

Editorial

Gorbachev skills strengthen Soviets

The death of Konstantin Chernenko and the quick rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev has led the Reagan administration to hope for better relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. But it is not likely.

This hope stems from the fact that Gorbachev is the youngest Soviet President to assume power since Stalin. Gorbachev is the fourth general secretary since Brezhnev's death in 1982, and at age 54, he has the ability and the time to consolidate his power in the Communist Party that his aging predecessors did not. At last, the Soviet Union has a leader who could be running the country well into the 21st century.

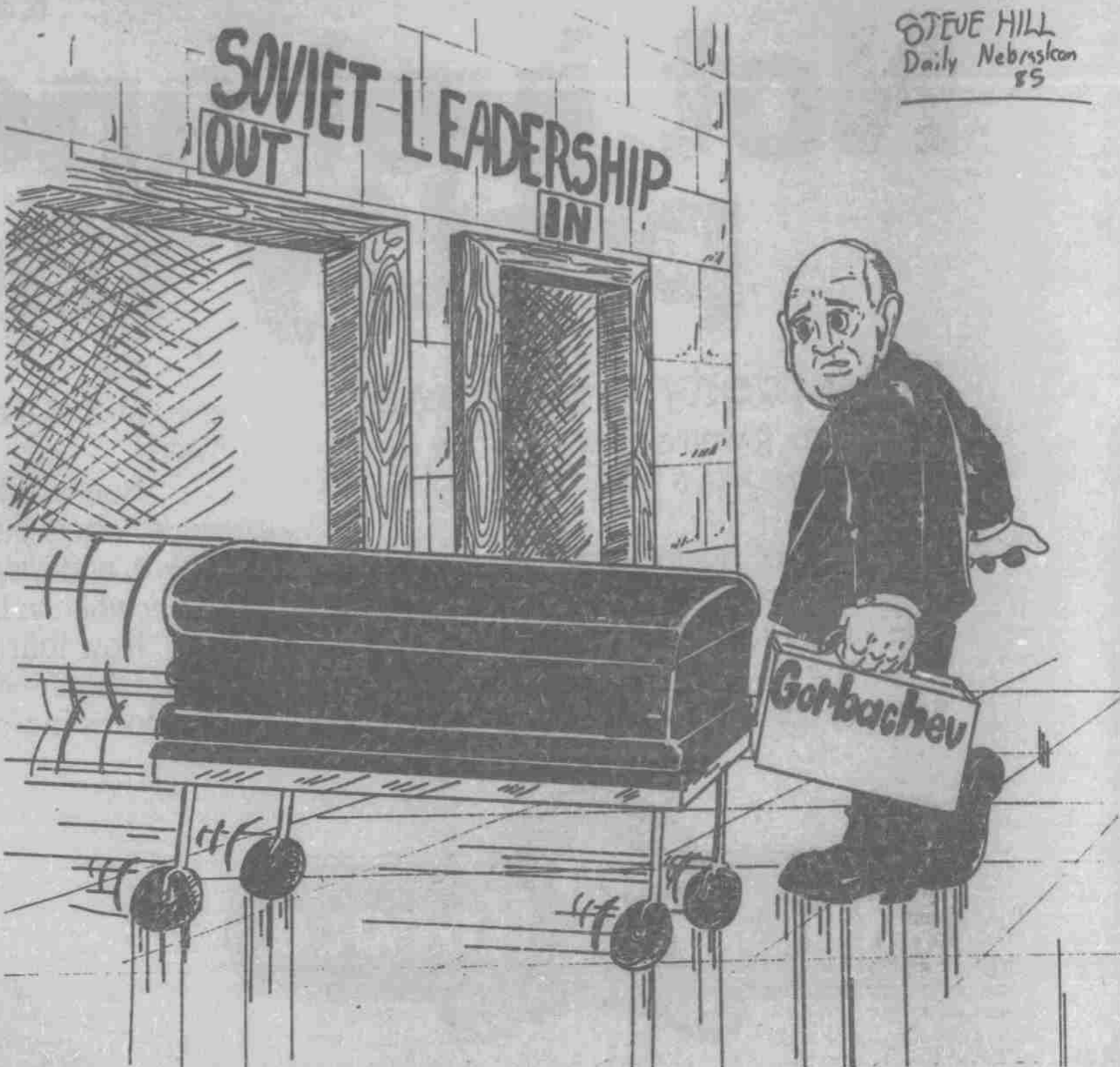
But before the Reagan administration can proceed, several problems must be examined. All that can really be said about Gorbachev is that he represents a new generation of Soviet leadership, but the party around him still belongs to the old-timers club. Kremlin policy is still decided by a collective leadership called the Politburo, and most of those leaders were born before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. They will not easily change their views or policies.

