated with piles of concrete slabs and idle construction machinery. The hill was gone, and the only reminder of Kutuzov and Napoleon was the classical Arch of Triumph stretching elegantly over the adjacent Kutuzovsky Prospekt. I had come because the newly constructed building is intended to be Moscow's only museum dedicated to the Second World War, and the large swath of land before it has for three decades been earmarked as the site for the Soviet Union's central monument to the Victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War.

That monument -- which is still in the planning stage -- has a long and strange history of dreams, plans, competitions, personal rivalries, bureaucratic inertia, wounded egos, rumors, and delusions of grandeur. It spans almost a half-century and provides a case study in the politics and economics of culture in the USSR. The earliest period is the most poignant: during and just after the war, architects in a country crippled by a decade of mass terror and war, equipped with
scant spiritual resources after twenty years of militant anti-religious propaganda, were impelled to honor their war dead by designing elaborate memorials that would never be built. During Khrushchev's tenure in the late fifties the architectural commemoration of the war began in earnest. As part of his famed de-Stalinization campaign, the First Secretary both revived a cult of Lenin that had long since been eclipsed by the organized adulation of Stalin and sponsored the construction of war memorials, at least in part to tap The Founding Father and The Great Patriotic War as alternate sources of legitimacy to fill the vacuum left by Stalin. He renewed plans, dormant since 1925, to build a grand Palace of Soviets to honor Lenin's memory. In addition, under Khrushchev's tutelage, the Council of Ministers first announced plans to construct, on Poklonnaia Hill, a national monument to the victory. The ensuing events were perfectly characteristic of the Khrushchev years: the architectural competition stirred the creative imagination of the artistic community, but what started out as an open contest ended in intrigue and scandal. During the nearly twenty years of Brezhnev's rule, the construction of war memorials turned into an immensely lucrative business riddled by corruption and run by cronyism. At the same time, the General Secretary, evidently eager to bolster his own prestige by inflating his personal wartime history, visibly linked himself with the erection of costly and flamboyant memorial complexes in many parts of the Soviet Union. The commission for the architectural and sculptural ensemble on Poklonnaia Hill was for a long time the object of infighting within the "supermafia" that dominated the
artistic community. The government collected from the public an enormous sum of money for its construction. Finally, not long before Brezhnev's death, a knot of powerful architects and sculptors won the coveted commission, but their creative efforts were stifled by Brezhnev's ally Victor Grishin, a powerful and feared Moscow bureaucrat. Grishin was ousted not long after the accession to power of Mikhail Gorbachev.

By the summer of 1986 a maelstrom fueled by both popular initiative and personal intrigue erupted around the planned monument. Its story had turned into a case study of how the broadly publicized campaigns for glasnost' (public criticism) and demokratizatsia (democratization) were actually functioning. Powerful individuals tried to rally around the banner of glasnost' to mobilize public support for projects they had dreamed up, only to find themselves the victims of the critical process that they had begun. The clashes and deadlocks that have blocked the realization of the Soviet Union's main monument to the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War reveal the stored emotions that make war memorials the most powerful of all evocative symbols commemorating the Soviet experience in World War II.

The impulse to commemorate military victory by building some sort of shrine is as old and as widespread as human civilization itself. Indeed, it is surely a mark of civilization, and decidedly a secondary,

2"Supermafia" is a term coined by emigre sculptor Ernst Neizvestny.
refined form of activity. More primal is the propensity to celebrate victory by, say, eating the heart of a slain enemy chieftain, or by making a drinking chalice out of his skull, as did the chief of the Pecheneg tribe after killing Sviatoslav, tenth-century prince of Kiev. Similarly, when Tamerlane celebrated his conquest of Delhi in the fourteenth century by ordering the construction of a mound made up of 30,000 enemy skulls, he was designing a most primitive war memorial. In the Soviet commemoration of victory over the Germans, the most primal of all rituals occurred on June 24, 1945. On that rainy day a giant military parade filed through Red Square. Stalin stood on top of the Lenin Mausoleum together with old Civil War generals like Budenny, and with other marshals reviewed the victorious troops as they marched triumphantly through the square. The highlight of the parade occurred when hundreds of soldiers bearing fascist banners attached to iron poles decorated with swastikas rushed forward, and flung those banners at the foot of the mausoleum. With that gesture, those men were laying symbolic enemy skulls at the feet of their leader and at the tomb of their founding father. They were demonstrating to all the viewers that the Nazis had been completely vanquished by their conquerors. These most primitive rituals and symbolic objects celebrate no more than the death of the vanquished and the continued life and power of the victors.

The building of war memorials or shrines is a step removed from such primary activities. For one thing, a shrine is typically not

3One of Tamerlane’s skull mounds is the subject of a famous painting displayed in Moscow’s Tretiakov Gallery, "Apotheosis of War," (1871) by Vasilii Vereshchagin.
constructed out of the enemy himself -- out of his heart or head or the banner he held -- although it may incorporate symbolic enemy objects. A shrine or memorial is intended to convey more than the simple message, "we live; they are dead." Even if a shrine is nothing but a pile of stones or a bundle of spears, it is meant to last into the future and is made of a material more durable than skulls or fabric. It is meant to show those who were not present at the moment of victory that a significant act had occurred. In the most primitive tribal village, women and children could look upon such a shrine and be reminded of a story they had heard about time and time again. A shrine or memorial is also intended to convey gratitude to a god or gods for their role in the victory, whether such gratitude is genuine or is merely expressed in order to placate a vengeful deity who might have easily allowed the battle or war to go the other way. Quite possibly, even the most elementary kind of memorial is meant not only to celebrate military victory, but simultaneously to mourn the lives of those killed in the effort. Surely for the wives, mothers, daughters and sisters of the fallen, such shrines are mourning places, even if the men who call for and build them intend for them to be purely triumphal.

A simple cairn will do as a memorial if everyone in the vicinity knows about the battle it is meant to commemorate. The piled stones serve as a reminder, or as a prod to inspire children or newcomers to ask the older generation about the marked event. Such a memorial of stones or sticks is dependent on living people to tell the story. The next level of monument is one that is self-contained and independent, one that tells the battle story, usually in the form of paintings or
sculptures or bas-reliefs. These appear on many classical monuments, such as Titus' Arch of Triumph in Rome. Such a memorial can stand for centuries, displaying to generations of visitors the saga of trial and triumph.

A further refinement in the evolution of war memorials is a shrine that is built not only to mark a victory and to tell its story, but also to serve as the locus of ritual acts honoring those persons who are deemed responsible for the victory, and paying obeisance to the deity. Such acts can be simple and uniform: at Tokyo’s Yasakuni Shrine, a memorial to those Japanese who have died in wars since the late nineteenth century, visitors approach the main shrine, throw a coin into a grate, clap twice and then bow to summon the spirits of the dead. Or such rituals can be more elaborate: at the Valle de los Caídos, the Valley of the Fallen, the memorial to the victims of the Spanish Civil war, visitors must travel to a mountaintop located at Spain’s exact geographical center, and there they enter the largest basilica in the world to hear a complete Catholic Mass.

What sort of shrine is a Soviet memorial to World War II? Is it primitive or refined, simple or complex? Does it herald a triumph or mourn the dead? Does it tell a story, serve as the focus of ritual acts? Are these rituals modest or ostentatious? What functions are served by a local obelisk or other monument to the Great Patriotic War?

There are tens of thousands of war memorials in the Soviet Union of all types ranging from some exhibited wartime relic -- such as a tank or even a soldier’s helmet accompanied by an identifying plaque --
to the most extravagant "memorial ensembles" built in the 1960s and 1970s. All Soviet war memorials are most importantly places of mourning. On Victory Day, and on many other days as well, they all are draped with the simple bouquets of flowers, often wilting in plastic wrappers, that are sold everywhere in the Soviet Union. The laying of flowers is the one universal act of paying respects to the dead that is ubiquitous in Soviet culture. No one, for example, would dream of attending a Soviet funeral without bringing flowers, for in an atheistic service, the only ritual act required of all participants is the silent laying of flowers on the coffin of the deceased. It is likewise customary for people visiting a grave to place flowers onto it. The laying of those little bouquets is the Russian counterpart to the Japanese custom of throwing a coin, clapping twice and bowing. With so many dead and unaccounted for in the war, some relatives lay flowers on a war memorial or unknown soldier's tomb simply because there are no graves for their loved ones. In that sense, the memorial is also a place intended for the ritual act of flower-laying. Also, a large proportion of memorials include an eternal flame. Often this is a spot that people approach in silence before putting down their flowers. At some of the larger memorials these flames are guarded by rifle-bearing youngsters who enact a slow and solemn changing of the guard every hour. Even the most modest memorial that features an eternal flame will post some type of honor guard on Victory Day. I recall a clumsy but correct little monument on a large collective farm in the Ukraine. It had all the classic components of a Soviet war memorial, and no imagination whatever. On a neat, grassy knoll planted with flowers
reposed a stone wall on which were engraved the names of farm members who had died in the war, and the words, "Glory to the heroes who fell for the freedom of our Motherland." To the pedestal of a grey, square-topped obelisk there adhered a dark green metal wreath that from a distance looked like a used automobile tire. On the other side of the pedestal there burned a lonely eternal flame in a five-pointed star. One of the farm directors explained to me that the adolescents in the community were busy at school and at work, but that on May 9 some of them had formed a splendid honor guard.

Only a tiny number of youngsters are given the by and large unwelcome opportunity to serve as honor guards at war memorials. Most children and adolescents experience war monuments and memorials on organized outings sponsored by schools, summer camps, or Communist Party organizations, such as the Pioneers. I have seen them at virtually every memorial I have visited: packs of schoolchildren trotting along hand in hand, standing in silence at the eternal flame while their teacher or director delivers some emotional remarks about the war dead, and listening with palpably vacant obedience to battle stories while clustered in front of bas-reliefs of resolute men and industrious women. Children also accompany their parents or grandparents on ceremonial visits to war memorials. On Victory Day it is common to see many small children, each clutching a bunch of wrapped tulips in one hand, while the other hand clasps that of a bemedalled veteran grandmother or grandfather.

For many young adults in the Soviet Union, the local monument to World War II becomes a significant locus of ritual on their wedding
day. In the past twenty or so years, since the opening of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow, it has become customary for newlywed couples to make a stop at their nearest significant war memorial immediately after the registry of their marriage but before the wedding reception. In Moscow the traditional stop is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Out of gaily festooned taxis or private cars parked before the intricate wrought iron gate of the Alexander Garden there emerge flushed bridegrooms and brides resplendent in gauzy white dresses and kitschy veils. Always accompanied by camera-wielding relatives, they lay flowers near the eternal flame. Then they return to their cars and drive off to celebrate their weddings. Officials who register marriages generally remind couples to pay their respects at the local war memorial, and certain categories of newlyweds such as active Komsomol members doubtless feel they must be seen laying a bouquet. But the custom of newlyweds placing bridal bouquets at war memorials must be viewed as ritual enacted voluntarily. Like the Jewish custom of the bridegroom crushing a glass at the end of his wedding ceremony to commemorate the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the Soviet rite is meant to solemnize youth's happiest moment by taking out time to remember the bitterest chapter of a people's history. It is meant to inspire a sense of obligation to parents and grandparents at precisely the moment when young people are making their statement of independence by getting married. (It is likely that in the USSR marriage marks less of a parental separation since newlyweds usually move in with one set of parents).
The Soviet war memorial definitely serves as a place of military ritual. I have frequently seen groups of men in uniform making what is obviously a ceremonial visit to a memorial. On my first trip to Leningrad's Piskarevskoe cemetery, whose grassy expanse covers the remains of hundreds of thousands of siege victims, I watched a cluster of stalwart army officers stand at attention in front of the eternal flame located near the entrance, and then lay flowers at the feet of the stately and feminine Motherland statue. With this public act the living warriors honored their dead comrades and other victims of the ordeal. Another rite that even more dramatically links past suffering with present resolve is the initiation of soldiers into the Soviet army. The recruits line up at a given war memorial and one by one they step up to the eternal flame and swear an oath of allegiance to the precepts of the army. A striking painting displayed on the penultimate page of the big, glossy volume commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the victory is called "Oath of Allegiance," and portrays a fresh-faced Candide in Soviet Army uniform holding an AK 47 automatic rifle in one hand and a small red book in the other. His boots gleam with the reflection of an eternal flame leaping out of a five-pointed star before which he stands at attention, gazing ahead with a sweetly vacant stare. Three rifle-bearing comrades await their turns to make their pledges.4

For some selected young people, then, war memorials are sites for the enactment of rituals meant at best to establish and at least to

demonstrate bonds with the mythic heroes and martyrs of the Great Patriotic War. For most Soviet citizens, however, those obelisks, pillars, walls, and statues are "little sermons in stone." Their bas-reliefs depicting valiant soldiers in battle or hard-working women toiling in the rear supply exemplary models for today's generation. Soviet people have no need of such tableaux. The older generations that lived through the war as adults have kept its memories and its legends alive, whereas for the past twenty years most of their younger compatriots have been saturated with war stories in school and the mass media. Whether the history and lore have actually penetrated their heads and hearts is another matter, but surely young people are not instructed by war memorials. Rather those hunks of stone function as reminders of what they have already been exposed to.

The ostensible purpose of memorials varies according to type. Modest monuments such as the spare obelisk and wall on the Ukrainian collective farm resemble solemn cemeteries in which the dead are remembered and honored. Some memorials tell a small story intended as a moral tale that is a moving microcosm of the total war ordeal. Just outside of Volgograd is the "Soldier's Field Memorial." It features a large stone triangle covered with writing, the statue of a little girl holding a flower, and a carefully crafted modernistic sculpture that is a montage of pieces of old weaponry. In the late 1970s, peasants farming that field came across an unopened letter that they had dug up along with helmets and remnants of weapons from the war. Its

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5Michael Ignatieff, "Soviet War Memorials," History Workshop Spring, 1984, p. 161
characteristic triangular shape instantly identified it as a letter sent from the front. When they opened it, some pieces of a dried flower tumbled out. It was written on September 18, 1942, at the beginning of the great Stalingrad battle, by one Major Dima Petrakov to his young daughter.

My blackeyed Mila,
I am sending you a cornflower... Imagine: the battle is going on, enemy shells are exploding all around, there are shell holes everywhere, and yet here was a flower growing... Suddenly the next explosion came... The cornflower was torn up. I picked it up and put it into the pocket of my field shirt. The flower had grown, stretched toward the sun, but was torn up by a wave of explosions. And had I not picked it up, it would have been trampled. Mila! Papa Dima will fight the fascists to the last drop of his blood, to his last breath, so that the fascists should not do to you what they have done to this flower. Whatever you do not understand, Mama will explain to you.

Little Mila, by then a middle-aged woman, thus read her father’s letter some thirty-five years after he had written it, and with the support of the local Party organization and a group of resident artists, decided to enshrine it in a special memorial for children. Its message had the perfect combination of drama and touching sentimentality that Russian adults think children will go for. The statue of a little girl in the completed complex is of course Mila, and the marble triangle at her feet is Papa Dima’s letter. Across a small cement expanse is the striking sculptural montage of weapons collected in the field and behind that, a black marble slab displaying old helmets. When I visited Soldier’s Field on May 12, 1985 the trunk of a dead tree with twisted

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6During the war, those triangular letters required no postage, and people who found such letters often went to great lengths to assure their delivery, realizing that they had been written by soldiers or officers.
branches rising above the displayed helmets was entwined with red
kerchiefs gaily fluttering in the warm breeze. Every slab and pedestal
was strewn with wilting flowers. In every direction newly plowed or
grassy fields dotted with leaving trees stretched toward the horizon. I
was accompanied by Georgii Fetisov, a prominent local sculptor, who
explained to me that it has become traditional for groups of young
Pioneers (members of the children's Communist Party organization) to
bring flowers to the memorial on the days surrounding Victory Day. They
always put a real flower into the hands of the statue. As a parting
ritual each child removes his red neckerchief and ties it onto the dead
tree. I suppose this act turns those little bits of cloth into a
symbolic offering to the spirits of the war dead, including Mila's
father.

Only the previous day I had seen scores of Volgograd Pioneers in
white shirts and red scarves visiting the famed memorial on Mamaev
Hill. There the children were merely silent (or rather, whispering)
spectators of a stone spectacle. Unlike the understated Soldier's Field
memorial, there is nothing modest about the grand ensemble overlooking
the restored city. It is perhaps the most celebrated of the flamboyant
memorial clusters constructed during Brezhnev's tenure as General
Secretary of the Central Committee. There are more than twenty renowned
ensembles in the Soviet Union. Some, like Khatyn' in Belorussia, have
been erected on the actual sites of Nazi atrocities. Every "hero-city"
in the USSR -- except Moscow -- has a memorial ensemble. These are
always costly and grand, and are composed of several parts. They are
the cathedrals of the organized memorialization of the Great Patriotic
War. Like cathedrals, they are sponsored by a large and powerful institution -- in this case, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. They are architectural and sculptural constructions intended to saturate the visitor with a multilevel series of impressions and emotions. The Volgograd memorial, for example, consists of several large sculptures, including a giant Motherland figure with a raised sword, vast outer walls whose intentionally ruined bas-reliefs tell the story of the battle, a symbolic "Lake of Tears" mourning the hundreds of thousands of victims of the battle, loudspeakers that play and replay wartime radio broadcasts monitoring the progress of the battle, an indoor eternal flame to which visitors are expected to bring flowers before circling the shrine room to the sound of Schumann's "Die Traumerei" echoing off the mosaic walls displaying the names of the Soviet victims of the battle of Stalingrad. Truly the designers of this memorial, sculptor Evgenii Vuchetich and architect Ia. Belopol'skii, set out to realize a complex psychological, political and spiritual agenda. As with any pilgrimage site, the process of approaching the shrine is itself an important preparatory part of the visit. The ascent, past the ruined walls and toward the immense statue set up against a vast expanse of sky is meant to begin an inner experience that inspires in the visitor sympathy for the harrowing ordeal that was Stalingrad, admiration for the valor of the Soviet soldiers, grief for the hundreds of thousands of Soviet lives lost, gratitude for the
victory to its organizer and inspirer, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. 7

In 1987, while visiting his New York studio, I asked the emigre monumental sculptor Ernst Neizvestny what he saw as the real meaning of the war memorials and other monuments he had designed in the Soviet Union. "We monumental artists make their icons," he replied. "Their" quite clearly referred to powerful Party bosses. For all public statuary is controlled by the political establishment that is, of course, dominated by the Communist Party. As for "icons," they are the primary artistic vessels of Orthodox Christianity. Statues and frescoes may predominate in some of the western churches, but in Russia icon-worship forms the heart of Christian devotion. An icon is a highly stylized representation of a sacred figure or figures, or the portrayal of a portion of the life of Christ or of a saint. Whatever the particular subject happens to be, the believer, who instantly recognizes the piece of painted wood as an icon, assumes a spiritual disposition of reverence. While the icon is not itself strictly speaking an object of worship, it is a vehicle through which believers can communicate with the deity. A glance at an icon, or better yet a prolonged gaze accompanied by a yellow candle lit before it, evokes a reverential mood in the accepting heart. The worshipper can supplicate the spirit it embodies, asking for help with the difficulties of daily life.

