The essential element of the reforms that started in 1985 was democracy. ... Can the idea and practice establish roots in Russia’s wide open spaces? ... The task we now face is not that of new construction, this time of capitalism, but of liberating the motivations for work, creative endeavor, full-blooded spiritual life, for reviving incentives for everything that lives, for surviving traditions, for the entire variety of most important cultures, all feelings and passions on which the life of society rests and thrives.

Alexander Yakovlev (Gorbachev’s adviser), 1991