The Politburo will still be the main force of the Soviet Communist Party. An example of the collective leadership is Andrei Gromyko, 75, the long-surviving foreign minister. Gromyko has lasted through several recent changes at the top and continues to call the shots on foreign policy. The fact that the Soviets did not postpone the arms talk at Geneva this week, when Chernenko died, also confirms this.

In his acceptance speech Monday, Gorbachev stated that the policies forged under Chernenko's predecessors, Brezhnev and Andropov, would remain unchanged. Gorbachev is a staunch supporter of Andropov's economic policies, which include a crackdown on government corruption and inefficiency. He also opposes Reagan's Star Wars defense plans, and if he follows the Politburo's views, little headway can be made in the arms talks for years to come.

Gorbachev does not represent any radical departure from the "norm" of Soviet leadership. He is an "ethnic Russian" and has been trained through the traditional Communist Party structure. But even with Gorbachev's background, he could prove to be a more skillful and a much more dangerous Soviet leader. With the shifting of old guard, more men of Gorbachev's caliber will rise to power, and the new leaders might be more willing to take risks in foreign policy. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said, "I think the existing line will be put forth in a much more skillful fashion. They will now have a leader who can present himself in public."

With the passing of Chernenko, the Reagan administration will now have to deal with a leader who will back his party's policies, yet Gorbachev will also have the time to consolidate his own positions and priorities. If capable, Gorbachev could prove much more difficult to deal with than any of the Soviet leaders before him.



STEVE HILL
Daily Nebraskan
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Equality elusive Anti-discrimination laws often defeat purpose

Equality is an elusive thing. Women want it. Blacks want it. American Indians want it. All people who feel that they are being discriminated against for something they have no control over look to equality as their universal saviour. Is this really wise?

discrimination gets in the way and clouds their judgment; and "prejudice," as we all know, is the direct result of ignorance. Eliminate ignorance and prejudice is on the way to extinction. Unfortunately, ignorance isn't even on the endangered species list and never will be. Consequently, we have laws born in ignorance and enforced in ignorance. And when this happens people have every right to jump up and scream for equality.

They want to be treated like everyone else, to have the source of the prejudice, color or sex, be totally ignored. This isn't what they have today. Instead, they're being head-counted like sheep to maintain that "proper" image.

Another case involves foster children in Los Angeles. The city instituted a policy to preserve the cultural heritage of its minority foster children, mainly Hispanic. They did this by denying the petitions for adoption of Hispanic children by anyone other than Hispanic foster parents. When a Hispanic child found a white or even black family that wanted to adopt him, he was immediately removed and put in another home. So in the name of equality (everyone has a right to his heritage), a lot of kids may have had the rest of their lives screwed up.

On the other hand, the laws seem to be multiplying at an alarming rate. They have gone from being laws which ensure everyone the right to vote, to laws which tell an employer whom he can or cannot hire. We have the threatened removal of abortion on the grounds that the fetus deserves equality too. And we have the idiotic rules that determine how we can word our ads for a roommate in this very paper. These laws and regulations, and many like them, are a result of our self-righteous government's attempt to show to the world what a great place America is.

The problem with these kinds of laws, regulations, and policies, is that they often come to us as a wolf in sheep's clothing. After so many years of fighting discrimination we have become ready to accept anything ringed of equality without first giving it a close examination. When we enact legislation that provides equality for someone, we are limiting someone else's freedom of choice. This is necessary to ensure a peaceful and free society, but only to a point. When we begin to take the blindfold off the statue that holds the scales, then someone's going to get hurt.

The sad part is that those people who fought, and are still fighting, against blatant discrimination, don't even seem to recognize that they have only traded one kind of discrimination for another. The affirmative action laws, for example, require a certain percentage of employees to be of a certain race or sex. For years minorities have fought for the ability to be judged on the basis of their qualifications.

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When people demand equality, the first place they start is usually the law. They believe that law should treat everyone the same regardless of things like race, color and sex. Those laws which are most important, the ones that ensure the peace and ongoing stability of our nation, are the very laws which they believe should not reflect the opinions of the tiny minority that enforces them or the even tinier minority that creates them.

But they forget that codified law originates in men's minds and its enforcement is nothing more than an expression of men's hearts. When people seek to right a wrong through the use of a law, what people really want to do is to change other people's hearts and minds to believe the way they do. Law is something that comes from belief. It doesn't form it.

Basically, all people want to be treated fairly and equitably. But for some, preju-

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Unsigned editorials represent official policy of the spring 1985 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Its members are Chris Welsch, editor in chief; Chris Burbach, editorial page editor; Michiela Thuman, news editor; Vicki Ruhga, copy desk chief and editorial writer; and Kelly Mangan, assistant advertising manager.

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Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion, or not run, is left to the editor's discretion.

Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned.

Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any.

Daily Nebraskan

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