7The memorial complex at Volgograd was opened on October 15, 1967 in conjunction with the nationwide commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Great October Revolution.
Like icons, Soviet monuments portray revered individuals or symbolize pieces of sacred history. They are meant to facilitate a spiritual transcendence of everyday concerns, to evoke feelings of humility, respect and resolve -- humility and respect for the dead heroes, and resolve to emulate their praiseworthy qualities. Like icons, they are instantly recognizable to members of the community. Unlike icons, however, monuments are ponderously permanent. Other products of Soviet agitational media, such as posters and billboards, are easily torn down. But the smashing of a statue is always fraught with political meaning.

Of course, in the Soviet Union even more than elsewhere, there is an enormous amount of statuary that goes absolutely unnoticed, like our own Civil War generals who collect pigeon droppings in countless parks. The omnipresent statues of Lenin have long since become the butt of jokes, precisely because of the pretense within the Party that the sight of that familiar visage and form inspires feelings of reverence in the viewer. I have met only one such reverential individual, Sasha Ivanov, a Lieutenant Colonel in the Air Force who wandered into the Volgograd studio of a sculptor friend of mine when I happened to be visiting, and ordered a bust of Lenin for the vestibule of the military academy where he teaches. His own personal hero was Feliks Dzerzhinsky, the first head of the Cheka (secret police), while Lenin he saw as "superhuman," simply too exalted to serve as an exemplar. He was genuinely excited about the prospect of the Lenin bust and went on animately talking about how "beautiful" it would look flanked by potted flowers. Lt. Col. Ivanov's enthusiasm notwithstanding, most Leniniana
appears to be entirely unnoticed. Indeed, in his autobiographical memoir, the emigre poet Joseph Brodsky expresses gratitude to the omnipresent portraits of the leader for inspiring him to learn how to tune them out and, as an ancillary skill, to tune out all that was ugly or unpleasant. 8

With the myriad statues of Lenin in squares and parks, no one would dispute that the central shrine of the Lenin cult is the polished granite mausoleum in Red Square, displaying in its inner sanctum the embalmed remains of the founder of Bolshevisms. Only a tiny proportion of those tens of millions of people who have seen the mausoleum from the outside have actually braved the long lines to gaze on Lenin himself. But everyone understands that the mausoleum is the USSR's symbolic locus of the official reverence for Lenin that has for decades provided the Communist Party and Soviet government with their main source of legitimacy. There is no such comparable locus for the memorialization of the Second World War. The Soviet terrain is dotted with tens of thousands of obelisks, steles, motherland statues, rifle-bearing resolute soldiers, grieving mothers -- and yet not one provides a central, unifying image that embodies, in a hunk of stone, the idealized memory of the war. It is telling, for example, that for the massive agitational campaign commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the victory in 1985, the prime symbol brought forward was the main monument of a memorial built by the Soviet sculptor Evgenii Vuchetich in 1949 and erected in Berlin, in memory of the Soviet soldiers who

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died in the battle over that city. The statue shows a soldier whose face displays both innocence and determination, holding in his massive arm a little German girl whom he has rescued from the flames of Berlin.

The victory monument on Poklonnaia Hill has from the start been envisioned as the central symbol of the Soviet experience in the war. It is meant to be a national monument, or rather, a monument to the nation itself, a visual representation of the Soviet people's noblest qualities, a tribute to the tens of millions who fought, worked and suffered through the ordeal, and to the twenty million who died. Fraught with such a ponderous agenda, it is no wonder that the monument has not been built.

The First Patriotic War

Some say that since 1812, and its entry onto the European stage as a great power, Russia has been dreaming of a monument to itself that will celebrate its achievements for all time. According to historian S. Frederick Starr, the phantom monument on Poklonnaia Hill is but the latest in a series of planned Russian national capitols.\(^9\) To commemorate the victory of the Russian people in the 1812 War for the Fatherland, Emperor Alexander I planned a grand memorial, indeed the only edifice fit to pay homage to the single nation that had succeeded in repulsing the Grand Army. In a manifesto issued on Christmas Day of 1812, the emperor pronounced his intention to celebrate his gratitude

\(^9\)He expressed this opinion to me in private conversation. For his fascinating article on the general subject see S. Frederick Starr, "The Ultimate Symbol: Russia's Non-existent Capitol, 1812-1979," *Tulane Architectural View* (New Orleans, 1982), Vol. II, pp. 48-57.
to God's Providence for having saved Russia, by building in Moscow a cathedral called Christ the Savior.

Alexander wished to see an enormous church erected on Sparrow Hills (now Lenin Hills), between the Smolensk Road on which Napoleon entered Russia, and the Kaluga Road on which he retreated. The design which he approved in 1816, by Karl Vitberg, a Protestant painter, projected a vast edifice that was inspired by St. Paul's words, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you?" (Cor.1:16). The church was to represent the birth, resurrection and transfiguration of Christ, whose suffering was exemplary for the Russian people. It would include dark catacombs containing bones of the war dead and walls displaying the names of all officers and men killed in the war. One part of the shrine was to house two monuments -- one made out of French cannons captured between Moscow and the Russian border, and the other out of cannons taken between the border and Paris. This cathedral was to be very much a war memorial! The official Imperial history of the cathedral says that when Alexander ordered Vitberg to realize his projected design, the latter refused, "fearing the intrigue that invariably accompanies such a large undertaking." Instead he wished to first consult with specialists abroad since he himself was not trained as an architect. He also sought to find ways to keep the cost down, lest he be criticized for extravagance.

Construction of the cathedral began in 1821, and was soon plagued with technical difficulties. After four years, Vitberg had to report

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10M. Mostovskii, Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelja v Moskve (Moscow, 1883), p. 12.
that it was impossible to build such a large edifice on Sparrow Hills, because the foundation kept sinking into the clay. The unfortunate painter had been right to fear complications and intrigue in accepting the emperor’s request that he construct the cathedral. For his efforts, his estate (and those of his colleagues on the construction commission) was confiscated, and, after a lengthy investigation, he was sentenced to exile in Viatka.  

Emperor Nicholas I, who succeeded his brother in 1825, called for another design for the projected shrine, and in 1832 approved the design of architect K.A. Ton. Nicholas himself chose the new site, near the Kremlin, on the left bank of the Moscow river. Work was begun in 1839 and completed only in 1881, long after the death of Nicholas and in the year that his son, Alexander II, was assassinated by terrorists. The resultant structure was immense; it could hold some 10,000 worshippers. As it turned out, this mammoth cathedral cum war memorial, after sixty-eight years of planning and construction, had a life span of only fifty three years. In 1934 the Soviet authorities, inspired by the militant anti-religious fervor of the early Stalin years, dynamited the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. And so the national shrine constructed in gratitude for the Russian victory in the Patriotic War was blown to bits.

There is, to be sure, a kind of linear history to Russian national monuments that are designed and redesigned and made the subjects of dispute and scandal, and are then aborted or short-lived, like the

11As it turned out Vitberg found himself in exile with Alexander Herzen, the Russian socialist thinker. For Herzen’s description of the unfortunate artist see his Childhood, Youth and Exile
cathedral, or never built at all. The immediate successor to the 1812 memorial was the Palace of Soviets. This edifice was planned as a national capitol building beginning in the mid 1920s. Architectural competitions for its design were held periodically for more than three decades, until 1959. The project accepted for construction in 1934 depicted an enormous classical style building on top of which there was to be a statue of Lenin 100 meters high. It was supposed to have seated 20,000 people and was to have been placed on the site of the demolished cathedral of Christ the Savior. The Palace of Soviets was never built.12 In its place, during the 1950s, the city constructed an outdoor swimming pool that is correspondingly vast, capable of accommodating 20,000 swimmers.

Wartime Dreams and Postwar Realities

I learned about the earliest monuments to the Second World War from Margarita Iosipovna, an intense, petite woman with a lively expressive face. She is an historian of architecture whose current research is on the designs of wartime architects for the reconstruction of destroyed cities. Perched on a small, uncomfortable chair in her narrow smoke-filled office in an old yellow courtyard building behind the Lenin Library, I watched her rifle through piles of drawings and photographs as she spoke. "During the war itself there were no means to

12In 1961, the Palace of Congresses was built in the Kremlin. It was intended for meetings of Communist Party Congresses -- which were progressively rarer during Stalin's long tenure, but were revived under Nikita Khrushchev. A modest, modern building, it bears no resemblance to the scope and spirit of the long-projected Palace of Soviets.
build memorials. There were only designs, drawings, projects. They were much more beautiful and interesting than were the actual memorials that were eventually constructed. She showed me the photographs of some stunningly elegant designs from the war years. Architects whose sole materials were pen and paper, and whose spirits were fired by patriotism and the pain of wartime losses, could allow their imaginations to roam and come up with splendid visions of monuments, memorials and plans for the reconstruction of bombed-out cities.

Margarita was joined by her boss and co-author, Iurii Pavlovich, dark-haired, handsome and instantly likable man who stood at his desk by the window, nervously puffing on cigarette after cigarette. "Iurii and I believe that the truest memorials to the war were the wartime plans for the reconstruction of cities," she said. "Every new house was intended to be a memorial. Architects knew that people would see new buildings and instantly understand that they were there only because of the war. When Moscow was rebuilt after the 1812 fire, those creations too were then viewed as war memorials." In fact, the second world war destroyed 1710 cities and towns, and 70,000 villages. In Stalingrad alone, over 40,000 houses were destroyed. For those architects who did not go off to fight, planning the reconstruction of cities and towns was their contribution to the war effort. To resurrect new cities from the ashes of the old was the dream that inspired wartime architects. Their plans are "designs of hopes, legendary designs of ideal cities, their own manner of victory monuments." Some were pure architectural fantasy; others were practical enough to serve eventually as the basis
of real post-war reconstruction. In their drawings they always included some edifice as a victory monument. Again and again they returned to a few familiar classical forms -- the old Slavic burial mound, the obelisk, the pyramid, the fortress wall, the triumphal arch. Most frequently the form was some kind of vertical.

In a lecture at Harvard, the poet Czeslaw Milosz talked about the wartime poems written by concentration camp inmates and resistance fighters living in Polish ghettos. One would think that the pressure of imminent death would free the imagination to produce the most creative and fanciful poetry, but Milosz found, to his profound disappointment, that they were filled with the most familiar, even banal images and phrases. When the soul is truly pressed to its limits, concluded Milosz, it grabs onto conventions. Thus it is not surprising that wartime architects also turned to traditional forms when they set on paper their mythical cities with arches, towers and temples celebrating a victory that was itself still a dream. However, while the wartime poems Milosz read were disappointingly conventional, many of the architectural designs for war memorials and reconstructed city centers are quite imaginative. They are grounded in conventional forms, but show flights of fancy that give them a mythic quality.

The first competition for monuments to the Great Patriotic War was held in the spring of 1942, while Hitler's armies were still advancing. The initiative came from the Moscow and Leningrad branches of the Union

of Architects. An exhibit of the entries included more than fifty sketches of monuments to the defenders of Moscow and to heroic Leningrad. At a national plenum of the Union of Architects held in the same month, a resolution was passed making the design of memorials to the Great Patriotic War the first order of the day, and ordering local organizations to hold and judge competitions for appropriate designs. In June, after one full year of war had elapsed, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet discussed the question "of the erection of monuments to the Great Patriotic War." This involved the issues of whom to sculpt and where to put the monuments. In the same year, the All-Union Academy of Artists also resolved to begin the design of war memorials.14

As the war progressed, the impulse to memorialize both its victims and heroes grew stronger. In 1943 the Moscow organization of the Union of Architects ran a contest for the best design for a "pantheon to the heroes of the Patriotic War." Similar competitions, often with public exhibits of the entries, continued to be held throughout the rest of the war. Doubtless it was at once inspiring and comforting to wartime artists to put their creative energies toward the shaping of shrines and tombs and other symbolic edifices celebrating the heroic efforts of their fallen brothers and sisters.

Many of their creations are fanciful and quite stirring. Probably the most moving are the simplest conceptions, such as a necropolis of fallen fighters (architect M. Olenov, 1943) consisting of rough-hewn wooden constructions displaying five-pointed stars or hammers and

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sickles, often under traditional little roofs of the sort one sees in Russian peasant homes. A similar design for a memorial atop a mass grave called for a grassy mound topped with a large, five-pointed star made of unpainted timber. In fact, the original memorials to World War II were some form of grave marker; gradually the concept evolved to include larger and grander schemes. Inspired by the immediacy of the war, and freed from the shackles of real financial and other practical constraints, sculptors, artists and architects concocted fanciful triumphal arches, vast columned pantheons, museums and monument ensembles whose scale and complexity of design make St. Basil's Cathedral look like a dull and simple architectural creation by comparison. Their intent was to arouse the emotions of large numbers of people.

Margarita Iosipovna especially liked the work of Andrei Burov, and generously presented me with an entire book about his career. Truly, his wartime designs for a museum and memorial to the defense of Stalingrad (1944) are dramatic. The main monument, entitled "Stalingrad epic," is a gigantic, elaborately carved ziggurat that one would expect to find on some Mesopotamian plateau. It was to be crowned with an eternal flame. The museum, called a "Temple of Glory," was to be an elaborate white and gilt structure, topped with a dome and golden cupola. My own favorite wartime design was for a memorial and museum


16 Arkhitektura 40 let pobjedy, p. 58

to the defenders of Moscow drawn in 1943 by I. Sobolev. Situated on a grassy hill at a distance from the center of the city its broad, white steps lead into a conical tower out of a European fairy-tale. A similar concept underlies M. Barshch’s 1943 design for a memorial-museum to victims of the fascist terror. Surely the most sumptuous of wartime designs was L. Rudnev’s 1943 vision of a museum of the Great Patriotic War situated in Red Square, as an extension of the GUM department store. The perspective of the artist’s drawing resembles an eighteenth-century Venetian painting; fluffy white clouds against a brilliant blue sky set off the massive arched entryway to the museum which, as pictured, would have blended harmoniously into Red Square. 18

None of these designs, lovingly created by artists who were both anticipating the celebration of victory and the mourning of the war dead, were ever realized. By and large, what did go up in the immediate postwar years were the drab and ugly functional buildings that have long been the trademark of Soviet style architecture. The wartime drawings of memorials vindicate their creators, and demonstrate that the ungainly buildings we are all used to seeing do not reflect a failure of imagination on the part of all Soviet architects. The fantastic designs of the war years remained simply paper dreams and schemes, just like the hundreds of drawings and models made over the past three decades for the proposed national war memorial on Poklonnaia Hill.

18A.K. Zaitsev, Memorial’nye ansambli v gorodakh-geroiakh (Moscow, Stroilizdat, 1985), pp. 27, 20, 43.
My first meeting with Margarita and Iurii lasted a full two hours. They took turns showing me photographs and drawings, and lecturing me on wartime architectural and monumental projects for which they share a palpable enthusiasm. As is always the case in a Soviet middle or low-level office, our conversation was regularly interrupted by telephone calls and unexplained visitors wandering in and out. I found it all fascinating and was charmed by both my new-found colleagues, but I had, in fact, come to their institute, which is devoted to the study of the theory and history of architecture, to learn about the history of the monument on Poklonnaia Hill. Every once in a while, in the course of our long conversation, I would ask something about that monument, and found that they, especially Iurii who spoke less but conveyed the authority of a boss (he sat at his own desk smoking his endless cigarettes; she, like me, had to make do with a small chair at the end of a cluttered table), kept changing the subject. Finally I confronted them point-blank and asked where I could read about the history of the Poklonnaia Hill memorial. "Nowhere," replied Iurii definitively, "forget about that memorial, don’t write about it. If you try to put together its story from written sources it will be false. Come back and live here for a year, and maybe if you talk to the right people, you can piece something together. But not now. The monument is such a sensitive topic, that no one would talk to you openly about it."

