

‘Hello Moscow!’: Planetary Collapse, Television,
And the Tufts Global Classroom (1998-1992)

An Honors Thesis Submitted for The Department of History

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Introduction:

Nuclear Destruction, Ecological Decimation, and...Tufts?

In June 1988, it was clear that citizens of American and Soviet society were trading one fear of apocalyptic heat-death for another. It was a landmark month: The Intermediate-Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, the most significant nuclear non-proliferation treaty between these two global superpowers in over a decade, had been ratified on June 1. Several weeks later, near the end of the hottest-ever June in the United States, Dr. Jim Hansen, the director of the American National Air and Space Administration (NASA), gave an impassioned speech to the US Congress from inside the sweltering capitol building on June 23, 1988. Hansen's message was simple: atmospheric carbon was increasing, and it mattered. These nearly simultaneous events mark a historical, cultural shift in the reigning "global problem." By the end of the 1980's, especially as the Cold War came to a seemingly sudden close with the collapse of the Berlin Wall in November of 1989, the threat of nuclear weaponry waned in the popular imagination. Now, the major task at hand for the global community was to prevent planetary collapse not due to nuclear winter, but too many mouths to feed, hotter summers, toxic skies, and rising seas.

Since the end of World War Two, everyday American and Soviet citizens had had nightmares about mutual nuclear decimation. By the early 1990's, the nightmare transformed into environmental collapse. When and why did this shift occur? How did it take shape? What did it mean for individual Soviet and American citizens and for relations between the two powers? Part of the answer to

these questions can be found in the story of Tufts University and its Global Classroom Project.

The Global Classroom Project (GCP) was an initiative of the Nuclear Age History and Humanities Center at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts (ca. 1988-1992). It was one of a long line of Cold War initiatives that attempted to do what arms reduction treaties and diplomatic summits could not: connect common citizens with one another. At its core, the GCP's self-described mission was to "bring together students in Moscow and Boston to discuss the great issues of our time."¹ The project raised hundreds of thousands of dollars, made dozens of headlines, organized numerous international trips (including three for Tufts students over spring breaks), and jointly ran at least three conjoined courses enrolling students from both Tufts and Soviet Universities via cutting-edge satellite technology. The GCP was a revealing episode in the history of Tufts University and of American higher education in general.² This thesis will also demonstrate the value of thinking with the Tufts Global Classroom as a window

¹ "The Global Classroom Project: Internationalizing Education for the 21st Century." 1992. Courtesy of Martin Sherwin (currently in the possession of the author).

² It is interesting to note that, when discussing the "Global Classroom Project", one could be discussing one of many things. That is to say, many "Global Classrooms", each with the vision of bringing cross-cultural context to international groups of students, have attempted to define innovation in education across the late 20th and into the 21st century. One example of such programs includes an initiative of the US United Nations Association to educate students in "inner city" American schools on how to navigate cross-cultural interaction (see Reimers, 2009). The only explicit reference to the Tufts Global Classroom Project that I was able to find within peer-reviewed academic literature was in the footnotes to "Before 'The Missiles of October': Did Kennedy Plan a Military Strike Against Cuba?" by James Hershberg, a TA for the Global Classroom Project and an interviewee of this project. Hershberg's article (1990) assesses the historical conditions of the Cuban Missile Crisis and uses the content from the third joint session of the GCP ("The Cuban Missile Crisis", April 30, 1988) as supporting evidence. Hershberg does not attempt to comment on the historical details or theory of the Tufts Global Classroom Project. As discussed below, the Tufts Global Classroom Project has not been prominently featured in many of the academic calls for such initiatives that were popular in the 1990's.

into Soviet-American relations in the critical years of 1987-1992. The Global Classroom Project's history reflected major transitions in Soviet-American diplomacy and in global issues of the era. The GCP's subject matter followed this shift, moving quickly from the threat of nuclear destruction to fears of global environmental destruction. Yet, ultimately, the solutions used to combat these respective crises both fit within the same international framework of Cold War institutions and initiatives.

Drawing primarily from archival sources from the Tufts Digital Collections and Archives, this thesis develops an understanding of the major figures and events of the GCP through engagement with and analysis of primary source literature.³ Oral history interviews with past participants, organizers, and experts of the Global Classroom add vivid details.⁴ The two types of sources have been used to reinforce the narrative strength of the other.

Secondary sources helped to place the Global Classroom Project within the contexts of late soviet history, Cold War history, environmental history, nuclear history, and histories of Tufts University and higher education.

This account of Late Soviet history illuminates the educational and intellectual effects of the democratization and collapse of the USSR. The writers

³ In this instance, this primarily means letters, memoranda and other documents taken from two collections of the Tufts DCA: The Nuclear Humanities Records and Center for Environmental Management Records. Resources from the Tufts DCA are cited according to their citation system, providing the necessary information to find and view each of the documents according to the DCA reference system. Some primary sources have either been emails or contributions from the private records of Martin Sherwin. These sources are also indicated as such according to the Chicago Manual of Style.

⁴ Oral history interviews were conducted virtually using Zoom teleconferencing software per recommendation of the Tufts IRB. Interviews were conducted with historical organizers of the GCP and other adjacent colleagues. A comprehensive list of interviewees is included in the appendices.

who have contributed to the historiography of the late Soviet Union have myriad opinions on how the Union's collapse came to pass. Ronald Grigor Suny understands Soviet history as the story of three different visions of "utopia", each centered on a different leader. Thus, 1991 marks the end to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's utopian vision.⁵ For Yale Richmond, a historian and analyst of Soviet-American cultural exchanges, the USSR eventually collapsed under the weight of an intelligentsia fascinated by the West after a robust period of formalized Soviet-American exchanges following the death of Stalin in 1953.⁶ Finally, Stephen Kotkin approaches the matter of collapse as a longer process wherein the Communist Party antithetically attempted to make itself both the agent and object of political reform during the period of perestroika.⁷

