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From the same old mold

General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, we hear at every hand, is something new in the Kremlin.

Time magazine, that fount of journalistic confusion, gilds his image. *The Washington Post*, quoting a "Western diplomat" in Moscow, hails his "vintage charisma" and is overcome by his "knowledge" of the United States. Most of the national media are dazzled by his "public relations" sense.

But Mikhail Tsympkin, in a recent masterly report for the Heritage Foundation, bursts this balloon of adulation by describing Mr. Gorbachev as "a new leader in the old mold" and takes the new *vozhd* at his word when he boasts that "Lenin invented this style." Invented, yes, but honed to murderous sharpness by Josef Stalin.

What has General Secretary Gorbachev done to achieve these almost unanimous accolades? He is rapidly doing away with the Kremlin's moribund leadership, but he has been replacing it with a new and seemingly more efficient gang of dedicated cutthroats.

Marshal Ogarkov, apostle of a Soviet nuclear first strike, is now the military boss. The key post of foreign minister is held today by a Stalinist in modern dress with a record of bloody domestic repression. Mr. Gorbachev himself has been most skillful in convincing an easily-seduced West that he is a pragmatist and a technocrat, out to reform the Soviet system — but in everything except conversation he has hewed slavishly to old party lines.

His past tells it all. To the late KGB chief and general secretary, Yuri Andropov, he was a ruthless enforcer. To Leonid Brezhnev, he was a reliable member of the Kremlin's corrupt "mafia." He became a

lawyer at a time when Soviet law was little more than a firing squad. As a Communist functionary at Moscow University, he pushed hard for Stalin's anti-Semitic campaigns. He received his mail-order agricultural degrees from the Stavropol Agricultural Institute, over which he reigned as first secretary of the city's Communist Party.

What's more, he has made it abundantly clear that his aim is to fine-tune Stalinism rather than to end it. Under the new *vozhd*, the tiny steps toward loosening the political and economic hold on Warsaw Pact countries have been reversed. He has called for even greater Soviet participation in the terrorist and guerrilla movements bedeviling Latin America and the Third World. And he has proclaimed a "Leninist course" of political intervention and military threat against the non-Communist world.

Much has been made of Mr. Gorbachev's advocacy of industrial centralization, but he also has called for an increase in control and central planning of the economy by the Communist Party bureaucracy. The secret police's increasingly repressive acts have received a stamp of approval by the promotion of the KGB boss to the Politburo. And Mr. Gorbachev has continued to focus economic policy on the needs of the military, not the needs of the people.

Stalin blew his propaganda horn for a "collective security" against Nazi Germany, even as he was cuddling up to Hitler. Mr. Gorbachev says he wants an "international security" system and a reduction in armaments — while enunciating a military policy of creating such a vast and menacing nuclear and conventional force that it will force the United States to bow to Soviet encroachments. The Soviets even have a name for this — the "factor of fear" — which they believe will compel President Reagan to give the Kremlin military hegemony by abandoning the Strategic Defensive Initiative.

And while this goes on, a campaign in the press, TV, and cinema glorifies the KGB for its "achievements" in terrorizing the Russian people.

KGB terror under Mr. Gorbachev has, in fact, been exported in growing quantities and Gestapo-like proportions to Eastern Europe — and stringent policies subverting the economies of Warsaw Pact countries to Soviet needs have been promulgated.

What will the media apologists for Mr. Gorbachev say when the rehabilitation of Stalin, now in the works, reaches full shout? Probably that it reflects the love of country of the new *vozhd*!

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