Crestfallen and intrigued, I left their office determined to mobilize all my friends to search for sources on what I had come to call "my" monument. It was two weeks before I received a telephone call about Masha (not her real name), a sophisticated and well-connected
researcher in an institute of urban planning. By the time she and I managed to connect, it was a few days before my departure from Moscow. I came to her office in central Moscow bearing a gift -- bottles of scotch and vodka. Always an appreciated item, easily obtainable for dollars in a Beriozka hard-currency store, in those days of Gorbachev's anti-alcoholism measures liquor was to my Soviet friends some kind of nectar sent down from the heavens. Masha was a stately woman in her fifties with a worn, refined face that for some reason made me think of the wives of the Decembrists, the brave aristocratic women of the nineteenth century who followed their husbands into Siberian exile.¹⁹ We liked each other instantly. I was taken with her warm manner and wry sense of humor; she was charmed by my stories of my bourgeois Russian ancestors. After more than an hour of talk interrupted by several of her colleagues, Masha locked the Beriozka bag with its precious cargo into a closet and suggested we go out for a walk, which I correctly took as a signal that we were really going to talk. She hooked her arm under mine, Russian style, as we walked along Kalinin Prospekt and tried to find that Moscow rarity, an open, but uncrowded cafe. First we continued to talk about personal matters: she lived with the usual strains -- three generations of family packed into a too-small apartment; I told her about how my husband and baby had been faring in our two-room Moscow flat. Then the conversation moved to Poklonnaia Hill.

¹⁹The Decembrist Revolt of December 14, 1825 was an unsuccessful attempted coup by several thousand Russian officers who tried to prevent Nicholas I from assuming the throne after the death of Alexander I. Five of its leaders were executed, and the others were sent into Siberian exile.
As it turns out, Poklonnaia Hill was levelled in 1956 or 57, but not because of the proposed monument. Its demise was part of the reconstruction of Moscow that was begun in 1935 and resumed two decades later after the interruption of the war. Kutuzovsky Prospekt is an avenue that runs from the center of the city westward, past the elegant apartment buildings in which many of the Party and government leaders have lived, out toward the beautiful countryside around Uspenskoe, where they have their summer dachas. After Stalin’s death, it was necessary to broaden it into a major thoroughfare that members of the collective leadership could use to travel to and from their dachas, apartments and offices. The Hill of Prostrations stood in the way. It was possible, of course, to have the thoroughfare go around the hill, or over it, or under it with the help of a tunnel. But all of these possibilities were rejected, and instead, the hill was levelled. "Why?" I asked. Masha instinctively looked to her right and left before answering. We were just passing by the beautiful Nikitskoe Vorota Church in which Russia’s beloved Pushkin had gotten married. "For security reasons. It was deemed unacceptable to retain any height from which someone could shoot at the limousines bearing Politburo members and ministers behind their drawn curtains. A tunnel was equally risky. So the hill was removed, or rather moved, since the excavated earth was piled up into a large mound. Added to it was a front portion of the hill that was taken down to make way for the construction of a large apartment building. People came gradually to call that mound Poklonnaia Hill." It was on the site of this mound, on May 9, 1957 that the USSR
Council of Ministers resolved to place a national monument to the victory.  

**The Khrushchev Years**

Poklonnaia Hill played no significant role in the Second World War, although farther down Kutuzovsky Prospekt is an obelisk "To Moscow the Hero-City," erected in 1976. Beyond that obelisk is a stretch of road that used to be called the Mozhaiskoe Highway, which was used in the defense of Moscow in 1941. But the Poklonnaia Hill area was clearly chosen for its association with the victory of the Russian nation in 1812. Close to it, in the former suburb of Fili, stands "Kutuzov's hut," a reproduction of a peasant's hut in which Kutuzov convened his main council of war after the Battle of Borodino. Nearby is an obelisk to the 1812 campaign as well as a recent (1973) equestrian statue of Kutuzov. Also close by is a museum dedicated to the Borodino Battle and opened in commemoration of its 150th anniversary in 1962. The massive structure that dominates the area is the Arch of Triumph, built in another location of Moscow in 1834, destroyed exactly

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21 The original hut burned down in 1868, and a replica was erected in 1887. *Moscow and Leningrad Blue Guide* (London, 1980), p.190

22 The sculptor was N.V. Tomskii, whose work figured prominently in last stage of the Poklonnaia Hill story.

23 *Ezhegodnik Bol'shoi Sovetskoi Entsiklopedii 1963* (Moscow, 1963), p. 155
one hundred years later as a hateful relic of the imperial past, and reconstructed on Kutuzovsky Prospekt in 1968.  

In choosing Poklonnaia Hill as the site for the country's central memorial to the 1945 victory, some person or persons evidently decided there would be a cumulative power deriving from a merger of national triumphs. This is perfectly in keeping with the tenets of Soviet propaganda since 1941. When with the outbreak of war a new patriotic propaganda was called for, the military successes and heroes of the imperial and pre-Petrine periods were instantly raised from ignominy to sublimity. And they were shown in wartime posters in a kind of linear ascent: Prince (and Saint) Alexander Nevsky, thirteenth-century defender of Novgorod against the Teutonic Knights; Minin and Pozharsky, two wealthy Novgorodian merchants who raised a popular militia to expel Polish and Swedish invaders during the "Time of Troubles" in 1610-12; Generals Suvorov and Kutuzov, the aristocratic commanders in the Turkish and Napoleonic wars; and General Chapayev, hero of the Red Army during the Civil War. Likewise, there has more recently been a propensity toward "pantheonism" in Soviet political ritual. That is, disparate revered figures and events are depicted as continuous and contiguous, sharing portions of one glorious saga of the great myth of foundation and legitimacy that underlies Communist ideology in the Soviet Union.

But who is to decide the exact plot of that saga? Who is to determine precisely what forms will best pay homage to both heroes and

\[24\text{Moscow and Leningrad Blue Guide, p. 190.}\]
victims of a national ordeal? And who stands to benefit financially and politically from the memorialization of the war in stone?

In April of 1987 I called on Ernst Neizvestny in his New York studio. The studio is a Soho wonderland pulsating with muscular forms in every conceivable medium. The sculptor is swarthy and powerfully built, with intense black eyes and a thin mustache. He has the look of a man who has been through everything -- and he has, including having been so seriously wounded as a Soviet officer in the Second World War, that he was actually left for dead. After feasting my eyes on the phantasmagoric sculptures that filled his large studio, I asked him about the operating principles of the monument business in the Soviet Union. Generally speaking, he said, opportunities for works of monumental art generate fierce battles within a small but powerful community of architects, sculptors, and responsible bureaucrats, because monuments are a very big business. Small ones are terribly expensive to produce, and large ones require enormous budgets for metal, stone, and the labor of entire teams of workers. Thus the call for a new monument inevitably leads to a struggle over which team will get the commission, since its responsible members stand to make a great deal of money. On the other hand, unlike painters or poets, those monumental artists who fail to get commissions have no opportunity to practice their craft, since they need government-owned equipment to be able to cast their sculptures. Thus the world of monumental artists operates by cutthroat rules and is thoroughly corrupt, with administrators at all levels accepting enormous bribes from competitors. Furthermore, the business has been run by what Neizvestny
calls an "artistic supermafia" that is connected to the Ministry of Culture and Union of Artists. It is a powerful clique of corrupt artists that jealously guards all important commissions for its own members. They sit on juries and in closed competitions select the designs of their cohorts, awarding them lucrative commissions. Truly open competitions are a rarity among Soviet monumentalists, and therefore always create a big stir. This is what happened with the first open competition for plans of the national war memorial. It was held in 1958.

On December 31, 1957, Izvestia published an announcement of an open competition for the best design for a Victory monument to be erected on Poklonnaia Hill. It was sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, the state construction committee, and the Moscow City Executive committee. Big cash prizes were promised to the winners, with a first prize of 50,000 rubles. The designs were to be "simple and majestic," reflecting the heroic exploits of the people and army, who "defended the independence of our homeland and saved the peoples of Europe and Asia from fascist enslavement," and simultaneously emphasizing the guiding role played by the Communist Party. They were to display the names of outstanding war heroes, recount major battles, and provide a special area for wreaths to be placed in memory of the war's fallen fighters. 25

Immediately after the announcement appeared, the Ministry of Culture began to receive hundreds of requests for application forms from architects, sculptors and artists. Letters also began to pour in

\[25\] Izvestia, Dec. 31, 1957
from non-specialists with suggestions about the future memorial. Entries were accepted until the first of July. On the twentieth, they were exhibited at the gallery in Gorky Park. Several thousand visitors came over the course of forty days. In all, 153 designs were submitted along with almost as many written suggestions, some accompanied by sketches. These were eventually narrowed down to eighty-eight models that met the contest requirements. 26

The jury consisted of prominent architects, artists and sculptors and two representatives of the Defense Ministry, including Marshal Konev of World War II fame. It was chaired by A. Zaitsev, president of the Moscow City Executive Committee. After its considerable deliberations, the jury concluded that not a single entry had successfully actualized the "concept of the Victory triumph, the idea of the heroic exploit carried out by the Soviet people and army in the Great Patriotic War." Therefore the jury could not recommend that any of the designs be realized. It did, however, award prizes to the top three contestants and single out an additional five for honorable mention.

The first and second prizes were awarded jointly to "Gold Star No. 2" and "To the Hero-People." "Gold Star" proposed a circular columned museum, and next to it an immense obelisk topped with a bowl displaying an eternal flame. A vast set of stairs flanked on either side with sculpted groups of Soviet soldiers was to bring visitors to the monument. "To the Hero-People" also featured an obelisk, but chose

to depict battle scenes not inside a museum, but in mosaics on an immense wall.\textsuperscript{27} The third prize winner was "Hello, Peace!" featuring an energetic sculpture of a triumphant soldier fairly leaping off a pedestal, his long cape waving in the wind and his helmet poised in his right hand for a celebratory toss.

I met its sculptor, Lev Kerbel, in the summer of 1987. A big, beefy man with large, freckled features and curly, sandy hair, he invited me into his studio. I knew this man had made the dreadful new statue of Lenin recently constructed at Oktiabrskaya Ploshchad, near the metro station, and so I expected the worst. Instead I was pleasantly surprised. A sculptor’s studio is always an exciting place to visit, even if his work is not always appealing. There is a surrealistic piquancy to the atmosphere that comes from the dissonance of dimensions produced by monumental artworks scaled down and crowded into rooms whose floors are inevitably strewn with plaster heads, legs, and other by-products of the trade. It was midafternoon, and like all American exchange scholars at that time of day who are loathe to waste the long time necessary for a restaurant meal, I was famished. "First you eat, then we work," he said sternly, as he sat me down to a table laden with plates of salami, bread, sliced cucumbers and tomatoes, cheese and a bowl of sour cream.

After lunch we walked slowly through the enormous studio. Kerbel (who claims that his name comes from the French "coeur belle") is a

\textsuperscript{27}The authors of "Gold Star" were Kiev architects A.I. Malinovsky, A.M. Miletsky and V.M. Shaparov and sculptor V. Osnach. The winners of "To the Hero People" were Moscow architects V.M. Ginzburg and Yu. I. Filler and artist A. G. Shteiman (Pravda, 9/25/58)
very successful, established sculptor. His studio consists of several large rooms in a fashionable part of Moscow. He has a chauffeur-driven car (in which he ferried me to my next appointment) and the authoritative, self-satisfied manner of a high-level bureaucrat. But his lined face bore the traces of a difficult life. He showed me a significant number of works devoted to the war theme. One of the very first -- a monument to Soviet wartime medics of the First Moscow Medical Institute -- doubtless explains the deeply furrowed forehead and cheeks. It consists of two faces and one hand sculpted into a large granite rectangle. One face is of a woman; stern, beautiful, with a hood covering her hair, she resembles the mother of God as depicted in classic Russian icons. Her hand cradles the forehead of a dead or dying young man; his eyes are closed, and his features closely resemble Kerbel's own. "Those are my son and my wife," he said in a quiet voice. "They died one after another." It seems his grown son had committed suicide and Kerbel's grief-torn wife had taken her own life as well. The sculpture, erected in 1972, was commissioned as a war memorial, but for the artist it was a way of mourning a personal tragedy. I have found that this double agenda is often at work in the memorialization of the war. Indeed, when I asked Kerbel why he had chosen to devote so many works to the war theme, he answered that he had himself fought in the war and had lost many people close to him. Of the four Soviet sculptors I have met who sculpt on the war theme, three are veterans; the fourth is the son of an officer who died tragically in the very last days of the war. They have all told me that their work is inspired by the painful memory of wartime losses.
Kerbel spent the war both as a sailor and as a sculptor. From 1942 on he sculpted war heroes; he saw this as part of his contribution to the war effort just as did the architects who directed their energies toward dreaming up museums and shrines to the Great Patriotic War. Many of those busts, of which I saw only copies, now reside in the Museum of the Northern Fleet. Most of them are expressive, effective works of sculpture in a traditional realistic style. Far less successful are Kerbel’s more recent, slightly modernistic memorials, such as the defiant helmeted head of a soldier with glaring, vacant eyes nestled into a rough stone column on the side of which his massive hand clutches a rifle. This memorial to the civil militia of the Frunzenskaia district is plunked onto a Moscow sidewalk. This heavy, glowering soldier is typical both of Kerbel’s many war memorials and of many others that have been erected in the past twenty years. Much more graceful and kinetic is the soldier-centerpiece of "Hello, Peace!" that won third prize in the 1958 competition for the monument on Poklonnaia Hill.

The professional evaluation of the results of that competition published in Moscow’s main architectural journal was that no single monument could possibly convey the depth and breadth of the people’s victory in the war. The author of the critical article particularly deplored those designs that were exclusively mournful in tone. He singled out an entry entitled "Requiem," that depicted a grieving figure. Evidently, remarked the critic, its sculptor did not understand

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28 Zaitsev, Memorial’nye ansambli, p. 175. The monument was erected in 1967.
the programmatic essence of the competition. The critical article called for an "architectural-sculptural ensemble" that could depict the manifold aspects of the victory theme. The author pointed out that the large Poklonnaia Hill site made it possible to construct something that could gradually work on the viewer’s emotions, preparing him for a full experience of the ensemble’s totality. In the author’s view, the Athenian acropolis was a successful classical ensemble, and an effective modern one was the Treptow-Park complex in Berlin featuring Vuchetich’s soldier holding the little girl. 29 That construction, completed in 1949, also includes a mausoleum containing the bodies of Soviet soldiers who died in the battle of Berlin, and a seated grieving motherland figure that looks oddly German, with a thick braid wound around her bowed head.

In 1959, coincidentally on Stalin’s birthday, the Ministry of Culture sponsored a joint exhibition of designs for a monument to Lenin, for the Palace of Soviets -- the national capitol building that had been in the design stage since the 1920s -- and for the Victory monument. The designs for the Lenin monument seem downright funny as they appear in the photograph accompanying the article. The number of acceptable poses is so small, that the entries were absolutely predictable and looked like ten thousand other monuments to Lenin one can see anywhere in the USSR: Lenin with his right arm outstretched; Lenin clutching his rumpled worker’s cap in his left hand; Lenin Pantocrator as a huge head with hard, determined eyes.

The Victory monument, however, gave monumental artists a far wider latitude. To their wall mosaic the authors of "To the Hero People" added a statue of a woman personifying triumph and a tiered pyramidal tomb of a Soviet soldier. Another entry described in the press was that of a team headed by Evgenii Vuchetich, the most renowned and successful of all war memorial sculptors. Besides the famed monument of a soldier holding a little girl erected in 1949 in Berlin, Vuchetich had also sculpted the legendary hero, Alexander Matrosov, and the partisan-heroine, Zoya Kosmodemianskaia. His greatest international success, however, was the sculpture, "Let Us Beat Our Swords into Ploughshares," which was erected in front of the United Nations building in 1957. Evidently the sculptor decided to capitalize on the true and tried, for his entry in the Moscow war memorial competition featured a globe topped with the same sculpture already on display in New York. Vuchetich, whose project was the second of two described in the article, had moved up to second place, and "To the Hero People" was considered the current first prize winner. That was in 1959.

But the contest was far from over. According to Ernst Neizvestny, there was a later, truly open competition that was not dominated by the "supermafia". No first prize was awarded, but second prize (meaning the winners' design was accepted with some reservations) went to the team of sculptors Neizvestny and Fiveiskii, and architect Lebedev. Third prize was awarded to another team of which Neizvestny was also a member.\(^{30}\) The second prize design projected an enormous complex that

\(^{30}\)Mr. Neizvestny was unable to supply me with published evidence of the results of this contest, which he said had appeared in several newspapers. He could not remember the exact
included battle scenes depicted in bas-reliefs on "ruins" -- walls intentionally created to look ancient and partly destroyed. The central symbolic sculpture of the complex was a huge, modernistic stele or obelisk onto whose front was appended the slim and solemn figure of Mother Russia clutching a large banner. An additional proposed structure was a sunken inverted pyramid, at whose bottom was a horizontal statue of a sleeping soldier covered with a pool of water -- the Lake of Tears" (ozero slez). The artistic team discussed their project with generals in the political administration department of the Soviet army, and were preparing to work out the details of their design and sign their contract with the Ministry of Culture.

As Mr. Neizvestny tells the story, Evgenii Vuchetich, whose entry had won no prize at all, was enraged, and complained to General Chuikov, whose bust he had sculpted at the end of the war, and who was collaborating with him on the gargantuan war memorial then being planned for Volgograd (for which Vuchetich had gotten the commission). As head of the Soviet forces in the great Stalingrad battle of 1942-1943, Chuikov was an officer of enormous standing. The gist of the sculptor's grievance is clear from his own memoir.\(^{31}\) He criticized formalist and abstractionist tendencies that were informing works of contemporary art and even monumental sculpture. Vuchetich's work was

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\(^{31}\)Khudozhnik i zhizn (Moscow, 1963). See also the long interview with him in Literaturnaia gazeta, December 18, 1962.
the most traditional kind of realism, while Neizvestny's sculptures can be described as expressionistic. Indeed it was Ernst Neizvestny who bore the brunt of First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev's notorious attacks on modern art in December of 1962. Neizvestny believes that those attacks were, at least in part, generated by Vuchetich's anger at having been passed over in the Moscow competition. "It is quite clear, and everyone knew it at the time," he explains, "that Vuchetich conspired with Chuikov to start the anti-formalist campaign because he himself had been threatened. 'Things have come to such a pass' he said to the general, 'that formalists are even winning contests for public monuments.'"