The story of the Global Classroom Project is also the story of a global shift in environmental awareness, and the rise of considering the ecological importance of a global community. At first, the GCP covered subjects pertaining to the nuclear arms race, focusing on post-war history and diplomatic developments. By the spring of 1989, the project had moved to discussions of environmental topics: clean water, global atmospheric pollution, and even climate change. Whereas nuclear arms were a point of heightened political tension, the environment was regarded as a "safer" topic of diplomatic discussion. This idea of "safety" was

⁵ Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment : Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*. 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁶ Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange & the Cold War : Raising the Iron Curtain*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

⁷ Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted : The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*. Updated ed.(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

somewhat naively understood to mean that major environmental problems, due to their global scale, were somehow politically inert or ideologically neutral.⁸

While it is true that global environmental problems were issues in which the entire world was implicated, matters of the environment were anything but neutral. Instead, the latter environmental phase of the GCP and its discussion of the problems of the natural world drew on deeply rooted ideologies with political ramifications. The Soviet's Union lack of environmental care was mobilized by politicians and journalists, inside the USSR and beyond, as an explanation for the USSR's decline and collapse.

Inseparable from discussions of global environmental affairs were the lapses in environmental stewardship and safety that provoked environmentalisms across the latter half of the 20th century. Fewer events had greater ramifications on the late Soviet Union, diplomatic relations, and the environment than the Chernobyl disaster. To assess the impact of this event, historian Kate Brown's *Manual for Survival: A Chernobyl Guide to the Future* is critical.⁹

Beginning with the destruction of the Chernobyl power plant on April 26, 1986, Brown traces the political and environmental fallout from the disaster to make a lasting statement on the nature of Cold War secrets and security and what we might learn from them today. Another work of Brown's, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters*

⁸ Peter Jennings recalls that Soviet panelists, during a spacebridge broadcast discussion on human rights, attempted to transition the discussion to the Soviet's successful record of forest management. Here, Jennings is employing a prime example of this narrative which considers the environment to be a neutral topic of discussion.

⁹ Kate Brown, *Manual for Survival : A Chernobyl Guide to the Future*. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2019).

uses two cities of the Cold War, one in the United States and the other in the Soviet Union and argues that they are essentially the same given their common status as major sites of plutonium production.¹⁰ *Plutopia* documents how environments were transformed, and political secrets were kept by both the US and USSR in order to maintain Cold War superpower status. On the Soviet side, Zhores Medvedev's *The Legacy of Chernobyl* is an early account of the effects of the disaster, particularly on human bodies.¹¹ Medvedev, a rogue Soviet radiologist, provided readers with an account of the disaster, an analysis of the technology that made it possible, and its unimaginable cost on environmental health and safety.

The notion that the poor environmental stewardship of the Soviet Union meant that the state held a weaker mandate to rule became increasingly popular . The originally censored and self-published (“*samizdat*”) text, *The Destruction of Nature in the Soviet Union* by Boris Komarov (the pseudonym of a Soviet official),¹² for example, refuted official Soviet claims that environmentalism was more attainable in the Soviet state due to the centralized nature of a planned economic society while Murray Feshbach and Alfred Friendly Jr.'s *Ecocide in the USSR* is a postmortem diagnosis of the USSR's “death by ecocide.” Furthermore, it is a potent testament to how, “as it broke down, the Soviet Union opened up.”¹³ These narratives, rooted largely in the Chernobyl disaster and the larger history of

¹⁰ Kate Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013)

¹¹ Zhores A. Medvedev, *The Legacy of Chernobyl*. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1990).

¹² Boris Komarov, *The Destruction of Nature in the Soviet Union* (White Plains, New York: ME Sharpe Inc, 1980).

¹³ Murray Feshbach and Alfred Friendly Jr., *Ecocide in the USSR* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

pollution from the military industrial complex, still affect legacies of the Soviet Union today.¹⁴ This nuclear amplification of environmental discontent is but one reason why nuclear history and environmental history should be considered in tandem when thinking with this period.

This thesis labors at the intersection of two disparate bodies of scholarship that should be better integrated: nuclear and environmental history. This union is a natural one. As Mikhail Gorbachev made clear in his October 1, 1987 speech in the arctic Soviet city of Murmansk, denuclearization and arms control are central to future visions of an environmentally sustainable society. The same global framework that worked to deescalate the arms race (until the INF treaty was signed in June of 1988) was later used to combat global environmental issues such as atmospheric pollution and a lack of clean water once nuclear weapons were no longer the top international priority.

Turning now to the history of the hyper-local, Sol Gittelman's account of the rise of Tufts University as a selective mid-sized research institution is a critical piece of the GCP's historical context.¹⁵ Tufts University in the middle of the 20th century was not the competitive academic institution it is today. Instead, it was just small New England liberal arts college with little money, overburdened by non-lucrative degree programs and an overworked faculty. After assuming the Tufts presidency in 1976, Tufts President Jean Mayer spent his Tufts career reversing this reputation. Mayer found Tufts in a position of having virtually

¹⁴ Paul Josephson, "Industrial Deserts: Industry, Science and the Destruction of Nature in the Soviet Union." *The Slavonic and East European Review* 85, no. 2 (2007): 294-321.

¹⁵ Sol Gittelman, *An Entrepreneurial University : The Transformation of Tufts, 1976-2002*. (Medford, MA; Hanover, N.H.: Tufts University Press ; University Press of New England, 2004).

nothing to lose and everything to gain. As a result, his presidential tenure is characterized by a series of high-risk, high-reward decisions that gained Tufts the international recognition it has today, such as the founding of the Tufts School of Veterinary medicine at a time when there was neither precedent nor apparent demand for a veterinary education in New England.

The Global Classroom Project fits under the umbrella of bold Mayer-driven initiatives which Gittelman refers to as “academic entrepreneurialism.” At first, the GCP aligned with Mayer’s greater ambitions of internationally driven education and engaged citizenship. In 1989, the project shifted to fit Mayer’s new emphasis on environmental literacy, exemplified by the Mayer-led Talloires Declaration of 1990. The GCP was made possible and took different shapes during its history depending on what Tufts needed it to be. But what gave the GCP the importance to function as an indicator of Tufts’ larger values?

