

## EDITORIAL NOTE

In 1991, the annual Killam Lecture series at Dalhousie University was devoted to the condition of what was then still the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics presided over by Mikhail Gorbachev. The organizer of the lecture series that year was Dr. Yuri Glazov of the Department of Russian. In accordance with a standing arrangement, consideration was given to publishing the lectures in *Dalhousie Review*. However, it was soon clear that the lectures were largely unsuitable for publication, in part because of the rapid changes that occurred in the Soviet Union in the latter half of 1991.

Yuri Glazov proposed instead that we should collect a series of articles on various aspects of the former USSR, and these are now contained in this issue of the *Review*. Of course, we recognize that circumstances continue to change apace. At the moment of writing comes news of remarks by a U.S. State Department official predicting the early demise of the Russian president, Boris Yeltsin. It certainly seems as though the only comment that can be made with certainty is that the situation is highly unstable: even a prediction that it is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future is itself uncertain.

These articles on the former Soviet Union thus represent the opinions of various experts caught as it were at various recent moments rather like mental snapshots. We hope, nevertheless, that the reflections we publish here will serve not only to interest present readers but also to remind those of the future of how an important part of the world presented itself at what is surely, whatever else one may say of it, a critical period in its history.

We would particularly like to thank Dr. Yuri Glazov for his assistance in assembling this issue.

A. A.