This sheds new light on a well known episode in the colorful history of Khrushchev's tenure. Someone had carefully planned to expose the First Secretary to modern art (which he hated) by including a number of works of abstract and expressionistic art at an exhibit billed as a thirty year retrospective of Soviet art held at the Manezh, Moscow's central exhibition hall. Khrushchev was brought in, railed against the "dog shit" he was looking at, and had a long confrontational argument with Neizvestny about his work.\(^{32}\) As a consequence, the commission for the Moscow war memorial was transferred from Neizvestny's team to one headed by Vuchetich. Moreover, Vuchetich took Neizvestny's key ideas, changed them somewhat (for the worse, in Neizvestny's opinion), and incorporated them into his memorial on the

Mamaev Kurgan in Volgograd. The battle scenes depicted as ruins on a crumbling wall, the "Lake of Tears" pool, and the Mother Russia sculpture all appeared in some form in the memorial to the Stalingrad heroes.

Mr. Neizvestny assured me that Vuchetich, his former employer, was not a successful monumentalist. His Mother Russia, a robed Amazon brandishing a raised sword and shouting in a hideous grimace, is, from toe to sword tip, the tallest statue in the world. But her form was that of an inappropriately blown up piece of salon sculpture. She should be two feet tall, resting on a carved table in a boudoir or bordello, holding not a sword, but a mirror. With that, Mr. Neizvestny raised his hand, bent one leg, and stuck out his hip in hilarious imitation of the pose. According to Neizvestny, Vuchetich had neither talent nor spirit, and was grossly undeserving of the honor of designing the Soviet Union's main memorial to the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War.

However one evaluates Neizvestny's feelings, it is fair to say that Evgenii Vuchetich did show a failure of imagination in going back to his earlier works for inclusion in the Moscow memorial. His original intention in 1959 was to repeat the statue that stands before the United Nations in New York. Four years later, Pravda published a photograph of Vuchetich's planned war memorial: before a modernistic white dome with wide arches circling an eternal flame, there looms the enormous statue of a resolute soldier clutching to his bosom a female child. It is identical to the sculptor's famed Berlin monument of 1949.
To the left, across a vast expanse of steps, seven banners are partially lowered to form right angles in striking resemblance to an incomparably more graceful wartime design of four lowered banners draped over a fraternal grave (drawn by V. V. Lebedev and P. P. Shteller). On each of his seven banners Vuchetich had engraved bas-reliefs recounting portions of the heroic saga. In the foreground he planned a tall representation of a torch whose flames interweave with the hair on the head of an angry woman. On the torch is inscribed the word "Remember!"

The article in Pravda accompanying the photograph of this memorial described it in effusive, florid terms. The author calls one of the bas-reliefs "a majestic hymn to victory hewn out of eternal stone." In addition, the article quoted some laudatory remarks about the design made by Nikita Khrushchev a few days earlier in a major speech on the arts. "Some time ago, members of the Presidium and the secretary of the Central Committee acquainted themselves with the sketches of the monument to the victory over fascism that will be erected in Moscow according to the design of Com. Vuchetich. The project gives reason to think that a very powerful work of realistic art will be constructed, rendering glory to the victorious people and summoning its viewers to the struggle for the strengthening of the power and impregnability of our great socialist Fatherland." This was the infamous speech in which

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33 For this wartime design, see Arkhitektura 40 let velikoi pobedy, p. 62.

34 Pravda, March 11, 1963. The architects designing the memorial together with Vuchetich were M. Posokhin and G. Zakharov.
Nikita Sergeevich railed against the "nauseating concoctions of Ernst Neizvestny."\textsuperscript{35}

Some two years later, Izvestiia ran a story about Vuchetich and indicated that his design for the Moscow memorial had been the subject of many heated debates. When, in 1987, I asked a number of sculptors and architectural historians about those debates, they could not remember any, nor could I find any references in the press of 1964 and 1965. Presumably those discussions were not held in public forums. But a number of individuals, including the poet Evgenii Yevtushenko and historian Roy Medvedev recalled that Vuchetich had come under fire for his design for the Volgograd memorial. Yevtushenko told me that the writer Boris Polevoi, editor of the journal Iunost (Youth), and from 1967, administrative secretary of the writers' union, had run a campaign against the monument in Literaturnaia gazeta. Medvedev remembered that his friend Konstantin Simonov, the famed poet and novelist, had worked hard to prevent the memorial from going up. Simonov had actually spearheaded a movement against the project, organizing a group of people who sent protesting letters to the government, artists' unions, and other responsible institutions.\textsuperscript{36} But despite these efforts the project survived the onslaught, and the flamboyant memorial ensemble was opened with great fanfare in October 1967.

\textsuperscript{35}Khrushchev delivered his speech on March 8, 1963, International Women's Day.

\textsuperscript{36}Medvedev said that nothing about this campaign was published. He himself had learned about it from Simonov.
I asked Yevtushenko why war memorials are so important, why people get so worked up about them. "They provide a kind of visual fixation," he explained. "Any idiot looking at a memorial can comprehend some aspect of it." It is doubtless because of this visual fixation that the Soviet media, especially newspapers and television, come back again and again to the by now hackneyed images of heavy, resolute soldiers, powerful grieving mothers of martyrs, and welcoming or menacing motherland statues.

Since Pushkin, Russian poets have played the role of guardians of the nation's spirit. Poems can articulate with unique singularity popular longings, dreams and fears. Monuments attempt to do the same. At their best, they harmonize with some kind of Jungian archetype that expresses in visual form key moments in a nation's history. When these moments have to do with war, their monumental embodiments become fraught with powerfully contradictory impulses. The memorialization of war has always aroused the human fascination with violence even as it has in some way recreated the horror of war. It invariably epitomizes the eternal struggle between destructive and humane impulses. As a visual representation of this struggle there could hardly be a more dramatic example than the main monument that Vuchetich chose to replicate on Pokloonnaia Hill -- the gigantic Soviet soldier, his mighty sword crushing a swastika while his left arm holds a trusting and pretty little daughter of the enemy.

In the Soviet Union, poets consider war memorials very much their business. Simonov tried to save Stalingrad from the Volgograd memorial and, as we shall see below, Andrei Voznesensky became a champion in the
Moscow monument saga. Certainly the most celebrated instance of a poet speaking out about a memorial was that of Evgenii Yevtushenko and Babi Yar. In the fall of 1961 Yevtushenko's friend Anatolii Kuznetsov took him to see Babi Yar, a ravine in Kiev where the occupying Nazis had massacred 100,000 people, most of them Jews. Kuznetsov, a writer, had grown up in Kiev and remembered seeing the grisly remains of human bones that had been bleached and torched. He related his family's wartime experiences to Yevtushenko, who told him that he should write a novel about them. "But who would publish it?" asked Kuznetsov? "Write it anyway," insisted the poet. That night, shaken by the visit to the grassy ravine, he sat down and wrote the celebrated poem, "Babi Yar."

Over Babi Yar
there are no memorials.
The steep hillside like a rough inscription.
I am frightened.
Today I am as old as the Jewish race.
I seem to myself a Jew at this moment....
Over Babi Yar
rustle of the wild grass.
The trees look threatening, look like judges.
And everything is one silent cry....
When the last anti-semit on the earth
is buried for ever
let the Internationale ring out.
No Jewish blood runs among my blood,
but I am as bitterly and hardly hated
by every anti-semit
as if I were a Jew. By this
I am a Russian.37

"The visit to Babi Yar filled me with shame," Yevtushenko recalled to me in a telephone interview. "Shame can be a very fruitful feeling. I was ashamed at my country's anti-semitism, ashamed that the atrocity

was not marked by any sort of proper memorial." He immediately began reading his poem at public gatherings in Kiev to enthusiastic audiences, and it was published shortly thereafter. The poem was an inspiration to many people. Yevtushenko told me that when Kuznetsov read it, he agreed to write his novel. In the course of our telephone conversation the poet also revealed that Dmitrii Shostakovich had telephoned him and asked whether he might be permitted to set it to music. When Yevtushenko assented, adding that he was honored, Shostakovich replied "Good, because I have already written the music." The result can be heard in the thirteenth symphony. When it was completed, the composer invited the poet to hear it, and played the symphony on the piano, singing all the solos by himself.

Eventually, in the 1970s, a memorial was constructed at Babi Yar. Few would dispute that the powerful poem galvanized the forces needed to construct the monument, although Yevtushenko himself points out that his was not the first poem on the subject. Ilya Ehrenburg, the famed wartime writer and correspondent, and Lev Ozerov had both devoted poems to the Babi Yar massacre. "But my poem was the first to confront the question of anti-semitism," he said. It is thus particularly shocking that the inscription on the monument makes no mention of the fact that most of the victims of the Babi Yar atrocities were Jews. It reads: "Over ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND citizens of Kiev and prisoners of war were shot here by the nazi invaders between 1941 and 1943."

I visited Babi Yar on a balmy July day in 1984 during my first visit to Kiev. The calm beauty of the grassy knoll creates a painful
dissonance in the heart of the visitor who is aware of the massacre that took place there during the war. The sculpture itself is unexceptionable, as far as these things go. It depicts eleven bronze figures in tortured motion, a kind of latter-day Laocoon. In the words of a Kiev guidebook:

In front is a Communist member of the underground, boldly looking death in the face with eyes filled with resoluteness and confidence in the triumph of the just cause. A soldier stands with tightly clenched fists next to a sailor shielding an old woman. A young boy who refused to bow his head before the nazis falls into the death pit. Crowning the group is the figure of a young mother, a symbol of life's triumph over death. 38

The Babi Yar monument was built during the Brezhnev era along with a number of memorial ensembles, including one at Khatyn' in Belorussia, that many say is the most powerful war memorial in the Soviet Union. Khatyn' features spare, abstract cultures in the shape of slim pipes from which dangle graceful bells; it is the one that Yevtushenko told me is his favorite. 39 In those years literally thousands of other monuments to the Great Patriotic War were erected, and indeed, beginning with the twentieth anniversary of the victory in 1965, the official veneration of the war blossomed into a major part of public political ritual. But throughout the sixties and seventies, the victory monument on Poklonnaia Hill remained bogged down in bureaucratic

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39For an extensive series of photographs of the Khatyn' complex see Nabat Pamiati (Leningrad, 1975). The memorial commemorates the Nazi slaughter of 149 villagers, including 76 children, on March 22, 1943.
inertia while its designers continued to draw their ample salaries from public funds.

Memorials Ascendant

In Brezhnev's last years there was a spurt of construction of great memorial ensembles. Closest to Brezhnev's heart undoubtedly was "Malaia Zemlia," one of two such ensembles put up in 1982 in the hero-city of Novorossiisk to commemorate precisely that rather small chapter of the war in which the General Secretary had himself participated as a propaganda officer in the rear. Malaia Zemlia was the name he had given to his shamelessly inflated memoir about his wartime experience, and there is no question that Novorossiisk was given the honored title of hero-city exclusively because of the Brezhnev connection. In 1981 Mr. Brezhnev had presided at the opening of an enormous monument and museum in Kiev dedicated to the victory. The statue, the work of Vuchetich, is a particularly ungainly realization of the motherland theme: a gleaming metal woman with an impassive, masculine face and a straight, stiff body draped in a classical robe with raised sword and shield. The pedestal, which looks something like a spaceship, serves as a museum of the Great Patriotic War.\(^{40}\) Even as these memorials were being constructed, plans were being made to finalize a design for the memorial on Poklonnaia Hill.

In 1979 a closed competition yielded four designs that were exhibited in the Manezh at the beginning of the following year. As

\(^{40}\)For a brilliant analysis of that memorial see Michael Ignatieff, "Soviet War Memorials"
usual, each was the product of a team of sculptors and architects, and each proposed a design to be realized on a grand scale. By far the most dramatic entry was a winged victory submitted by a team headed by the sculptor Viacheslav Klykov. Two huge modernistic wings bearing bas-reliefs provide the monument’s main silhouette, and suspended in front of the wings is a most unusual motherland figure. She is slim and rather mournful, with a cloak covering her head and shoulders. Her arms are raised, less in triumph than in a pose of benediction. The whole effect is quite ethereal. Indeed, an analytical article in the main architectural journal complained that the figure is in fact not a motherland, but rather a "mother of God" (bogomater’), or perhaps a nun, and therefore inappropriate. She does bear a resemblance to a classic, Byzantine theotokos. But the author praises the "spirituality" of the composition for ecological reasons; Klykov’s design called for the restoration of Poklonnaia Hill to its original shape. 41

The three other exhibited entries were incomparably more stolid and masculine. One was purely geometric, a huge slanted triangle slashed with walkways for pedestrians. The shape represented both the "hedgehog", a slanted metal antitank construction used to defend Moscow during the war, and a lowered banner. The last two entries were the joint winners of the competition. Both of their designs were based on the theme of the victory banner. One proposed an immense columned pedestal, a victory tower, really, topped with a sculpture of a triumphant soldier wielding a banner emblazoned with a profile of Lenin

so large that it dwarfs the soldier's head. The other was the most esthetically unappealing of the four designs. The entire monument was meant to embody the victory banner. A wide staircase decorated with grouped sculptures in the center and at the sides was to lead to a plateau bearing an awkward stone representation of a gigantic, partly lowered banner on which was depicted the figure of a soldier. These joint winners were told to further refine their projects. The first, the victory tower, was deemed the most expressive, powerful, laconic and strongly symbolic; the second was chosen because of its idea of the victory banner. The memorial was envisioned "not as a monument to the war nor as a monument to the war's victims." This was to be "a Victory monument, a raised and heroic Victory monument in a war with a very fierce and powerful enemy." The head of first winning team was the architect M. Posokhin, that of the second team, the famed sculptor, N. Tomskii.

Victory Banner

The revised plan they eventually hammered out was for a grandiose memorial ensemble with an elaborately contrived symbolic structure. Visitors were to ascend a vast set of stairs arranged in five groups — one for each year of the war. Marking each year there was to be a rectangular wall on which bas-reliefs would recount the main events. On either side there were to be fountains with precisely 1418 jets of

42 The responsible authorities were the Council of the Ministry of Culture of the USSR and the City Construction Council of GlavAPU, Moscow's main architectural planning agency.

43 Barkhin, "Proekt pamiatnika pobedy"
water -- one for each day of the war. A kind of grand cosmology was played out in this design, intended to transport the visitor into an altered state of consciousness. Many sculptural groups were to greet the visitor as he ascended the massive steps. The first, dedicated to the early days of the war, was called "Arise, enormous country" after the opening line of a truly rousing anthem, "Sacred War," composed just days after the outbreak of war. Playing on the familiar motherland theme, it was to show a famous wartime poster, "Motherland is calling," a round-faced maternal figure summoning Russia to battle.

At the rear of the complex a museum was planned, topped with a golden cupola meant to resemble a sun rising behind the central monument, which was to be situated at some distance in front of the gleaming white marble museum building. The museum was to feature dioramas of six major battles, and its most dramatic room was to be the circular Hall of Glory, a locus for the ritualized exaltation of the victory. Along the walls of that hall, white marble posts topped with bronze wreaths symbolizing glory were to display the engraved names of all 12,400 Heroes of the Soviet Union. A glass case in the center of the room was to display the original victory banner, the flag that was hoisted onto the Berlin Reichstag building on April 30, 1945. Sometimes called the "holy of holies" (sviatynia sviatynykh), in the official veneration of the idealized war experience this banner bears a functional resemblance to Lenin's embalmed body, also displayed in the center of a large room to a steady stream of respectful viewers.44 They

44On the banner, see V. Shelekasov, Vstan' pod znamiageroev! (Moscow, 1975). For a discussion of Lenin's body and the Mausoleum, see Nina Tumarkin, Lenin Lives!The Lenin Cult in
are both objects that are purported to embody the national spirit. Leonid Brezhnev once posited that the victory banner incorporated not only the glorious outcome of the war, but was also "the immortal banner of October; the great banner of Lenin; the unconquerable banner of socialism -- the bright symbol of hope, symbol of the freedom and happiness of all peoples." 45

It was Brezhnev's banner that provided the theme of the central monument to the victory planned for Poklonnaia Hill. The design was a creation of N.V. Tomskii, whose project in the 1979 composition had revolved around the idea of a banner. "And why do you think Tomskii got the commission?" asked Volodia (not his real name), an unofficial sculptor whose studio I was visiting. "Because that is how things work in the Soviet Union. They were planning a national monument, really a monument to the Communist Party. It was to be the most important monument in the country. Who gets to do it? Naturally, the president of the Academy of Artists. And that happened to be Tomskii." Volodia, an intense sculptor in his thirties with a mop of blond hair, was truly passionate about the Poklonnaia Hill project and eager to tell me everything he knew about its history. His own specialty was not war memorials but thoroughly abstract sculptures illustrating moral themes; his favorite work was a gleaming double helix called "Cain Kills Abel, Abel Kills Cain." But I had gone to see him because I had heard that he had entered the most recent contest for the Poklonnaia Hill monument.


45 Shelekasov, Vstan' pod znamia geroev!, epigraph.
He was still angry about the design of the monument that had come close to being realized.