One answer to this question lies in the technology which made the GCP possible. Eleven times throughout its history, the GCP conducted live, two-way television broadcasts with satellite transmission to hold joint lectures between cities in the US (nine in Boston, once Bowling Green, Ohio, once in New York City). This iteration of teleconferencing technology was popularly referred to as “telenost” or “spacebridge.” With directors, camera crews, studios, and massive budgets, spacebridges were cultural and technological opportunities to perform diplomacy. The Citizen Exchange Council’s volume, *Spacebridges: Television and US-Soviet Dialogue* is one of the only pieces of work that attempted to understand the contemporary significance of “spacebridging” in the late ‘80’s and

early '90's.¹⁶ The Citizen Exchange Council (or "CEC", now named "CEC ArtsLink") had been founded in 1962 to provide private American citizens trips to the Soviet Union. As of April 27, 2021 CEC ArtsLink's "about" page stated that the organization aimed to "accomplish what the Soviet and American governments could not do... open doors, share ideas, and build mutual trust." The 1989 volume, a product of two conferences that the CEC sponsored in 1987, walks the reader through a series of chapters on the theory, history, and practice of what the authors refers to as "telesummitry."

Spacebridges provides a number of clues as to why the GCP was seen as a jewel in the Tufts crown. Spacebridging was a popular form of diplomatic communication in the 1980's and '90's well beyond the confines of any one program. The first two-way satellite broadcast between American and Soviet citizens was a joint rock concert, linking a band in Moscow with one in California.¹⁷ This concert in the early 1980's, spacebridges largely covered more politically neutral material, featuring common conversations between citizens with a particular emphasis on school children.

By 1987, spacebridges had moved into much more serious territory. That year, the most important international two-way broadcast, the "Capitol-to-capitol" program between Washington DC and Moscow, especially captivated Soviet audiences. More people in the Soviet Union watched this primetime televised event than American audiences did the airing of the 1987 World Series. Soviet

¹⁶ Michael Brainerd ed., *Spacebridges: Television and US-Soviet Dialogue* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1989).

¹⁷ Michael Brainerd, "Preface" in *Spacebridges* ed. Michael Brainerd, 1.

audience viewing ranged anywhere from 130 to 150 million.¹⁸ The American response was comparatively lukewarm, perhaps due to the fact that the transmission was not broadcast during American primetime. The program was composed of panels of experts and analysts from both the US and USSR. The topic of the first broadcast was on arms control, the second was on human rights.

For both of these programs, there were the same two moderators. Representing the US was Peter Jennings, the host of ABC World News Tonight and one of the most prominent faces of American news broadcasting. Jennings' fellow moderator was a Soviet journalist by the name of Leonid Zolotarevsky (a character with a cameo appearance in the GCP). Jennings, who wrote the introduction to the CEM's edited volume, remembers Zolotarevsky, a Soviet journalist in the war in Afghanistan, as "a political team player."¹⁹

Despite viewing Zolotarevsky's stance as anti-journalistic, Jennings remembers the Capitol-to-capitol series as a success. In his recollection, Soviet citizens were used to having propaganda fuel their media exposure that international live broadcasts like this one were a breath of fresh air. In the second broadcast of "Capitol-to-capitol" discussing human rights topics, US Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan called the Soviet Union "a hell for human rights" while live on the air.²⁰ This inflammatory comment sparked a wave of letters from Soviet citizens to ABC offices asking for the American news team to be more vigorous on issues which otherwise went undiscussed in the Soviet Union, even in

¹⁸ Peter Jennings, "Introduction" in Spacebridges ed. Michael Brainerd, 6.

¹⁹ Ibid, 6.

²⁰ Ibid, 7.

an era of *glasnost*. In response to this debacle, Gorbachev called a meeting of the Central Committee. Jennings recalled that, at this meeting, Gorbachev indicted the organizers of the spacebridge series for “not doing as well as the Americans.”²¹ As a result, Soviet panelist participants “came out swinging” at the next broadcast on the “Third World.” For Jennings, the most important aspect of spacebridge broadcasting was that diplomacy unfolded in unstructured real time. He considered this to be natural for the American way of life, but dangerous to the Soviet social order. In his opinion, the Soviet Union allowed participation in such broadcasts out of a desire to “impress average Americans”, but it was still significant and impressive to Jennings that the Soviet Union was willing to let everyday citizens “inside” the realm of democratic and political debate.²² Ultimately, he concludes that spacebridging may not be a substitute for diplomacy, but certainly was an example of television at its best. The conversations were genuine, and the political ramifications were significant (at least in the Soviet Union).

Peter Kaufman, the publications officer at the Institute for East-West Security Studies in New York, also penned a chapter in *Spacebridges*.²³ Kaufman’s section nicely sets up several premises that will be important for understanding the story of the GCP going forward. For one, Kaufman records the initial hesitancy surrounding this style of broadcasting. When the trend began in 1982, the US was headed by the anti-Soviet Ronald Reagan while the USSR was

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid, 10.

²³ Peter B. Kaufman, “Overview: The First Five Years and the Next Five” in *Spacebridges*, ed. Michael Brainerd, 14.

led by the cautious Leonid Brezhnev. During this early period of spacebridge programming, Kaufman recalls, “distrust was evident on both sides.” Each audience was skeptical of the authenticity of the other, often calling into question whether or not they were dealing with “real” Soviets or “real” Americans.²⁴ Kaufman notes that much had changed since those early days, agreeing with Jennings that the lectures had come to serve to put both Soviet and American representatives “on the spot in real time.”²⁵ He also considers the stickiness of spacebridging across cultural differences. Whereas Americans held one expectation of television, Soviets held another.

Part of these different cultural expectations of media and television amounts to the differences in structure between the Soviet and American economies. American media content and style was determined on the market, with various programs all competing for national attention. American culture by the 1980’s was awash in media, especially television. Television in the 1980’s and ‘90’s, for some American theorists, was a particularly commercial form of communication that bogged the country down with information. For others, it was the truest American art form, representing a serial need for palatable American stories.²⁶ From the Soviet perspective in the 1980’s, this kind of television was an absolute novelty.