Entitled "Victory Banner," it was quite evidently to have been an exaltation of the Communist Party, as Volodia had suggested. A seventy-meter high wavy banner of red granite with a huge bas-relief of Lenin’s familiar three-quarter profile and topped with a five-pointed star on its flagpole is held aloft by a group of somewhat diminutive Soviet people crowded onto a tall pedestal. Volodia says that Tomskii got the original idea from the yearly public festivities that take place in Red Square on November 7. Apparently as part of the annual celebration of the Great October Revolution, a wooden statue is placed on the lobnoe mesto, the site of public executions during the pre-Petrine period. Against the background of St. Basil’s Cathedral the structure depicts a Black, an Oriental, and a Caucasian man holding a red banner that presumably symbolizes the ultimate victory of world socialism. Volodia told me with absolute assurance that Tomskii had decided to replicate this idea in the national war memorial.

Whatever its genesis, the monument planned for Poklonnaia Hill was graceless, stolid, and ugly. But its most important drawback was its visual theme of the banner, which clashed with its ostensible purpose. Supposedly the monument was to commemorate the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War. So why are they holding a banner larger than they are? And what is Lenin’s face doing there? The actual red flag flown on the Reichstag building displayed a hammer and sickle,
and bore the name of the army group that took Berlin. 46 But this one shows Lenin, who is the personification of the Communist Party. As Mayakovsky once said, "When we say Lenin, we mean the Party/ When we say the Party, we mean Lenin." Volodia was right when he said that what was really being planned was a monument to the victorious Party.

By the spring of 1984, with the fortieth anniversary of the victory only a year away, the project finally got underway, more than a quarter-century after the initial Politburo resolution. The foundation was begun to be laid, and a huge team of sculptors and architects began to build some of the memorial's many costly components. Vast sums of money were collected to fund the project, most of them from subbotniki, "voluntary" labor days held annually on the Saturday closest to Lenin's birthday. Thus the money to celebrate one great myth was raised by appealing to another.

According to the chief engineer in charge of the memorial project, some twenty thousand people labored to bring in the considerable funds. Others simply sent in donations to account #700828 that was advertised in many newspapers. It is reasonable to assume that in many factories and other workplaces, employees were simply told to contribute. In all, by 1986 some 190 million rubles were collected. This is a staggering sum, considering that it is about one million times as large as the average monthly wage of a Soviet worker, which in 1986 was 195 rubles. 47

46 It was the 150th Irditskii Division, Order of Kutuzov, Level II.

47 Sotsialisticheskaia industriia, January 18, 1987. The average monthly wage for a peasant was even lower, 159 rubles.
During Victory Year, 1985, a sprinkling of articles in the media hailed the forthcoming memorial as the culmination of the Soviet Union's reverence for its fallen heroes and mighty spirit. Moscow News, the English-language newspaper for foreigners, printed such a piece about a week before the anniversary. Naturally there were articles about it in the architects' trade journal, Arkhitektura SSSR, and one of many commemorative volumes published for the fortieth anniversary included a smug piece on the memorial complex written by A. Polianskii, secretary of the union of architects, who had slipped onto the team of designers in 1984.

As has frequently happened in the past with such projects, its models were put on exhibit to publicize the enterprise and elicit public endorsement. The time was a year after the fortieth anniversary, mid-June, 1986. The place was the bewilderingly huge addition to the Tretiakov gallery on the Crimean Embankment. Vecherniaia Moskva ran a major piece on the exhibit, featuring many photographs, an article by Polianskii (now billed as the chief architect of the project) and an interview with its main sculptors. (N. V. Tomskii had died in 1985 and had been replaced by O. Kiriukhin and Iurii Chernov). In this paper, the public was invited to respond with its views, but within a quite limited arena. For example, several variations of the interior of some of the museum halls were displayed, and visitors were asked to state their preferences. They were also told they could give their opinions on the proposed park surrounding the memorial. The sculptors said they and their colleagues had been at work on the project for almost five years, and that they were operating in a special twenty-four meter high
pavilion constructed on Zorge street. They ended their interview by expressing the hope that Muscovites would offer "criticisms and suggestions that would make the sculptural part and the ensemble as a whole more expressive, more spiritual."\textsuperscript{48}

The Plot Thickens

By the summer of 1986 Mikhail Gorbachev's call for \textit{glasnost'} had penetrated public discussions in many spheres. Derived from the root word, \textit{glas}, which means voice, \textit{glasnost'} is the voicing of ideas and criticisms. Quite suddenly, beginning that previous winter, the mass media, particularly the press and television, became vehicles for critical assessments of many economic, social and cultural issues. In this context, the projected monument on Poklonnaia Hill, placed on exhibit with the manifest purpose of drawing out public opinion, became a kind of sitting duck. One after another, people took potshots at it until finally they killed the project. Throughout that summer there were vociferous debates in the press about it, culminating in a government announcement on September 2 that the main monument would be scrapped and there would be an open competition for its replacement.

The popularization process snowballed quickly. At first, the memorial designers seemed to be very much in control. A few days after the exhibit opened some of the project's key staff, the architect Belopol'skii and sculptors Kiriukhin and Chernov held a question and answer session with workers from the Oktiabr'skaia district in which the exhibition hall stands. As reported in the press, the staff answered

\textsuperscript{48}Vechernaia Moskva, June 18, 1986.
questions authoritatively; they were simply acquainting the interested public with what still appeared to be the future plans for the monument.\footnote{Sovetskaia kultura, June 26, 1987} But almost immediately, the proposed monument was subjected to sharp criticism. Sovetskaia kultura played a catalytic role by asking its readers to write in their reactions to the exhibit.

There was not a single wholly positive response to the planned memorial complex. A few letters indicated enthusiasm for the idea of a major memorial in Moscow, often coupled with the hope that the construction would proceed apace, but the overwhelming proponderance of letters and articles conveyed a negative assessment of the complex and the main monument in particular. The memorial focused people's attention on their history and their culture, and inspired some to demand that they, the people, appropriate these spheres that had long been the province of bureaucratic mastodons.

The first devastating attack came from Andrei Voznesensky, the famed poet. An architect by training, he had a longstanding interest in monuments, and visited the exhibit just the day before speaking to the congress of the Writers' Union in Moscow. On impulse (as he later told me) he decided to speak his mind on the proposed monument in his speech to the congress. A small excerpt of that speech was published in Literaturnaia gazeta, deploring the people's utter indifference to their own culture. Voznesensky bitterly compared today's Muscovites with those of more than a hundred years ago.

When the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was being built in honor of the victory over Napoleon, everyone participated in the construction by making donations, and [Alexander]
Herzen was enthralled with the project. But we are astonishingly indifferent. We worked off our subbotnik, but what will be built? It’s as though Moscow weren’t ours. And now -- according to a new trend -- the design is exhibited for the purpose of discussion across from the Crimean Bridge. Go there! I went yesterday. The design is of an ugly pillar 70 meters high, that is, [the size of] a 30-story apartment building. It is one of the most dispiriting and worthless monuments in the world... Besides, even red granite looks black when silhouetted, and all those entering Moscow will be frightened by the gigantic black banner. What a horror...

What the poet had in mind here was that because of the placement of the monument, it would almost always be silhouetted when viewed from the west, which is how it would be seen by those driving in along Kutuzovsky Prospekt.

A few days after the appearance of Voznesensky’s speech, another writer, Mikhail Roshchin, jumped into the fray. His article "Maybe It’s Not Too Late?" in the popular weekly, Nedelia, was an impassioned plea to stop the construction of the project and take the time to rethink the whole enterprise. "In the place of an old Moscow arboretum there is now ripped-up earth and a huge construction project," he writes. The machinery is so formidable, he continues, that one wonders what we might have accomplished had we had such a technology in 1941! But is this destruction necessary? Do we really need to spend an enormous sum to honor the memory of our people’s exploits in this manner, by building a gigantic complex? Roshchin was attacking not just the main monument, as did Voznesensky. He called the whole project into question, and invited the readers of Nedelia to respond. He suggested that the money might be better spent by building twenty or thirty apartment buildings for veterans. The proposed project, he writes,

50 Literaturnaia gazeta, July 2, 1986
"brings to mind not the best examples of pomposity and gigantomania, beginning with the Egyptian pyramids....While it is still not too late, maybe we should think it over once more? [Is it not better] to plant trees, build beautiful apartment buildings, to return the green Victory tract to our children and grandchildren, rather than have a concrete one?"  

By the second week of July, letters on the monument were appearing thick and fast. Those appearing as part of Sovetskaia kultura's invited debate were published under the provocative headline, "Responsibility Before the Future." Their authors complained of the design's gigantomania, its ugliness, its lack of originality, sparkle, and inspiration. Many point out that the monument is being built with public monies. Therefore it must be "splendid and magnificent, worthy of the people," says one letter whose author pleads that it is better to delay the project for a year or two or five, "so that our generation will not be blamed for primitivism and oversimplification." The most thoughtful response in the Sovetskaia kultura debate came from a woman, a certain N. Mikhailovskaia, who began by expressing astonishment that people were criticizing only the sculptural component of the planned complex; this direction, she noted, had been "obviously provoked." Someone, she cannily figured out, was protecting the rest of the project. And someone, she continued, had been ordering the workmen on the Poklonnaia Hill construction site to speed up the tempo of their work on the memorial just as the criticism of it was mounting. Mikhailovskaia wrote with palpable passion that the victory monument

51Nedelia, July 7-13 (No. 28), p. 14
should be a "temple, a temple to Memory." This is a theme echoed by other letter-writers as well. "Memorial [pamiatnik] comes from the word 'memory' [pamiat']," wrote another involved citizen. "That is why people go to a memorial ... to feel the grandeur of the exploit and the burning intensity of the loss." All those engaged in the debate agreed that the planned monument did not inspire the desired feelings, which one writer called "holy stirrings." In her letter, Mikhailovskaia concluded that the worst that could happen is that the project might be allowed to continue unhindered and result in another mistake like the "Rossiia" and "Intourist" Hotels.52

Indeed, many letters sent from Moscow and other parts of the Soviet Union criticizing the project used it as a springboard for attacking other architectural monstrosities, such as the "Rossiia" Hotel and war memorials already extant in other cities. A resident of Kiev, for example, responded to Mikhail Roshchin's article in Nedelia by complaining about Vuchetich's Motherland monument that had gone up five years earlier. Why, he asks, was it necessary to erect next to the smaller monuments of yore (meaning the ancient Monastery of the Caves with its golden cupolas) a towering woman of steel clutching a sword? A physician from Riga took the complaint about useless monuments a step further: "There is in Riga a monument to participants in the war, but no hospital for them, although one is necessary." In the same vein a war invalid from Stavropol reported that he had visited the construction site on Poklonnaia Hill and concluded that no one needs

52Sovetskaia kultura, July 10, 12, and 19, 1987
this kind of pomposity, that the money should be spent on those who are still alive.

It is clear that these criticisms went far beyond the responses intended by the organizers of the exhibit of the model in the State Picture Gallery on the Crimean Embankment. Rather than suggesting a little tinkering here or there, or at the very least restricting their attacks to the main monument, they took on the entire thirty-year-old project, and some used it as a springboard to publicly lambast the administrative system of churning out expensive monuments that were, in Mikhail Roshchin's words, mere pokazukha -- an untranslatable word meaning something like "empty showcase." Moreover, this pompous and ugly pokazukha was accused of replacing the hospitals and proper apartments that veterans really need. It looked as though the policy of glasnost' had inspired the public to question the long-standing Party and government practice of giving circuses instead of bread.

The Riga doctor who suggested that the veterans in his city had more need of a hospital than of a war memorial, and Roshchin himself, who proposed that the enormous sums earmarked for the monument on Poklonnaia Hill might be better spent on the construction of twenty or thirty apartment buildings, had gotten to the heart of the matter. For the monumentalization of idealized myth in the Soviet Union has always been used to obscure real and pressing life problems. More precisely, the mythic Lenin or Stalin or legendary war hero, whether he is depicted in bronze or oils or a work of literary fiction, is meant to convey an alternate, higher reality compared to which the quotidian concerns of Soviet citizens fade into obscurity.
The criticism of this practice, inspired by the debate over the Moscow war memorial, was indeed pithy and pungent. It was also passionate and genuinely popular, for the issue seemed to touch a raw nerve in many people. This not surprising, since it concerned an enormous amount of money and a traumatic episode in the nation’s history. Suddenly Soviet citizens were saying, it’s our past and our money, why are they making all the big decisions? Indeed, wrote Mikhail Roshchin in his second long article on the subject in *Nedelia*, why is it that as a rule such monuments are put up without any public discussion, but rather as faits accompli? Why do we not learn about the costs, procedures, who is running the competitions, and how the commissions are given out? For many people the issue was a passionate one because it concerned not only money and the remembrance of the second world war, but also ecology and, indirectly, the preservation of Russian historical monuments. For many people the legendary Hill of Prostrations with its old park had been a precious piece of Russian soil that was a kind of historical monument, and they called for its restoration. One person wrote into *Nedelia* announcing his readiness to participate in subbotniki to help restore the hill. Many others echoed the sentiment. During the month I spent in Moscow in June of 1987, most members of the intelligentsia whom I queried on the subject spoke out for the rebuilding of the hill. American author Suzanne Massie recalls attending a lecture at Moscow University in February of 1987 at which the painter, Ilya Glazunov, when asked about the monument, raised his voice and invited the audience of several hundred people to join him in

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53 *Nedelia*, August 4-10, 1986
restoring the old hill by bringing handfuls of earth to the construction site! The debate in *Nedelia* also inspired readers to counterpose the new monument to ancient buildings that have been destroyed or allowed to fall into disrepair. "Why are tasteless and expensive edifices being constructed when brilliant treasures of old are being torn down?" wrote a Muscovite, M. Panferov, citing the example of the ancient Simonov Monastery. It shelters the remains of other, earlier war heroes, the warriors of the Kulikovo Battle against the Tatars in 1380; and yet the building is now used as a factory. And a veteran used the war memorial discussion as a forum to air a related, characteristically Russian grievance: the Novodevichi Convent (Convent of the New Virgin), a lovely old Moscow complex with a famous cemetery, was open only to visitors with special passes. "It is blasphemous that people should need passes to see the graves of Chekhov and Gogol!" Once again, a familiar message: It is our past, let us reclaim it! This theme is central to our story of a monument. The open discussion of what was to be a national cathedral evoked intense populist feelings in a public unused to the privilege of appropriating its own symbols, and even more important, its own dramatic past.

Of course the public debate was highly politicized. This was the era of selective glasnost', when for example, some newspapers and periodicals (such as Moscow News and Ogonek) were deeply critical of the established system, and others were not. This selectivity was apparent in the debate over the victory monument. Sovetskaia kultura and Nedelia published sharp attacks and called for readers to send in

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*Nedelia*, August 4-10, 1987
critical remarks. Moscow's daily, Vechernaia Moskva, on the other hand, published letters voicing milder criticisms of the exhibited model. But as a totality, the question of the monument caused a great stir in Moscow that summer. Letters poured into newspapers and government offices. The response books in which visitors to the exhibit were invited to state their views were filled with hundreds of comments. Thousands of people crowded the gallery to see the displayed model of little people holding up a gigantic red banner with Lenin's profile plunked into its middle. Sovetskaia kultura, in an editorial comment appended to the conclusion of its public discussion of the affair, pronounced the project flawed in both its architectural and sculptural components, citing the unusually unanimous opinion of its readers. The editors called for an open competition for the main monument, expressing the hope that this call would be heeded.\(^55\) And in fact, on August 17, 1986, some six weeks after the opening of the exhibit, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union published a resolution announcing its intention to hold an open competition for the main monument of the Victory Memorial in Moscow.\(^56\) This decision was immediately lauded in the press as a vindication of Gorbachev's policies of glasnost' and democratization. Izvestiia interviewed Lev Kerbel, the Lenin and State Prize-winning sculptor. He had some generous things to say about Tomskii's "Victory Banner" monument, but added that in important matters involving everyone,

\(^{55}\) Sovetskaia kultura, July 26, 1986

\(^{56}\) Izvestiia, August 17, 1986
"genuine glasnost' is necessary."\textsuperscript{57} Sovetskaia kultura proudly trumpeted the assertion that the discussion on its pages had prompted the Politburo to hold the open contest, and published letters supporting the plan. "An expression of true democratism" is what one letter called it. Another echoed this sentiment. "The people's money is being used for this memorial; how could its design be decided upon behind closed doors? We must learn to live under conditions of democracy..."\textsuperscript{58}

Had glasnost' really accomplished something in the sphere of national culture? A careful reading of the Soviet press during the summer of 1986 showed a spontaneous popular movement -- filled with energy and excitement -- to get rid of the monument planned for construction on Poklonnaia Hill. I could only surmise that the exhibit in the State Picture Gallery had been intended to mobilize popular enthusiasm for a project that was a fait accompli, that the expected minor criticisms of the monument had been evoked to make the public feel that this was their project, and that the ensuing stormy discussion and its outcome had happened spontaneously and not by design. Then, in April of 1987, Andrei Voznesensky came to Boston to read his poetry.

The Voznesensky Connection

As usual, his performance was thrilling. I sat with an audience of students in a crowded auditorium at Tufts University and marveled at

\textsuperscript{57}Izvestiia, August 18, 1986

\textsuperscript{58}Sovetskaia kultura, August 19, 1986
the power he managed to exude, despite the evident fatigue that showed in the sagging muscles of his boyish face. In the question and answer period I asked the poet about his attack on the planned war memorial at the Writers' Union congress the previous summer, excerpts of which had been published in Literaturnaja gazeta. He responded that the government had intended to build "the ugliest monument in the world," that thirty million rubles had already been spent and one hundred million more were earmarked for the project, and that he had been especially horrified at the idea that the thing would face east, causing people to see it in black silhouette. "I don't want to have big ego," he continued, but people read my speech and, inspired by it, sent letters of protest to the government and to newspaper offices, and thousands came to the construction site waving copies of the speech and heckling the workers. In the end, the government abandoned its plans to build the monument. This was the first time in our history, he concluded, that the actions of a poet were able to make the government change its mind on something so important.

I was astonished at the role Voznesensky had appropriated for himself in the story and was particularly intrigued by the notion of thousands of protesters bearing copies of Literaturnaja gazeta in their raised fists. So I followed up with three long telephone conversations with him, each of which I translated and transcribed as soon as I hung up the receiver. The following is a transcription of the first two conversations edited for clarity and conciseness and to remove those portions that the poet indicated were off the record.
Conversation with Voznesensky

April 15, 1987

Q. Why did you visit the exhibit of the monument?
A. I'm an architect by training, so am interested in these things.
Besides, I had seen a photo of the model and didn't like it.
Q. Why did they put it on display?
A. They're idiots, they understand nothing. They wanted publicity and
praise to help raise more money. They thought they would get many tiny
suggestions, but had no idea there would be real criticism. You know
that that 30 million rubles have already been spent, and they are
expecting to spend another 100 million. This was all done by government
decision on a very high level, maybe even Politburo.
Q. Yes, Politburo.
A. Right, on the very highest level. Work on the memorial had been done
in studio of sculptor Tomskii [N.V. Tomskii]. Now Tomskii has died and
his colleagues are the most untalented people. They had this idea of a
red granite banner. I alone realized that the only way for it to be
placed was so that people would see it from east to west so that it
would look black, which would be terrible. When I went to the exhibit
on the Crimean Embankment, I met one of sculptors who had made the
monument. He asked me, "Well, how do you like it?" I said to him, "And
how do you like it? Why it's absolute shit!"
Q. Did you actually use those words?
A. Yes. "And besides," I said, "not only is it costing tens of millions
of rubles, but it is ruining a beautiful corner of Moscow." The
sculptor answered that he didn't like it either. He said that a certain
high-level bureaucrat had made the design.
Q. Really?
A. Yes. Well, the bureaucrat didn't actually draw it, but he said it
should be red banner of gigantic proportions with small people, or at
any rate, with Soviet people holding it aloft. The sculptor said that
he and his colleagues had done the best they could with such a dumb
idea, but he really does not like it.
It just so happened coincidentally that the next day was the congress
of the Writers Union. I was one of the first to speak, and no one knew
ahead of time what we would say; we just spoke. I spoke about many
things, and decided to include my views on the monument. I had hardly
written anything about it in my lecture notes.
Q. You spoke impulsively, then?
A. Yes. I feel strongly. It's quite an emotional issue for Muscovites.
I said a great deal, much more than was reported in the paper. I
reported the conversation with the sculptor about the high Party
official. Then I went to the office of Literaturnaia gazeta to make
sure that they didn't cut everything out of my speech, those jerks.
Q. Well yes, Chakovskii...59

59 Alexander Chakovskii, the conservative writer, was editor-in-chief of Literaturnaia gazeta.
A. I sat there literally the whole day, drinking tea, trying to keep my speech in there. But they still cut out most of it.
Q. And what was the impact of the speech?
A. It started a whole popular movement. Crowds of people went over there clutching copies of that Literaturnaia gazeta in their hands.
Q. Over where?
A. The construction site on Poklonnaia Hill.
Q. Many, many people?
A. Thousands. They were waving the paper and protesting the construction of the monument. The workers started to work even faster and more furiously in response. And people were heckling them and trying to obstruct their work.
Q. Was this an organized group? Did it appear on one day or several days?
A. It was absolutely spontaneous. All of Moscow read that piece of the speech. Maybe there’s not such a great interest in all the literary issues we spoke about, but everyone got excited about the monument. It’s an emotional Moscow issue.
Q. And did they come just for one day?
A. They came every day for a week. People also began to come in enormous numbers to the exhibit on the Crimean Embankment. They started to write by the thousands in the response books, complaining about the monument. The authorities finally had to put away the books. It turned into a real bedlam.
Q. Why did people get so agitated about this?
A. First of all the monument was terribly ugly, the ugliest monument in the world. Second of all, Poklonnaia Hill is a sacred place. The plans called for levelling the hill and destroying a beautiful old park originally built by Muscovites doing voluntary labor. So people were really affected by the plan to destroy the area and build an ugly monument.
Q. You shamed them. In your speech you said that Muscovites were behaving as though the city weren’t theirs.
A. That’s right. Because of all this, the government decided that the plans for the monument should be opened up to a public competition. But the entries were really very weak. The ground rules stipulated that everything would stay the same -- the layout, the museum there, or whatever they call it...
A. Right, the Museum of the Great Patriotic War. The competition was only for the monument itself.
Q. Did you go to see the exhibit of the entries?
A. Yes, but I wore dark glasses, because everyone knew that I had been the one to organize it all. This is the first time in our history a poet was able to so influence a government decision. Most of the entries were the same kind of thing as the horrid proposed one. The entries divided up into Slavophile and Internationalist camps. There were a few nice ones. One was by my friend Tsereteli with whom I had built a memorial in Moscow [to the union of Russian and Georgian people]. It had a pleasant, simple, classical look, like the Vendome columns in Paris.
Q. Did you work with Tsereteli on the design of the competition entry?
A. No, he did it without my participation. Had we done it together, then people would have said that I had spearheaded the whole movement. So I could get my own my design chosen in the competition. In all there were some nice entries, pleasing to look at, but nothing brilliant. Only 2 or 3 were based on a restored hill. Now the ending of all this is sad. No winner was chosen. The whole thing is left up in the air, there are no more workmen, but there are bulldozers and debris all over the site. It's a mess.

April 16, 1987

Q. Why do you call Poklonnaia Hill a sacred place?
A. Because it is an historical place. It's the place where Napoleon stood waiting for the keys to the city, and they were never brought.

Q. What would you like to see there in the way of a monument?
A. First, I would like to see the hill restored. And then, I don't know, I haven't really thought about it. I would like something small, intimate, maybe just made of flowers. Most important is that there should be trees and greenery.

Q. So the park should be restored.
A. Yes. Yes, because it's about life and death. Best of all would be just to leave this hill clean [sic]. Why ruin it with stone pedestals, monuments, etc.? And why take the spot associated with one victory[1812] and add on another one[1945]? Why these are absolutely separate things! Or maybe the monument should just be simply a little statue of Napoleon! I wrote a poem, it's too long to recite it to you now, but it says how a statue of Napoleon is on the hill, and they took the hill away, but the statue remains in the same place, just suspended in the air. The cars are driving by the street, and Napoleon looks down at them from the sky (Voznesensky and I are both laughing as he is saying this). The main thing is that it should be something lyrical, yes lyrical, anti-monumental. After all, the hill itself is a memorial. Whatever ideas I should have I don't feel I can propose anything, since I started this whole movement. Then people would say that Voznesensky did all of this so he could get his project instated. Can't do it. But I would like something simple, lyrical.

Q. Have you seen our Vietnam memorial in Washington?
A. Yes, but to tell you honestly, I don't remember it.

Q. I think of it as a particularly successful war memorial.
A. In any event, it should be something lyrical. The war ended already forty years ago, people have forgotten about it. It's time to concentrate on life, trees, parks.

Q. But don't you think that the memory of the war is still an important component of Soviet political mythology?
A. Yes, of course, and not only in political mythology, but in fact. People do remember the war. Remember, in our country, families are much closer than here in your country where kids grow up and move to different cities. With us they usually stay together, there is a sense of continuity of generations, of the need to remember the invasion, occupation, Jewish graves, all these things; people, even young people, remember and care.
Q. Was it your speech that began the whole debate in Sovetskaja kultura, in which people were deeply critical of the monument?
A. You mean the campaign against the monument?
Q. Yes.
A. Yes of course. Moskovskaia pravda had an article that was critical of me, which said, without naming me, that a certain poet who is completely unschooled in these matters has been trying to get the Poklonnaia Hill project scrapped. But all the other press was strongly supportive of my position. That was the only negative article. It turned into a popular groundswell. Thousands of people wrote letters of protest.
Q. To whom? The newspapers?
A. Yes, and to the government.
Q. How do you know that?
A. How do I know? I have friends, many friends who did just that. And then people by the thousands wrote in those books.
Q. The response books in the gallery.
A. Yes. Thousands wrote in them, and finally the books were taken away, because people were writing terrible things, using a lot of foul language. People went to write in them just like they were going into battle.
Q. It was a real protest.
A. Yes, a real protest. It was a popular movement.
Q. Actually, it was not just Muscovite, but turned into something national. In Sovestakaia kultura there were letters from Riga, from Kiev, from all over.
A. Yes. It was genuinely popular.
Q. In our conversation yesterday, you said that this was the first time in Soviet history that a poet was able to effect a change in a big government decision.
A. Yes. They had already levelled the hill, spent 30 million rubles and raised 100 million more.
Q. I read that the entire sum was to have been 190 million.
A. Yes. The important thing is that it was in the Five Year Plan. With us everything is done very bureaucratically. To change what is in the plan is a very big thing. It was Gorbachev who did this. We now have a new line, and he responded to the people's wishes.
Q. The sculptor that you spoke to at the exhibit, was it Kiriukhin or Chernov?
A. No. Chernov is the main sculptor. Of course he absolutely hates me, but this was one of his co-workers. He came up to me and said, "Well, how do you like it?" thinking I was going to say something positive.
Q. He recognized you.
A. Yes, of course.
Q. And did you really tell him that it was shit?
A. I said that the design was very bad, very bad. Then I did use that foul word. That is not my style. I'm a polite person. But I said to him, for the sake of the money, for the sake of Moscow, how could you so ruin our country? And he said that he himself didn't like it.
Q. But he had no choice about the design because of that high official?
A. Exactly. This was the official's pet project.
About two months later I arrived in Moscow for a month-long research trip. Charmed by Voznesensky's account of the popular movement to dump the monument inspired by his published speech, but just a little bit suspicious, I was determined to learn more about the genesis of the plan to scrap the monument and hold an open competition for its replacement.

The true story came out during the last hectic days of my stay. The most helpful, as usual, was Masha, the city planner who had enlightened me about the security considerations that had dictated the original changes on Poklonnaia Hill. It seems that she knew someone who had worked for A. Polianskii who was -- not coincidentally -- both the president of the national Union of Architects and the chief architect of the infamous latest version of the "Victory Banner" Moscow memorial. Masha, who was very much an insider in this whole story, was quite evidently torn between the understandable desire to protect her friend's boss from public scrutiny and the impulse to tell the truth to a well-intentioned American scholar of whom she had grown fond. She saved the scoop for the last minutes of our last walk together in downtown Moscow. I knew from other sources that this was a particularly dramatic moment in Polianskii's career. Just the previous week, in mid-June 1987, a stormy session of the annual congress of the Union of Architects had ousted him from his position as its president. Masha herself had been at the session, but was unwilling to reveal the details of the critical discussions at the congress. However she did reveal that he had been attacked because of his role in the affair of the war memorial.
"Exactly what was his role?" I asked her, as we turned the corner of Gertsen Street, walking arm in arm, as was our practice. Masha sighed and pulled me closer to her as a chill summer wind blew up suddenly. "It was Polianskii who orchestrated the events of last summer; it was he who decided that there must be an open competition for the main monument. You see, he came onto the project rather late, and was terribly dissatisfied with its sculptors. Tomskii, you remember, died some time ago, and even before then, since he was old and ailing, he had been aided by a group of sculptors. Two of them, Chernov and Kiriukhin, took over when he died. Polianskii hated their projected 'Victory Banner' monument. And he disliked their planned ancillary sculptures as well." Remembering my conversation with Voznesensky, I asked her about the role of a high level bureaucrat. Was he not intimately bound up with the design of the monument? And what was his identity? Masha paused; I could see that she was trying to decide how much to tell me. "There might have been someone like that," she replied, but refrained from naming any names. Her heels clicked authoritatively on the sidewalk. "In any event, the sculptors were tied hand and foot by bureaucrats who knew nothing about art. Polianskii decided to get rid of those sculptors and replace them with others so that his architectural design would not be marred for eternity by that monstrous monument." "So it was his idea to organize the exhibit in the State Picture Gallery on the Crimean Embankment in order to draw criticism?" I asked. Masha nodded. "And did he call for the public discussions in the press?" "Of course," she answered quietly, "but he underestimated himself. He thought the monument was so bad that it would
come under strong attack, but it never occurred to him that the
criticism might extend to his design as well. Everything but the
sculptural portions of the complex -- the landscaping, the promenades,
the fountains, the museum -- are all Polianskii's work. When the
project was displayed he sat in a corner of the exhibition hall day
after day poring over the response books, in which many people had
recommended that the whole project be scrapped. He was really shaken by
this. Not only had he overestimated himself, but he mistimed his effort
to get rid of the sculptors and replace them with better ones while
leaving his project intact."

"He should have done it two years earlier,
when the Party apparatus under Chernenko was gearing up to celebrate
the fortieth anniversary of the victory," I said. "Exactly. Then he
would have gotten what he wanted. The monument design was so ugly that
it would have drawn enough mild criticism for him to argue that it must
be replaced. But by the summer of 1986 stormy times had arrived. He
could no longer control the critical process." What about Voznesensky's
assertion that he had spearheaded the move to scrap the monument? That,
said Masha, was wrong. "Believe me," she said, "it was Polianskii's
doing." As we continued to talk she did, however, confirm the poet's
claim that crowds of people had flocked to the exhibit and many had
written terribly nasty things in the response books. She herself had
gone there several times and seen what was being written.

Masha's story was confirmed by Daniel Mitlianskii, a Moscow
sculptor who remembers seeing the miserable figure of Polianskii
hunched over the response books, reading attack after attack on his
beloved design. We were perched on little stools, eating bread, fresh
dill, and some toxic-looking cheese that he considered a delicacy, all laid on on a small, rickety table in his studio. I had brought a small bottle of Moskovskaya vodka, but drank tea. Mitlianskii was eagerly gulping down the vodka from a large and dirty tumbler. It was a cold, rainy day in late June, 1987. I had had so much trouble finding his studio that I had telephoned him from a nearby payphone and waited for him to find me. Other callers were waiting to use the phone (which always seems to be the case in Moscow) so I had no shelter from the rain. As I peered down Gostinichnaya Street looking for him, I had mixed feelings. On the one hand I was looking forward to meeting this man, because he had sculpted the single most effective monument to World War II that I had ever seen in the Soviet Union, a modest sculpture of five soldiers that sits in the courtyard of a high school in downtown Moscow. On the other hand, when we had arranged the meeting on the phone a day or two earlier, he had said "I should warn you, I'm not in good form. My wife is dying." At that he exploded into a hacking cough that lasted some minutes before we could resume the conversation. So I really didn't know what to expect.

The man who retrieved me from the environs of the phone booth looked like Hollywood's version of old man Karamazov -- unkempt, matted brown hair streaked with grey, a full grey beard, exhausted, bloodshot eyes, and a slightly loping gait. He still had that dreadful cough. He seemed so very much like a man at the end of his rope that for a moment I was frightened to follow him into his studio. But I was eager to interview him about war memorials and besides, this was Moscow, which I consider the safest city in the world. What I ought not to have done
was given him that vodka; the last thing that a Russian man who is angry, sick, and half-crazed with grief needs is alcohol. As a consequence, he was tearful during much of our visit.

The studio was a fabulous place, filled with wonderful, fanciful sculpture -- huge expressive heads, small, graceful soldiers whose slimness conveyed their touching youth and vulnerability. For Mitlianskii war memorials were a passion. He wept as he spoke about the war, and this was before touching a drop of vodka. He was also so desperate about his wife who was dying of cancer, and himself so sick with a bronchial infection that our conversation, most of which I have on tape, was a stream of consciousness about death, war, Russia, art, and politics. This was our first and last meeting until my next trip to Moscow, because I was leaving for the States early the following morning. I said I would be back in a year and would see him then. "Who knows if I'll be alive then?" he asked. I quietly wondered the same thing myself.

After leaving Mitlianskii I paid a farewell call to Volodia, the young sculptor. His clear eyes, ruddy complexion and vigorous voice contrasted strikingly to the mien of the older man. I was determined to learn the identity of the high official who Voznesensky indicated had designed the "Victory Banner." Volodia insisted that the sculptor Tomskii had dreamt up the idea of a large banner held aloft by a group of people, but that a high Party official had in fact been terribly involved in the project, meddling in even the smallest details. He named Victor Grishin, a senior Politburo official and boss of the Moscow Communist Party organization."He was a terrible person who ran
Moscow as if it were his own patrimony," said Volodia. "He was utterly obsessed with the memorial on Poklonnaia Hill. What he had wanted, and indeed, what had been planned, was a memorial not to the war victims, but to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. That’s what the flag really meant. It was a national monument to the Party. He laid down the specifications, he was constantly on the search for just the right stone for this or that part of it, he was really preoccupied with it. He saw it as a monument to himself, like a pharoah with his pyramid."

The whole recent skandal about the memorial, continued Volodia, was orchestrated by Polianskii, the secretary of the Union of Architects, who engineered a plot to dump the sculptors. "One of them, Iurka Chernov, is my pal. He is not untalented, but Grishin gave him no freedom in designing the work. Polianskii thought he could replace poor Iurka and his colleagues and retain his entire architectural plan intact. My God, what an ugly mess the whole thing turned into!"