Television, Kaufman wrote, captivated Soviet society at large but especially youth culture, citing “Soviet sources” that roughly 70% of Soviet youth

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid, 16.

²⁶ Horace Newcomb, “Viewpoints: Television in the Context of American Culture” in *Spacebridges*, ed. Michael Brainerd, 50.

determine their professions through television.²⁷ Part of this captivation was due to the fact that Soviet television was much less of a flood. State-controlled and centralized, all of the cultural production of television in the Soviet Union was filtered through the state television producer, The USSR State Committee for Television and Broadcasting, abbreviated as “Gosteleradio.”²⁸ With very little fictional or serial programming, Soviet television in the 1980’s was largely dominated by news programs. Real-time programs such as the various spacebridges were a very welcome deviation from such programming. The difference in corporate structure versus state control manufactured a media environment in which Soviet audiences were far more enthusiastic about the novelty of the spacebridge than their American counterparts.

Despite this uneven enthusiasm, exciting American innovations in American spacebridging did receive publicity and momentum. Kaufman, in his overview of American spacebridges, gives special attention to two-way satellite broadcasts as a tool for education. Here, he directly mentions the Tufts Global Classroom Project. Unlike other spacebridges which aimed to reach around 100,000 American viewers per broadcast in order to be relevant, the GCP simply aimed to engage a smaller but more engaged audience of students and experts. Kaufman quotes Martin Sherwin, a professor of history at Tufts and the central figure in the story of the Global Classroom Project, in clarifying the aims of this sort of broadcast beyond simply attracting viewers. In conversation with Kaufman, Sherwin claimed that the specific impact of the Tufts Global Classroom

²⁷ Kaufman, “Overview”, 25.

²⁸ Ibid, 27.

was that the project could “seek to reach current and future elites, who can in turn affect public opinion.”²⁹

Understanding the Tufts Global Classroom Project within the greater context of “telesummitry,” one can see that this project is far from alone. Spacebridging was a communications trend starting in 1982 and continuing through the mid-1990’s. At first, the broadcasts were used to attract crowds through mass appeal with events such as rock concerts and discussions between children. The 1987 “Capitol-to-capitol” program hosted by Leonid Zolotarevsky and Peter Jennings brought spacebridges into a new era of international diplomacy with visible political impacts. The Soviet Central Committee discussed these programs at its meetings, and Mikhail Gorbachev directly referenced spacebridges as a source of “constructive and wide-ranging dialogue” in his 1987 on the *perestroika*.³⁰ The Tufts Global Classroom represents a departure from the “Capitol-to-capitol” model by focusing its energy not on attracting crowds of viewers, but by impacting a “elite” future generation of leaders and experts by centering on universities instead of the mass public. Tufts, and the architects of the Global Classroom, would not have been able to dream up this spacebridge if not for the climate of both Tufts and international diplomacy in the late 1980’s, one of both openness and entrepreneurship.

The GCP was a definite project of historical convergence. The unique moment of the program allowed for its very existence. To see why, it useful to return to the Chernobyl disaster and the Soviet political establishment’s response.

²⁹ Ibid, 17-19.

³⁰ Ibid, 33.

On Saturday, April 26, 1986 an obsoletely designed RBMK reactor (the Russian acronym emblematic of “reaktor bolshoy moshchnosti kanalnyy” or, in English, “high-power channel-type reactor”) near the town of Pripyat, Ukraine caught fire in a catastrophic incident that would soon make the name “Chernobyl” infamous in homes, conference rooms and lecture halls across the globe. This incident and, even more so, the horrific way in which it was downplayed, covered up, and mishandled by the Communist Party, forever altered the Soviet Union. At first, Soviet reporting of the incident emphasized the responsible way in which the party responded to the meltdown and the way in which life could return to normal. It was not until an International Atomic Energy Agency meeting in August 1986 that it was internationally understood that the disaster was far worse than the Soviet government had reported.³¹

The Soviet Politburo, under the newly appointed General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, was presented with a choice. Gorbachev and his inner circle could either continue to deny the gravity of the disaster or begin to come clean. Deeming the political costs of covering up this major disaster to be too great, the Politburo began to allow more information on the disaster and its health and environmental effects to come to light.

This process of transparency was a long one. Even four years later, after a long line of “Chernobylology” texts, experts were skeptical of the official narrative of the accident and suspected that there were still many details yet to come to light.³² This feeling of never enough transparency caused Chernobyl to

³¹ Medvedev, *The Legacy of Chernobyl*, 3.

³² *Ibid.*

be a watershed moment. A little bit of openness on the Chernobyl disaster was not enough to sate public opinion.

In response, Gorbachev began his campaign of *glasnost* or “openness.”³³ In addition to increasingly open reporting on Chernobyl, Gorbachev and the Soviet elite restored the circulation of numerous banned novels and films, resumed the allowance Jewish emigration from the USSR, and combatted widespread alcoholism with concrete policy. Andrei Sakharov, the Soviet thermonuclear physicist turned anti-war activist living in exile, received a call from Gorbachev that he and his wife could return to Moscow. These tangible reforms, paired with the 1987-1988 reforms to the planned economy that allowed opportunities for private businesses, were serious steps towards democratization.³⁴ Gorbachev seemed bent on taking the Soviet Union in a truly new direction.

While Gorbachev walked the line between starry-eyed reformer and smooth political operator at this unprecedented moment in the Soviet Union, across the world, an American academic was building his career around the atomic bomb. Martin Sherwin was a well-established American historian by the time Gorbachev unveiled *glasnost*. After earning his BA at Dartmouth in 1959, Sherwin served a four-year stint in the Naval Air Force (during he which he experienced the Cuban Missile Crisis first-hand).³⁵ After his military service, Sherwin enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles in 1971 for a PhD

³³ A historical term, *glasnost* first was used to refer to media reforms made by Tsar Alexander II in 1858 and again to describe the demands of a rally in Moscow’s Pushkin Square on December 5, 1965 for increased transparency around the closed trial of Yulii Daniel and Andrei Sinyavsky.

³⁴ Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*, 60.