Open Contest

When the open competition was announced on September 2, 1986, it looked as though Polianskii had weathered the storm of criticism and managed to get his way. The published rules specified that the competition was for the main monument only, and that entries must take into account preparatory work already done on the site. Polianskii’s museum with its Hall of Glory, and his alleys, promenades, steps and

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60 In 1985, during Mikhail Gorbachev’s first months as General Secretary, he ousted Victor Grishin from the Politburo and made Boris Yeltsin head of the Moscow Party organization.
squares, surrounded by a Victory Park were presented as fixed features of the project. The winning monument was to be erected exactly where "Victory Banner" was to have gone up, in front of the Museum of the Great Patriotic War. Most likely Voznesensky's practical criticism made at the Writers' Union congress was taken into account by the sponsoring authorities, since they warned entrants to consider how their designs would look from close up, from far away, and in silhouette. 61

The competition, sponsored by the USSR Ministry of Culture; Academy of Artists, and Unions of Artists and Architects, was to proceed according to rules limiting the size of entry models and the materials from which they could be made. First, second, and third place winners were promised modest cash prizes of three, two, and one thousand rubles, respectively. An additional five competitors were to receive honorable mention and honoraria of five hundred rubles. The competition was to run four months, from September through December. From January 15 to February 1, 1987, all submitted works meeting the ground rules would be exhibited to the public, which would be invited to leave written comments. By the end of those two weeks the jury was to have chosen the eight prize winners whose work would be placed on display on February 1. The ground rules also insured the anonymity of all competitors, whose projects would be identified by a number that would reflect only the the order in which the designs were submitted. 62

The contest, the first truly open competition for a major monument since the 1950s, created an enormous stir in the Soviet artistic

61Sovetskaia kultura, September 2, 1986
62Ibid; Izvestiia, Jan. 17, 1987
community. Hundreds of people were inspired to send in entries in the form of models or sketches. Hundreds more sent in letters describing the kinds of memorials they wished to see erected. On January 15, 1987, according to plan, all the entries were placed on exhibit in the Manezh, Moscow's Central Exhibition Hall located near Red Square. It would seem that its organizers hoped for a large public turnout, for they made the visiting hours long and the attendance free of charge. On the opening day, 377 works were put on display.\(^\text{63}\) It did not take more than a few days for the criticisms to appear, both of the displayed entries and of the plan to give the jury only two weeks to choose eight winning entries.

The most strident critic was Mikhail Roshchin, the writer who had spearheaded the attacks published in Nedelia the previous summer. Once again, he chose the same newspaper to launch his attack in an article entitled "The Victory Monument -- Let Pain and Happiness be Reflected in It." On the positive side, he was moved by the enthusiasm for the project shown by Muscovites, as evidenced by the crowds at the exhibit and the long lines waiting to get in. (In July of the previous year Voznesensky had chided his fellow citizens for their apathy about the proposed monument, and compared them unfavorably to their mid-nineteenth-century counterparts who had become involved in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.\(^\text{64}\)) But Roshchin was palpably disappointed in the exhibited entries. Here, finally, was an open competition for the most important monument in the country, and what

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\(^\text{63}\) \textit{Vechernaia Moskva}, January 16, 1987

\(^\text{64}\) See above, p. 64
does he see in the way of designs? A collection of the most familiar, trite, conquering soldiers (with a sword, bouquet, machine-gun, on horseback, slaying a dragon like St. George), Motherland figures (including a pregnant one), flames, banners, wings, beams of light, swords, stars, arches, steles, heavy wreaths. He noticed many versions of "Nike," the Greek goddess of victory whose most famous depiction resides in the Louvre. "But she is not our creation, what do we need her for?" asks Roshchin. Or the ancient Russian warriors, bells, gilded cupolas -- maybe they are good, but they are not ours either, he adds, meaning, they are not Soviet. "But the war was ours, was special, filled with many meanings, great and small, it was at once savage and infinitely humane."

"How strange and bitter," continues the author, "that our artists lack the spirit, pain, thoughts, tears and joys" with which the events of the war are permeated. Maybe they were handicapped by the requirement of fitting their designs into the work that was already begun on the site. "Whatever the reasons, the general impression one gets is the same: cliche." It looks like even our artistic thinking "alas, is in need of perestroika (restructuring)." Maybe, he suggests, if the competition's commission does not find a uniquely satisfying design, it is better to wait and think a bit more, to search for a proper design?65

Izvestiia carried a collection of letters under the heading "Glasnost': feedback - The Monument on Poklonnaia gora -- DON'T HURRY!" One after another, the authors criticized the competition entries and

65Nedel'ia, No. 3, January 19-25, 1987
called for more time in evaluating the project. "It looks as though once again they're 'playing' at glasnost': they put on a show, made a commotion and..." wrote a graduate student in physics. "What's the rush? Who's hurrying us?" asked a member of a research and design group and his wife. The competition period was too short, and there was hardly any time for discussion.66

In fact, the contest aroused a tremendous furor. In two weeks some 40,000 people had attended the exhibit; by the end of the first-week, twelve thousand people had left written comments evaluating the entries.67 According to the rules, entries were identified by number only, but many people seemed to know who was responsible for which project. Day after day the Manezh was packed with people; in the course of a month there were 145,000 visitors.68 And, from what many people tell me, the tenor of the exhibit, especially in its final two weeks, was shrill and sometimes quite hysterical. Certain projects had advocates who served as active agitators, so that unsuspecting spectators would find themselves surrounded by people promoting this or that project, pointing out its merits, and urging the visitor to write a positive response on its behalf. People who attended the exhibit tell me its atmosphere was like a rynok, the market at which peasants hawk the wares they have raised on their private plots.


67Izvestiia, January 31, 1987

68In the end, the jury decided to extend the exhibit from two weeks to four. See below, p. 99.
Journalists, on the other hand, had been barred from "agitating for this or that project" so that contestants could not complain that their candidacy had been prejudiced by the press. True to the spirit of glasnost, an Izvestiia reporter complained that it was "not correct" of the exhibit organizers to muzzle the press this way, since everyone else was permitted to express an opinion of the entries. Besides, he added, journalists are not placed under such restrictions when covering discussions of candidates for Lenin and State Prizes.69

I learned from three separate sources that the biggest commotion in the Manezh revolved around entry number 206. Its basic form was that of a traditional Russian Orthodox church, minus the eight-pointed crosses, but replete with onion-dome cupolas of gleaming gold. The edifice was to sit on top of a reconstituted Poklonnaia Hill. This entry was the work of one Slava (Viacheslav) Klykov, the talented sculptor who in fact had been a member of one of the four finalist teams in the 1979 contest for the same monument. His submission at that time was the striking winged victory which had been criticized as looking like a mother of God.70 Clearly, religious themes, or at any rate, religious forms are Klykov’s metier.

A war memorial in the shape of a church is certainly not without precedent. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior was a memorial to the first Fatherland War. In Spain, the Valle de los Caidos, the grand memorial to the victims of the Spanish Civil War, is a Catholic church. Indeed a rather moving, in fact quite elegant little book published in

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69Izvestiia, January 17, 1987

70See above, p. 54.
England at the end of World War II suggests that bombed-out churches should serve as effective war memorials. The author argues that such churches should neither be restored nor torn down, but preserved as memorials together with their garden-ruins. In a country that professes atheism, however, a church is the very last form that one would think would be acceptable, especially for the official national memorial to the Great Patriotic War. Indeed, when in the 1920s a competition was held for the design of the Lenin Mausoleum in Red Square and someone proposed the shape of church, the jury put that entry into the category of rejects labelled "clearly absurd and fantastic or ideologically odious." It is surely a sign of new times that Klykov's "design #206" evoked an overwhelming positive response from viewers and came very close to winning the competition.

The story of Klykov's project has its own intriguing subplot, which revolves around a Moscow-based group called Pamiat' (Memory). During my month there in June 1987, Pamiat' was unquestionably the talk of the town. Formed in the early 1980s to champion the preservation and restoration of historical monuments and buildings, its meetings from the beginning were characterized by anti-Semitic and Russian nationalist overtones. These sentiments came to public light in 1986 when tapes of two of its meetings began to circulate around Moscow. At one of these gatherings the discussion's moderator blamed the destruction of Moscow architectural landmarks on a conspiracy of Jews and Freemasons, and as

71 Bombed Churches as War Memorials (Cheam, Surrey, 1945)
72 A.N. Kotyrev, Mavzolei V.I. Lenina, proektirovanie i stroitel'stvo (Moscow, 1971), p. 108. For more on the Lenin Mausoleum, see Tumarkin, Lenin Lives!, chap. 6
evidence read aloud the Jewish names in the telephone directory of the Main Administration for Architecture and Planning in Moscow.\textsuperscript{73} At the next meeting, held on December 8, 1985, one of its leaders, Dmitrii Vasil'ev, read portions of "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," a notorious anti-Semitic tract. As a result of this meeting, the group was officially disbanded and lost its home base at the Gorbunov House of Culture.\textsuperscript{74} It continued to meet in a number of places, however, and was said to have the backing of a number of important personages in the Party and government, as well as prominent artists, such as Ilya Glazunov, and writers, such as the famed Siberian writer, Valentin Rasputin. The member about whom I heard the most gossip was one Valerii Emel'ianov, purportedly one of its founding fathers. In April of 1980 he killed his wife and chopped her up into pieces with an axe. He was tried, judged not responsible for his actions, and consequently spent some six years in a psychiatric hospital before being released in January 1987. He has been called a "spiritual father" of Pamiat’. In the course of a series of lectures he expounded his belief in a conspiracy of Jews and Freemasons against Russia and the rest of the world. In the year he killed his wife he also published in Paris a book called Desionizatsiia (De-Zionization).


\textsuperscript{74}\textsc{Radio Liberty Research Bulletin}, 342/87; \textsc{Ogonek}, No. 21, 1987, pp. 4-5.
In its role as protector of Russian historical sites Pamiat' undertook a prominent role in the public debates about the monument on Poklonnaia Hill. The chief of the project's construction team, Evsei Grigorievich Freedman, told me that Pamiat' saw the whole complex as riddled with Masonic symbols and stars of David. In fact he added something I had already heard from another source: Pamiat' claimed that all of Moscow is shaped like an enormous star of David if you look at it from the air, proof of its having long been in the clutches of the Jewish conspiracy.

When the exhibit of entries opened in the Manezh in mid-January, 1987, Pamiat' members rallied around their favorite design -- Klykov's #206, shaped like a church and intended for construction atop a restored version of Poklonnaia Hill. Daily they congregated near the model, loudly lauding its virtues to incoming visitors. Klykov's case was strengthened by an article of enthusiastic support published by the "village-prose" writer, Valentin Rasputin. For him, design #206 was an "improved and clarified" realization of an archetypal image of a monument to the victory of his people in the Patriotic War residing in his soul. In his article published in Sovetskaia kultura, he captured the essence of the semiotics of monuments. He said that one does not find memory simply by designating a symbol and financing it with public funds. A truly vivifying memory is summoned when symbolic memory (znakovaia pamiat') generates and maintains a spiritual one. Otherwise, memory can become a "burial-ground." Rasputin brilliantly counterposed his high praise of Klykov's project with a virulent attack on some existing monuments. In colorful prose he lamented the many cold and
unappealing gigantic burial-grounds recently built for fabulous sums in Soviet cities and town, suggesting that their designers were actually mocking the public as they rushed to get more commissions from the Ministry of Culture. "Has little mother Russia (matushka Rossia) lost not only her talent but her taste as well?"

Rasputin's nationalism and sensitivity to ecological issues evident in his famous "village prose" provide the underlying power of this article. Poklonnaia Hill is the "sanctuary of our national history," and the designer of #206 is "a thousand times right" in calling for the hill's restoration. If we tolerate the razing of this hill, reasons Rasputin, then something else will be destroyed tomorrow. Furthermore, the author praises the design itself, which he finds perfectly balanced in scale and form, and consonant with Russian history. Our fathers and grandfathers went off to war fully aware of their nation's history, he writes, which is what made them so difficult to conquer. For they had at their side Alexander Nevskii, Dmitrii Donskoii, Bogdan Khmielnitskii, Suvorov, Kutuzov.75 All this must be remembered when building this monument. Implied though not stated in Rasputin's article is the idea that a church provides the most

75Nevskii, best known in the West as the subject of Eisenstein's famous film, was a Novgorodian Grand Prince who defended his city from an invasion by the Teutonic Knights in the thirteenth century. Dmitrii Donskoii, Prince of Moscow, battled the Tatars in the 1380 battle of Kulikovo Field. Khmielnitskii, legendary bogey man of Jewish lore because of frightful atrocities he and his men committed against that people in the course of their wars of rebellion, separated the Ukraine from Polish domination in the seventeenth century. Suvorov was a key figure in Catherine the Great's war against Turkey in the eighteenth century, and Kutuzov was, of course, the most renowned general in the war of 1812.
appropriate form for the monument because Russian Orthodoxy has been always -- at any rate until 1917 -- equivalent to the Russian spirit. The author deems Klykov's design to be "beautiful, lofty, sonorous and welcoming." He says that of all the arts, monumental art is the most responsive to the imperatives of patriotism, as is evident from the proposed monument. "I am not a specialist," Rasputin concludes, "this is simply my own personal judgment, and so I ask you to refrain from judging me harshly." But, he adds, "I do consider myself a specialist in patriotic feelings." He then ends by inviting the reader to bow before the great figure of the Motherland on Poklonnaia Hill; builders of monuments must take into account the sincerity of the public's feelings of reverence (poklonnye chuvstva.)

Rasputin's was one of many published letters inspired by the exhibit in the Manezh. Some of them were, like his, statements of support for one or another project. A letter signed by an entire family praised project #206, calling it the only talented entry and one that is realized in the tradition of Russian architecture, thus demonstrating the unity of "our whole people," a phrase that doubtless refers to the Russian and not the Soviet people. The family also liked the project's call for the restoration of the hill. A young man in his twenties wrote to support design #188, which he thought was theatrical enough to appeal to young people. It was in the shape of an enormous organ with huge pipes. He suggested that lights, color, and music -- a

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kind of *son et lumiere* -- could be used skillfully with this design to make the monument extremely dramatic.\(^77\)

The jury consisted of fifty-one people (artists, veterans, and others) headed by B. Ugarov, president of the Academy of Artists. As part of its deliberations it convened two meetings to discuss the designs for the monument, one held in the House of Architects and the other at the Manezh. The sculptor Daniel Mitlianskii was at both meetings, and reported that they were terribly animated, indeed almost hysterical in tone. In the Manezh, over a thousand artists, architects, journalists and others were present. Mitlianskii says that Pamiat' members agitated loudly for Klykov's design and harassed other speakers. When he himself stood up to make a remark, one of them shouted accusingly, "What is your nationality?" The anti-Semitic and ultra-nationalist tone of the discussion was apparently quite horrifying. None of the newspaper accounts of the meetings corroborate this, but a piece in *Sovietskaia kultura* does say that the two-day meeting in the Manezh was very heated. It also reports that one of the speakers was Valerii Emel'ianov, the axe-murderer (identified in the article simply as an economist). In his speech he suggested not only that Poklonnaia Hill be restored, but that earth be transferred to it from all the hero-cities and also from the battlefield of Kulikovo, where Muscovites fought the Tatars in 1380, and from Borodino. Thus, he reasoned, the reconstituted hill would have an even higher symbolic content than before!\(^78\)

\(^77\)*Sovietskaia kultura*, January 29, 1987

\(^78\)*Sovietskaia kultura*, January 31, 1987
The meeting-hall buzzed with accusations that the hill had already been completely levelled by bulldozers, and many writers, veterans, artists and architects spoke out angrily against those who had ordered this act. It seems that the hill, or rather, the right of Muscovites to have this hill, had taken on a powerful symbolic meaning. Beautiful, ancient, tradition-fearing, historic Russia was pitted against the soulless, technocratic barbarian bureaucrats. If glasnost' and democratization meant anything to this group of excited members of the intelligentsia, it gave them the right to vocalize their demands for the preservation of their land and history, and to expect that their voices would be heard and acted upon.

In these discussions and in the letters and articles about the competition published in the press, the word most frequently apposed to glasnost' was keleinost', which means secrecy or privacy. Previous contests for the monument had been conducted secretly. As for the fall, 1986 competition, some complained that it too had elements that were keleino, in which the public had not been consulted. In an article about the big public meeting in the Manezh, architect V. Stupin insisted that the fundamental problem with the whole competition was that its organizers had forgotten that "our new social norms are now characterized by glasnost'." They ought to have publicized and explained every single one of their moves in the press and on radio and television. But they did not, and consequently the contestants had to grapple with an impossible set of rules. At this point the architect Polianskii (whose days as designer of the Poklonnaia Hill memorial and as secretary of the Architects' Union were already numbered) came under...
fire. The rules had specified that entries "must pay special attention to guaranteeing the stylistic unity of architecture and sculpture." This meant that Polianskii's work, which was already in place, necessarily determined the style to which the sculptor had to attune his work. What kind of creative independence did that leave, wondered Stukin? The problem was exacerbated by the fact that artists had been given only four months to submit their designs. No wonder the results were so trite. Several speakers at the big meeting suggested that a new contest be held in which the contestants would be completely free to design what they wished. Others sought to solve the problem by demanding that all the work thus far completed on the hill -- including the entire museum building -- be torn down.\textsuperscript{79}

Boris Riazantsev, an investigative reporter for the progressive weekly, Ogonek, took a special interest in the story of the monument, and especially in the role played by members of Pamiat'. I talked to him on the telephone when I was in Moscow in June of 1987. He is evidently more comfortable as interviewer than as interviewee: he was closed-mouthed about Poklonnaia Hill, and would say nothing more than that he was interested because it was a terribly live issue, referring me to his three published articles on the subject.

The first concerned the two meetings about the monument in the Manezh and in the House of Architects. It bore the following clever epigraph: "If the mountain does not come to Mohammed, then it will have to be levelled. (Sad joke of an architect)." Riazantsev wrote that at both meetings those gathered agreed that adhering to the existing

\textsuperscript{79}Ibid.
architectural project had made the sculptural contest a sham. Then he transcribed the views of some of the speakers he had taped during the meetings, and some interviews he had conducted afterwards. Mitlianskii was one of those included, and he made some very strong criticisms: "The contest was not entirely clean. By the way entries were arranged in the hall it was immediately apparent which ones were favored by the bosses. The identifying numbers were a fiction. Models were not supposed to be more than one meter high, but what about the one that was three meters, and to boot done up in metal and even gilded?" (The sculptor later told me he had been referring to the design submitted by Polianskii himself). "The exhibit is a rehabilitation of the previous project." An architect named Fishbein complained about the destruction of the hill, and then moved on to another theme: "In the designs there are too many depictions of women. Symbolism is symbolism, but as a veteran I know that the Victory was achieved not by a dancing woman, but by a soldier." Another architect attacked those who say that too much money has already been spent, that it is impossible to restore the hill: "But listen, Tsarskoe Selo was restored, Volgograd was restored, Peterhof was restored, Warsaw too; surely it is easier to rebuild a hill."

In his article Riazantsev reminded his readers that in fact Poklonnaia Hill had been moved decades ago, and that the Victory Park atop the mound that people thought of as the hill was destroyed in 1961. He complained about the agitators at the exhibit who "worked over" the visitors, and leafleted them on behalf of certain projects. This could hardly be called "fair play," wrote the journalist. The
meetings themselves ended in a most unattractive way, he said. Unauthorized people kept coming up to the podium and ripping the microphone out of each others’ hands. But somehow a mutual agreement was reached that the contest had yielded no profitable results, that a new competition was needed and that it must be held under different conditions. Also the joint representatives of the unions of artists and the council of veterans agreed that the construction on Poklonnaia Hill must be stopped. The decision was sent off to Party organs, the Ministry of Culture, the secretariat of the Union of Artists, and the contest’s jury. The very next day the head of the jury held a press conference in which he announced that the exhibit would be extended for two weeks until February 15, and that seven entries damaged in transit had been repaired and added to the collection. Ugarov added that the jury would therefore take a recess, and would reconvene to finish its deliberations within a few days after the exhibit’s closing. When one of the correspondents at the press conference questioned Ugarov about his personal attitude toward the stormy discussions swirling around certain of the entries, he replied: "It’s a complex question... One has to know how to use democracy... Some people are trying to transform democracy into demagoguery. They are using incorrect methods."81

When, on February 21, the jury published its decision, those who had been at the public discussions were not surprised by what they read, while doubtless many others were shocked and disappointed. The jury had examined 384 models and 505 sketches, and had received 37,925

80 Boris Riazantsev, "Sud’ba poklonnoi," Ogonek, No. 6, 1987
81 Izvestiia, January 31, 1987
written responses and suggestions about the design of the monument. They came to the conclusion that none of the submissions could be recommended for actual realization, or even for further work (in the 1979 contest, remember, the first and second prize winners were told to develop their designs jointly). Therefore, the jury decided to award no prizes. It also asked the Moscow City Executive Committee (Mosgorispolkom) to stop all construction work on Poklonnaia Hill.82

When I arrived in Moscow some three months after this announcement, I learned from three reputable sources what had forced the jury to this dramatic conclusion. After all, to declare no winners in the first open architectural competition in thirty years appears to be a shocking vote of "no confidence" in the popular artistic imagination. Two people who had been at the meetings in the House of Architects and in the Manezh, and a third, utterly reliable source whose good friend had been a contestant and had also been at both meetings, all gave me the same explanation.

When at the press conference Boris Ugarov had been asked about the "stormy discussions swirling around this or that design," the questioner doubtless had in mind #206 -- Slava Klykov's model based on a Russian Orthodox church. It was apparently the focus of a constant brouhaha, and its many proponents at the meetings, such as the notorious Emel'ianov, heckled participants who tried to speak out for other projects. The tone of the meetings was such that it would seem impossible for the jury to award first prize to any other entry. The first meeting at the House of Architects was smaller and somewhat more

82Vecherniaia Moskva, February 21, 1987
restrained, but the gathering at the Manezh, in which the thousand-
strong crowd was utterly uncontrolled, was dominated by Pamiat' and the
Klykov faction. As the meeting was winding down, it was obvious that
many of those present thought all the entries were bad, but that of
these the best was #206, which, with all its patriotic virtues, would
be recommended to the jury as the choice "of the people." Suddenly,
someone stood up and said: "But we cannot ask the jury to select this
design. A monument with this design already stands in the city of
Briansk!" And with that he held up a corroborating photograph. At that
point, the commotion in the hall can only be imagined. Klykov was
finished, and so, in effect, was the credibility of the contest.

Glasnost Ascendant

Many Muscovites were delighted with the news that the jury had
found no winners in the sculptural competition. The dominant sentiment
was that no new monument should be or would be built. "Those
preposterously expensive monstrosities, one gigantic sword-wielding
Motherland after another, belong in the past with Brezhnev," said an
articulate university student who considered herself particularly
engage. My friend, Margarita Osipovna, the architectural historian, was
also pleased. "There should be a moratorium on all memorials to World
War II. We are so over-saturated with them that we cannot process any
more or create anything new. It is no wonder that the contest produced
largely repetitions of old themes. True, there were a couple of designs
in the shape of a kurgan -- an ancient Slavic burial mound -- that
were quite passable. But believe me, I was at the Manezh exhibit many
times and the submissions were truly banal. Yes, it is time for a moratorium."

"Should there have been such a moratorium on statues to Lenin after the centennial of his birth in 1970?"

"Absolutely. The reason behind a sculptural and architectural composition of this sort is lost when the viewer is numbed by endless trite repetitions."

Margarita predicted that no new memorial would be built and that there would be no further contest after the last fiasco.

Roy Medvedev, the independent historian whose special expertise is recent history and contemporary affairs, predicted that no new memorial would be built. "After all, Moscow has the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. That will do as a national shrine," he said to me as we sat chatting in his cozy study. Many others echoed this sentiment. Throughout the month of June, 1987, I raised the subject with a wide variety of people, from friends and academic colleagues to strangers whom I met in chance encounters, such as mothers in the playground to which I took my infant son. Most of the young and youngish people I talked to and all of my friends, thought that there should be no new monument built, although two of my interlocutors agreed with Margarita Osipovna that the kurgan shape was pleasing and appropriate for such a structure, since it was genuinely Slavic as opposed to almost all Soviet monumental art, which derives from bad nineteenth-century Russian imitations of bad European sculpture. A kurgan is a burial mound. Therefore the use of its form turns the monument on Poklonnaia Hill into a locus of mourning -- like the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington, D.C. -- rather than a celebration of the victory. A number of young people I spoke to thought that a national monument simply to the war dead would be appropriate in
view of their enormous numbers. But in my many conversations about the monument I mostly heard the same criticisms over and over again. A new monument is unnecessary; it is far too expensive; the public's money should be spent on the many things that people really need.

There were, of course, others, especially older men and women, who took the opposite approach. "Naturally the monument must be constructed," said an old veteran with whom I was illegally sharing a long cab ride. He sported a three-day growth of beard and a chestful of military decorations. "Certainly public funds should be expended this way out of respect for those, like myself, who gave everything so that the next generations might live in peace." Another booster of the Poklonnaia Hill memorial was Georgii Aleksandrovich Kumanev, my advisor at the Academy of Sciences' Institute of History, my host institution. Kumanev, a genial but careful man of about fifty, is the department chief of the Sector of the History of the Great Patriotic War. He also heads the Institute's Party Committee, a powerful position. He was solemn when we talked about the planned memorial, and expressed sadness that it had not yet been built. This was our introductory meeting, and I was sitting in his rather drab office together with a graduate student, Sasha, who had been assigned to me for my entire stay as a companion and helpmate. Kumanev was Sasha's thesis advisor and it was clear that the young man was not comfortable in the older one's presence. He nodded in enthusiastic assent every time his professor made any comment whatsoever. "Kiev is ahead of Moscow in this regard," said Georgii Aleksandrovich. "That city erected the impressive motherland monument in 1981," he said, referring to the huge female
figure with a sword. "My friend at the Institute of History there was absolutely instrumental in overcoming the bureaucratic inertia and making certain that the monument was constructed. The one on Poklonnaia Hill needs such a champion." Those were the first positive words I had heard anyone utter about the Kiev memorial, which I had found dreadful. I sat there wondering whether my advisor was making a political statement or simply had bad taste. For the first time I took a good look at his clothes. His taste seemed quite unexceptionable — understated and rather elegant. So I decided that the warm remarks about the "Heavy Metal Motherland" (as I liked to call that monument) reflected something other than his idea of what was attractive. The political message of that monument is itself complex. 83 What does a "motherland" mean in the Ukraine? Surely it denotes Mother Russia, about which many Ukrainians have at best mixed feelings. Is praise for the statue also praise for Russification? Or for Brezhnev, who with difficulty made his way down to Kiev for the opening ceremony in 1981? Or for the Soviet Army? In any case, I decided to keep my distance from Kumanev.

Later, when Sasha and I were alone, I asked him what he thought about the Moscow memorial. He paused; like his advisor, he was cautious and rather methodical. "The veterans are waiting for it, the whole country is waiting for it, it will absolutely be built." Of medium height, solidly built, swarthy, black-eyed, intense and always perspiring, Sasha, a young man in his late twenties, was the absolute

83 For a brilliant analysis of the Kiev memorial, see Michael Ignatieff, "Soviet War Memorials."
epitome of the eager, super-organized, hard-working graduate student. I
found his excessive politeness hard to take, but he was marvelously
helpful to me, accompanying me to appointments at the institute,
helping me out with bibliography, and so on. "Listen, Sasha," I said,
as we were walking out of Kumanev's office, let's go to Poklonnaia
Hill. I've been in Moscow for a week already, and all I've done is meet
people in their offices." He did not seem at all keen on the idea. "I
tell you what," I said, "I'll go alone; just tell me how to get there."
He insisted that I would get lost alone and agreed to come with me. As
it turned out, I was running a bit late and we went to the construction
site by taxi, and so I didn't need a guide for the subway and buses.
But Sasha's company did not bother me and besides, he had
providentially brought an umbrella, which was welcome when we
encountered a surprise rainstorm.

The taxi took us westward along Kutuzovsky Prospekt past the
stately nineteenth-century Arch of Triumph. Sasha pointed to the right
and said: "See those apartment buildings over there? That is where
Brezhnev lived, and Andropov too. Gromyko still lives in that house.
Many Party and government leaders live here on the Prospekt; their
dachas are in the countryside just west of here straight along this
road." The buildings looked quite ordinary but the location reminded me
of a conversation I had had a few days earlier with a young computer
programmer. He reported that he had visited the construction site with
a group of friends, one of whom had gazed across the rubble and then
down onto the avenue and said: "This sure would be a great place from
which to shoot!" Three weeks later I learned from Masha that the
original Poklonnaia Hill had been moved precisely to protect the security of those dacha and apartment-dwellers when the highway was broadened and the buildings erected in the mid-fifties.84

Sasha, my husband Harvey, and I made our way across the thoroughfare and up a long, sloping pathway to the site. A wire fence preventing us from ambling over the concrete slabs to the museum building, but we could see that it was complete. Behind it, on the ground, reposed an enormous domed cupola. Huge cranes perched here and there in the mud. As I was photographing the scene a middle-aged stout lady in an apron came out of a small construction trailer and asked what we were doing. I explained that I was an American scholar and guest of the Academy of Sciences. She seemed impressed by those credentials and warmly invited us into the shack. We entered a long room with a large rectangular table and many chairs. The walls sported large photographs of the projected memorial complex replete with the "Victory Banner" monument that had drawn so much fire the previous summer. The woman disappeared into another part of the shack and reappeared with a round-faced, blue-eyed ruddy man with a mop of grey curly hair. This was Evsey Grigorievich Freedman, chief of the construction team. As we introduced ourselves and I explained that I was researching a book chapter on the history of the Poklonnaia Hill memorial, other members of the team gradually filed in. They were open and friendly, and seemed glad to have something to do. They were eager to pose for photographs and answer any questions I might have. Several

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84 See above, p. 32.
men took my husband and Sasha to look at the displayed photographs, while the boss immediately launched into his pet peeve: Pamiat’.

I recalled that the group had made headlines the previous month, on May 6, when some 400 of its members had staged a demonstration in Red Square. They carried banners bearing slogans that read: "The historical-patriotic association Pamiat must be officially recognized!" "Down with saboteurs of perestroika!" "We demand a meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin!" "Stop work on Poklonnaia Hill!" Yeltsin, Politburo member and Grishin’s successor as head of the Moscow City Party Committee, scandalized Moscow by agreeing to meet with them for more than two hours at the Moscow City Soviet. The discussion ranged over many subjects, including the preservation of architectural relics and the monument on Poklonnaia Hill. Yeltsin assured the gathered body that work on the monument would be completely stopped "until new, interesting designs appear which will be discussed by the entire country."85

Standing with Evsey Grigorievich by the window of the construction shack, I learned that three days after that demonstration -- May 9, Victory Day -- Pamiat’ had again demonstrated, this time at the very construction site on which we were standing. As he told it, "fifty extremists with placards" milled around the rubble, demanding the reconstruction of the hill. The following week, on May 16, the leaders of Pamiat met with the construction team, members of the Moscow City Committee.

85Moscow News, May 17, 1987. Yeltsin himself became man in the news worldwide in the fall of 1987 when, on Oct. 21, he made a speech sharply critical of Gorbachev and subsequently lost his job and publicly recanted his sins in a manner reminiscent of the 1930s show trials.
Executive Committee, the first secretary of the regional Party committee, and poor Klykov, whose near-winning project had been so ignominiously unmasked. "Of course Klykov was just angry and jealous, and felt that no monument but his should be erected. You know that this organization is full of utter lunatics," Evsey Grigorievich said, pulling out a cigarette as I shook my head to the one he politely proferred me. I liked the man; he seemed straight and sincere. "Do you know, for example, that one of the leaders, a man named Emel'ianov, killed his wife and chopped her up into..." "Yes, I had heard about that," I interrupted. That story made me nervous each time I heard it. "And they are certain that Jews and Freemasons have designed this whole complex up here." He moved over to the photograph on the wall. "See this? They have decided that the Jewish star forms the basis for the layout, with a point here, another here, and so on. He lightly touched a few spots with his hand. "Besides," he added with a chuckle, "they are very suspicious of me. After all, my name is Freedman." He paused for effect. "And I'm not German!" Remarkably, Mr. Freedman placed the ultimate responsibility for Pamiat' not on its members but on Mikhail Gorbachev. "This is what happens when you have a call for democratization. Too much democracy is a dangerous thing. All kinds of people with crazy ideas climb out of the woodwork." He chuckled derisively. By the time he finished his monologue three or four of his co-workers had formed a small audience, quietly puffing on cigarettes and occasionally glancing at me to note my reaction to the story. When he made the last critical remarks about democratization, they all nodded in enthusiastic assent and added their smirks to Freedman's.
Freedman invited us all to sit down at the big table, and the aproned lady came in with a tray of glasses and juice. By this time there were more than a dozen of us in the room. The boss ran the meeting and patiently tried to answer all of my questions about the monument's history. He was a friendly man, but he was clearly also a man with time on his hands. "They've told us to slow done our work pace, to really slow it down. The museum building is ready, except for the facade, and the cupola is all set to be mounted. But they told us to leave it on the ground. So let it sit!"

I returned to the States in July convinced by my two wisest observers, Margarita Osipovna and Roy Medvedev, that the Poklonnaia Hill project would die a quiet death. But two months later, with no warning that I could see, Pravda published an announcement of yet another competition for the memorial. The announcement itself took the unusual form of an interview with Evgenii Grigorievich Rozanov, who, as head of the government architecture and city construction committee, was apparently now the responsible figure. When asked why after a full thirty years of planning, the memorial was still only being talked about, he eagerly responded by criticizing almost the whole history of the memorial's conception -- in much the same vein as Ernst Neizvestny in our New York interview. "To be truthful, after the contest of 1957, when eight prizewinners were chosen, glasnost' stopped operating in the planning. Artists worked in secret, already blinded by the golden gleam of their future laureates. They accepted no criticisms or suggestions."

Then Rozanov said something quite extraordinary. Without actually naming Victor Grishin, he launched into a personal attack:
The lessons of last year’s open competition and the discussions in the Manezh this past spring have convinced us that we are reaping the fruits of the period of stagnation, when the opinion of one individual, who moreover had no esthetic taste, could veto the work of entire collectives of artists. The design whose realization cost more than 40 million rubles, collected from the Soviet worker-people, was characterized by pomposity and gigantomania. Meaning: if the monuments in Volgograd and Kiev are almost one hundred meters high, why should Moscow’s be lower? Nowadays this kind of reasoning is no longer taken seriously....(italics added)

The new contest, said Rozanov, is qualitatively different from all the previous ones. It invites participants not only to create designs, but also to choose their preferred sites in Moscow for this "main monument to the twenty million Soviet citizens who died in the fire of the Second World War." Artists who do not know Moscow well are invited to write in for information about this or that location. As opposed to the 1986 contest, Rozanov said that in this one only projects meeting competition specifications would be accepted. In the former one, some special designs were clearly favored by their placement in the hall; designs were not treated equally.

Contestants were given six months to complete their designs. After that, during March and April 1988, an exhibit of all the entries was promised, along with a "broad popular discussion" and an evaluation by experts. The plan was to then have the jury name ten prizewinners who would each receive the substantial sum of 5000 rubles, and who would be given another four months to compete with one another in a second round. The results of the second round were to be announced in October 1988.

At the end of the article, the Pravda correspondent remarked that realistically one could expect the memorial to go up no sooner than the
fiftieth anniversary of the victory in 1995, which is a long time to ask old veterans to wait. "Fifty years is, unfortunately, a long time, countered Rozanov. "But we do not have the right to rush, because we are creating a memorial that will endure for centuries." \(^{86}\)

\(^{86}\textit{Pravda}, \text{September 2, 1987}\)