³⁵ See Martin J Sherwin. *Gambling with Armageddon : Nuclear Roulette from Hiroshima to the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1945-1962*. (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2020).

in history. While at UCLA, his military background and international interest inspired him to write his dissertation on the 1945 American decision to drop the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. Sherwin established himself as a prolific scholar of nuclear proliferation and diplomacy. He joined the History faculty at Princeton University in 1973. That same year, he released his first full-length book, *A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance*, an examination of the diplomatic landscape leading up to the creation of the atomic bomb and the ways in which this diplomatic landscape forever shifted after the bomb's use. *A World Destroyed* won the 1973 Stuart L. Bernath and American History Book Prizes and launched his career as a scholar. Sherwin moved to Tufts University in Medford, MA in 1980, where he was both a professor in the history department and an adjunct faculty member in the Fletcher School of International Law and Diplomacy.

Sherwin founded the Nuclear Age History and Humanities Center (NAAHC) at Tufts in 1986, “the first academic center in the nation dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of the nuclear era.”³⁶ Now interested in shifting his focus away from the political science of nuclear weapons, Sherwin wanted to consider the impact that these weapons had on society through the lenses of art, literature, film, and history.³⁷ The NAAHC offered postgraduate and doctoral fellowships to research and study the potential resolutions to nuclear conflicts

³⁶ “Nuclear Age History and Humanities Center Records”, Tufts Digital Library, Accessed May 6, 2021, <https://dl.tufts.edu/concern/eads/x633fb85p>

³⁷ Martin Sherwin. Email to author, 7/24/2020.

around the globe. and organized conferences on international nuclear diplomacy. By far though, the flagship initiative of the NAAHCP was the GCP.

According to Sherwin, the Global Classroom Project was born from a moment of idleness and a “wild idea.”³⁸ On one afternoon in January of 1987, Sherwin waited in his office on the Tufts quad for a call to pick his wife up from work. Leaning back in his chair, Sherwin was struck with a thought. “If Gorbachev really is serious”, Sherwin mused, “then he might just allow a discussion between Soviet and American students on these nuclear issues.”³⁹

Sherwin was already teaching a popular course at Tufts on the topic titled “America in the Nuclear Age”. There had to be comparable student interest in the Soviet Union. Sherwin immediately figured that the centerpiece of the program should be technology, but he had no attachment to any particular format. Initially, Sherwin had imagined that Soviet and American students could communicate through a basic two-way communications device called the videophone, a small device with a screen of several inches that allowed its users to see and hear other people on the other end in black-and-white simultaneously.⁴⁰ Could this fantasy really come to fruition? Luckily for Sherwin, Jean Mayer, the president of Tufts University at the time, was “no stranger to fantastical ideas.”⁴¹

When Dr. Jean Mayer assumed the presidency of Tufts on July 1, 1976, Tufts was in serious financial trouble. With a shrinking endowment and a Board of Trustees set on not “stooping” to raise money, Tufts had a limited number of

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Martin Sherwin, Email to Author, July 24, 2020.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

paths forward.⁴² President of Tufts from 1938-1952, Leonard Carmichael focused on increasing student enrollment and left Tufts with an endowment \$1.5 million larger than when he started. He did not however, undertake without undertaking any of the significant fundraising campaigns that were typical of Tufts' "peer institutions." While this substantial increase of the endowment might seem positive, it did anything but put Tufts on firm financial footing or improve the university's academic reputation. .

Promoted from dean position to president in 1952, President Nils Wessell continued in the same vein as his predecessor. Most notably, Wessell pushed for the transition from Tufts College to Tufts University in 1955. Supporting this move, he personally oversaw the genesis and development of the University's PhD programs. However, with no other meaningful avenues for paying the bills (and fundraising still seen to be an act of groveling), enrollment continued to have to be expanded while the program quality (especially of doctoral degrees) continued to decline. Tufts was left with underpaid faculty, a burgeoning undergraduate student population, and twenty-two doctoral programs with "little to no status in the academic community."⁴³

Burton Hallowell, stepping into the position in 1967, inherited a growing annual deficit of \$500,000. General political unrest and student discontent, concurrent with the Vietnam War era, made for a tumultuous tenure. With a weak alumni network and little hope of other fundraising, it seemed that Tufts might simply not be a viable project as an academic institution. When Hallowell retired

⁴² Gittelman, *An Entrepreneurial University*, 13.

⁴³ Ibid.

from Tufts in 1975, he breathed a heavy sigh of relief and walked into another career. The Board of Trustees was once again in the weeds with a failing institution and a vacant presidency.

Jean Mayer was a PhD and Professor at Harvard in the fledgling field of nutrition. He was passed over twice in the search for a Tufts University president, first in 1967 and again in 1976. In '76, the Tufts Board of Trustees selected Johns Hopkins Provost Barry Woolf, leaving Mayer as the runner-up.⁴⁴ Mayer, still steadfast in his desire to lead Tufts, accepted the presidency as a clear second choice after Woolf resigned from the position.

Mayer's leadership was bold and adventurous. Seizing the idea of "academic entrepreneurship", he saw no use in hesitation. Within months of accepting his position as Tufts president, Mayer entered the university into a shaky but promising relationship with the academic lobbying group Schlossberg & Cassidy as their first client. Whereas earlier Tufts presidents saw soliciting funds as a sign of weakness, Mayer embraced the possibilities that it could give the university.

Jean Mayer made even riskier moves as his presidency continued. At his summer inauguration address, Mayer made it one of his top priorities to establish a Tufts Veterinary school. With his new partners at Schlossberg & Cassidy, Mayer felt confident that Tufts could raise the immense funding it would require to create a new campus and veterinary program. From his inauguration in 1976 to

⁴⁴ Ibid, 16-17

his retirement in 1992, Mayer consistently gambled on bold new initiatives, and in the process raised the bar for what could be done at Tufts.

Mayer was a major advocate for the GCP. This project fit precisely within what he was trying to accomplish throughout his presidency. He was such a strong supporter in fact that he was often credited with the GCP's founding. With the spirit of "academic entrepreneurship" at Tufts and the spirit of glasnost abroad, this program aspired to close the space, both ideologically and physically, between the Soviet Union and the United States. Citizen diplomacy is often seen as a natural outcome of mutual understanding and common purpose. When it came to the case of the GCP, however Soviet-American "friendship" came with many prerequisites and conditions that should not be taken for granted. Without perestroika/glasnost, the momentary popularity of spacebridge technology, the Soviet economy's centralization of Gosteleradio, the need for Tufts to rebuild its reputation, and the joint drive of Sherwin and Mayer to directly oversee the success of these program, the GCP never would have come to fruition.

Foundationally, the Global Classroom Project is best understood when divided into two main phases. First, is the planning phase along with the Nuclear Series (1987-1988). Part One of this work tracks this first era, an iteration of the program that explored themes of nuclear culture, the historicization of the Manhattan Project, and the importance of art to understand nuclear trauma. Until 1988, the GCP was very true to its original mission and structure, partnered principally between Tufts University and Lomonosov Moscow State University. Chapter One explores this early partnership, why history was used as a method of

nuclear exploration rather than international policy theory, and how celebrity science influenced the culture of the late Cold War.

Part Two tracks a very different phase of the program, following the GCP as it switched subject matter, organizational personnel, and partner institutions. With the nuclear weapons crisis cooling, public attention and funding availability grew interested in the degradation of the global environment and its implications for the human community as a whole. Part Two seeks to explore the issues and narratives that built this globalized thinking, imagining it not as a natural “safe topic” but mutual interest in complex, new ideas mobilizing charged political rhetoric. Through the narrative of this transition in the Global Classroom Project’s area of concern, one can begin to understand how global concerns over the use of nuclear weapons gave way to matters such as overpopulation and climate change.

Finally, this work identifies the cause of the Global Classroom’s eventual collapse in 1992 and the interconnected ways to consider nuclear and environmental destruction that it left behind. Before the Global Classroom Project can end, however, it has to begin. This is where we now turn.

Part One:

The Nuclear Weapons Series

(1987-1988)

Chapter One: Building the Spacebridge

After his initial moment of clarity, Professor Martin Sherwin promptly made an appointment with Tufts President Jean Mayer. The former recalls that it took little work to convince the latter to sign onto the Global Classroom Project. Readily enthusiastic and not wasting energy on slow movements, Mayer encouraged Sherwin to get to work on drafting a letter to Gorbachev himself. Sherwin promptly drafted this letter for Mayer, proposing his general ideas for an exchange program which sought to put a halt to the nuclear and arms race through student diplomacy. As Sherwin now remembers, there was no issue with organizing the initiative from the Tufts end of things. The letter from Jean Mayer to Mikhail Gorbachev was signed and sent along on February 5, 1987.¹ Sherwin later described Mayer as the singular figure required to build enthusiasm for the program at Tufts. Remembering the president's enthusiasm Sherwin wrote, "from then on he was on board and he was Tufts."²

In his letter to CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, Jean Mayer performed diplomacy with flying colors. Mayer frames opens his correspondence, "I am writing to you about a matter of the greatest concern for my country and yours and about the potential contribution universities can make to improve the

¹ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1970-1993. Collage of newspaper articles on television broadcasts between Tufts University and Moscow State University, photocopy 1987. UA027.001.001.00079. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

² Martin Sherwin. 'Clarification on GCP Timeline'. Email, 2020.

situation. I refer, of course, to the arms race in the nuclear age.”³ Mayer went on to identify himself as an international educator, and Tufts as an institution with programs “all over the world.” For Mayer, the key question that a program such as the GCP could address was the way in which academic institutions could help “focus attention on the nuclear dilemma with a greater sense of urgency.” “As the President of one of America’s leading universities”, Mayer wrote to Gorbachev of the responsibility he felt to answer and act on such questions.⁴

The idea for the program that Jean Mayer presented to General Secretary Gorbachev on February 5, 1987 was already well-developed. The proposed plan was a semester-long joint course on the history of the arms race “guided by parallel syllabi planned together by the professors teaching the courses.” Mayer did not have a Soviet university partner in mind, simply writing that the classes would be taught at Tufts “and a University in the Soviet Union.”⁵ Mayer’s proposed program linked these parallel classes “periodically via satellite communication, allowing for mutual observation and participation.”

Mayer proposed that the program would be initiated by the autumn of 1988 (a conservative estimate, the GCP was actually running a semester earlier) and requested an audience with General Secretary Gorbachev the “great deal of preparation” this “unprecedented initiative” required. Mayer already planned to be in Moscow from May 29-30 of 1987 to attend a meeting of the Physicians for

³ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1970-1993. GCP 1 (R) 1986 -- 1987. Letter, February 5, 1987, Mayer to Gorbachev. UA027.001.001.00009. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Social Responsibility and figured that perhaps he could meet with Gorbachev at this time. Mayer closed his letter by directly calling Gorbachev to action, “this kind of experience for our young people, which modern technology makes possible, is too important to forego.”⁶

Sherwin got the letter in the hands of Frank Von Hippel, a physicist, friend, and former colleague. Von Hippel was a trained and practiced theoretical physicist and a Professor of Public and International Affairs at Princeton. This international interest, paired with an advanced scientific background earned Von Hippel the chair of the Federation of American Scientists (FAS). Founded in 1945 by the Manhattan Project scientists who designed the American atomic bomb, the FAS served as a reminder that scientists, engineers, and others with technical training “have [an] ethical obligation to ensure that the technological fruits of their intellect and labor are applied to the benefit of humankind.”⁷ Frank Von Hippel, in his role with FAS worked with the Soviet political and scientific establishments on technical steps for the escalation of the nuclear arms race. He was already established in the dual worlds of science and international diplomacy. Von Hippel was an advisor of Mikhail Gorbachev’s on nuclear arms descalation. In turn, Von Hippel was well-acquainted with Gorbachev’s chief science advisor, Evgheny P. Velikhov.⁸

Velikhov was one of the most celebrated scientists in the Soviet Union. In 1987, he was the head of the physics department at Moscow State University. A

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ “About FAS”, Federation of American Scientists”, Accessed May 6, 2021, <https://fas.org/about-fas/>

⁸ Martin Sherwin, Email to author, December 6, 2021.

member of the Communist Party since 1971 and a member the party's Central Committee, Evgheny Velikhov embodied the strong marriage between science and politics in the Soviet establishment. With a presence felt across scientific society, he was the Vice President for the Soviet Academy of Sciences for Math and Physics, and the first president of the USSR Nuclear Society. In 1988, Velikhov was named the director of the Soviet Union's Kurchatov Institute of Atomic Energy. As such, regulating the cleanup of the Chernobyl disaster and directly briefing Gorbachev on the effects of the aftermath were his responsibilities. Needless to say, Velikhov was among the top echelon of Soviet scientists and wielded considerable political and social power as a result.

Velikhov used his station in the government and in Soviet academia to advocate for thawed relations with the West. By 1987, he was engaged with Von Hippel, the FAS, and other American scientists and diplomats, working towards a mutual reduction in nuclear weapons.⁹ Von Hippel leveraged this connection with Velikhov to pass along Mayer's letter during a visit to Moscow. Enthusiastic about scientific exchange, having already successfully completed some video lecture exchanges with universities in Germany, Velikhov was excited to undergo a similar exchange with an American institution.¹⁰ As a senior arms control advisor to Gorbachev, Velikhov allegedly relayed news of the program to the chairman of the central committee, but largely singlehandedly managed the Soviet logistics of the GCP.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

With Mayer's approval at home, Von Hippel as a bridge, and Velikhov working the Communist Party abroad, the Global Classroom Project began to take shape. By the middle of the spring 1987 semester, Sherwin and Mayer had received a telex expressing Velikhov's enthusiasm.¹¹ This approval was put down into a formal agreement once Sherwin had a direct audience with Velikhov himself. Sherwin's personal access to Moscow was channeled through the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), a multinational organization and typical product of Cold War techno politics.

The IPPNW was founded in 1980 by U.S. and Soviet medical experts in who were determined to prevent nuclear war between these two superpowers. Providing medical data from treatment centers in Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a cautionary tale, the doctors of the IPPNW marshalled their scientific credibility to advocate for the removal of nuclear weapons from arsenals.¹² Starting with a cohort of just a few doctors from the US and USSR backed by first year medical students at Harvard, the IPPNW grew to include 135,000 medical experts from 60 countries by 1985.¹³

Drs. Bernard Lown and Evgheny Chazov, American and Soviet citizens respectively, co-founded and presided over the IPPNW. Bonded professionally and personally through mutual work on cardiac arrest, Lown and Chazov set a powerful example for what us often referred to as a "humanitarian ethos of health

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² "IPPNW: A Brief History", International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Accessed May 6, 2021, <https://www.ippnw.org/about/ippnw-a-brief-history>

¹³ "IPPNW Milestones", International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Accessed May 6, 2021, <https://www.ippnw.org/about/ippnw-a-brief-history/ippnw-milestones>

care” within the framework of citizen diplomacy.¹⁴ Lown and Chazov travelled back-and-forth between US and USSR to promote both their own medical work and large-scale international agendas of cooperation between their two countries. Their work earned the IPPNW the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985.

Dr. Lown had a practice in Malden, Massachusetts in the 1980’s. Just a few minutes away from Tufts, he happened to be the physician and close friend of Jean Mayer.¹⁵ The Seventh annual international meeting of the IPPNW was scheduled to take place in Moscow in late May and early June of 1987. The GCP already underway, Lown invited Mayer to join him for the conference and get a taste of Moscow in person.¹⁶ Mayer asked Sherwin to come along. Sherwin, in turn, convinced Mayer to extend the invitation to Hans Fenstermacher, a young graduate student at Tufts. Fenstermacher, fluent in Russian and a host of other languages, worked with closely with Sherwin and would later become a co-coordinator and Assistant Director of the project.

Sherwin met with Velikhov directly while in Moscow for the IPPNW conference in June of 1987. Elaborating on Mayer’s letter and Von Hippel’s messenger work, Sherwin remembers that his ideas met with Velikhov’s characteristic enthusiasm for diplomatic projects. It was clear that Velikhov was interested both from a political and personal perspective. Velikhov’s enthusiasm, however, was metered. Political etiquette required that he needed to take a

¹⁴ Randi Garber, "Health as a Bridge for Peace: Theory, Practice and Prognosis — Reflections of a Practitioner." *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 1, no. 1 (2002). 71.

¹⁵ Martin Sherwin, Email to Author, December 6, 2020.

¹⁶ Mayer offered the dates of this conference as a potential time to meet in his letter to General Secretary Gorbachev. There is available record of whether or not this meeting actually occurred.

relationship with the GCP slowly. He agreed only to meet with Sherwin at some unspecified point in the future.¹⁷ It would take more bureaucratic maneuvering before the GCP would be on solid ground.

Formal agreements were essential for successful diplomacy with the Soviet Union, a precedent set during the late 1950's and early '60's, an era of popular Soviet-American cultural and scientific exchanges.¹⁸ Once Sherwin and the GCP team at Tufts gave Velikhov a draft agreement for the program, matters of planning became increasingly serious.

When exactly the initial GCP agreement was drafted is unclear.¹⁹ Given the content of the document, titled "Draft Agreement to Teach a Joint Course on the History of the Nuclear Arms Race with Live Television Linkage Between Classrooms," it was sometime after Sherwin's meeting with Velikhov in May of 1987 and before October of that same year.²⁰ The body of this early agreement demonstrates which aspects of what would become the Global Classroom Project were foundational to the concept and which came as later additions. Interestingly enough, the title of "Global Classroom Project" is nowhere to be found in this document. Record of that name does appear in print until late 1987. In the middle

¹⁷ Martin Sherwin, Email to author, December 6, 2020.

¹⁸ Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War*, 15-16.

¹⁹ As organized in the Tufts Digital Collections and Archives, the draft agreement to "Teach a Joint Course on The History of the Nuclear Arms Race with Live Television Linkage Between Classrooms" could be attached to the same document as Mayer's letter to Mikhail Gorbachev. However, these documents discuss the "Joint Course" as taking place over different time frames and thus could not have been drafted at the same time. The actual draft agreement document is without a printed date.

²⁰ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1970-1993. GCP 1 (R) 1986 -- 1987. Letter, "Draft Agreement to Teach a Joint Course on the History of the Nuclear Arms Race with Live Television Linkage Between Classrooms." UA027.001.001.00009. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

of 1987, the program is just referred as a “joint course.” It is easy to get swept away in all of the grand media coverage of the GCP that would have you believe that it was some sweeping ambition from the start. While it would soon receive major publicity as an unprecedented program, the original scope of the Global Classroom Project was focused and manageable.

Core to the program, as evident in the original draft agreement, is the importance of “live television linkage” three to four times per semester.²¹ Furthermore, this “television linkage” was such a fundamental part of the program that the initial draft agreement clearly stated a duration (two hours each) and time (“0800 Boston time”) of these linkages.²² There is mention of physical exchanges, but the language around that aspect of the program was left vague. Instead of listing clear expectations, the initial draft agreement states that “the parties will seek to facilitate significant intellectual between their courses including student and faculty visits to each other’s classes.”²³ It was too bold to name a physical visit to Moscow or Boston outright, though this might have been an intention from the beginning.

The personnel of the program that became the GCP was largely set from these early moments. The initial draft agreement plainly states that Academician Velikhov would serve as the director of the Soviet course while Sherwin would serve as Velikhov’s American counterpart. While both Velikhov and Sherwin’s

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

involvement somewhat shifted throughout the program's lifespan, the involvement of these two men was perhaps the GCP's greatest continuity.²⁴

The most interesting inconsistency that this document reveals is the lack of a solid Soviet partner institution. According to this early blueprint, Tufts University "through its Nuclear Age History and Humanities Center" is one entity in the program, collaborating with not a Soviet university but the Committee of Soviet Scientists for Peace and Against the Nuclear Threat (CSSPANT). CSSPANT was the rough Soviet equivalent to FAS, another group of internationally engaged scientists working to publish data on the nuclear threat and potential strategies to disarmament.²⁵ Instead of attaching itself to any one Soviet institution, the program's initial agreement read that, while "Tufts University will undertake to organize and finance the television link in the USA...the CSSPANT will facilitate arrangements in the Soviet Union."²⁶ There is a brief mention of Moscow University (a future institutional partner in exchange) but this draft agreement clarifies a steady theme for the Global Classroom Project very early on, the program found more stability in Velikhov than with any one Soviet academic institution.

Into the fall and winter of 1987, with Velikhov clearly in support of Sherwin's initiative and an agreement committed to paper, the Global Classroom

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ A testament to this comparison is Harold Feiveson and Frank Von Hippel's 1990 paper, "Beyond START: How to Make Much Deeper Cuts" published by the MIT Press. In this essay on alternatives to the prospective Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), Feiveson and Von Hippel use data on the Soviet intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) arsenal published by CSSPANT to support their central argument.

²⁶ Letter, "Draft Agreement to Teach a Joint Course on the History of the Nuclear Arms Race with Live Television Linkage Between Classrooms," UA027.001.001.00009.

Project began to take shape. As such, the media took immense interest in Sherwin, Mayer, and their program. This attention increased the pressure to lock in a Soviet academic partner and get this initiative underway.

Tufts needed a partner in the Soviet Union and radio studios on both ends to produce these teleconferencing programs, not to mention a significant amount of funding to make these ambitious broadcasts possible. Velikhov brought Lomonosov Moscow State University (“MGU”, sometimes referred to as MSU) into partnership with Tufts vis-a-vis his political authority and academic chair. MGU, as the most prestigious institution in the Soviet Union at the time, was the most obvious partner for the program.²⁷ However, this partnership rested on an unstable foundation, and Sherwin knew it.

Velikhov did not consult MGU’s administration for an opinion on GCP cooperation. Sherwin himself knew this. Today he stills recalls that, “[Velikhov] more or less just told them to do it.”²⁸ There was tension between Tufts and MGU from the beginning of their “cooperation”, but the problems with this unstable partnership did not reveal themselves until 1990. As of 1987 Moscow State felt dragged into the GCP without their full consent but were willing to play along.

A similar foundation grounded the GCP’s partnership with Gostelradio, the national Soviet radio studio and television station. Velikhov’s incorporation of the studio into the program produced slow brewing tensions that took a year to manifest. The original manner in which Gostelradio was brought into the fold of

²⁷ Moscow State University was also attended by both Mikhail Gorbachev and Evgheny Velikhov himself.

²⁸ Martin Sherwin, Email to author, December 6, 2020.

the GCP led to misunderstandings that caused the studio to try and drop the spacebridge programs only a month before the first broadcast. There were no such tensions on the U.S. end, where Videocom Inc. and Videocom Satellite Associates were the initial partners in satellite transmission.²⁹ This difference can be explained largely as a difference in economic structure. Whereas the Videocom companies selectively chose the American spacebridge projects that they wanted to take on, Gosteleradio was overburdened with handling and producing media programs across the Soviet Union. The GCP's Moscow-based producer was simply told to work with Sherwin, leading to rooted discontent.

All of this was behind the scenes, however. Press coverage for the GCP in the fall of 1987 was extremely positive, which gave it enough political weight to skate across its thin ice with Gostelradio. There was enthusiastic coverage from the *Boston Globe*, *Newsweek*, and United Press International (UPI). These early headlines referred to the program with the early term "glasnosTV."³⁰ Richard Taffe, on the behalf of UPI, proclaimed, "US, Soviet Collegians to be on 'glasnosTV'." *Newsweek*, along with a photo of Martin Sherwin smiling in front of thick, square monitor, published the headline "Satellites for the Classroom: Joint U.S.- U.S.S.R. Course." The *Boston Globe* focused on the ideological context of the program rather than the technology, boldly claiming "Tufts to have

²⁹ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1970-1993. GCP 1 (R) 1986 -- 1987. Report, Tufts Moscow Videoconference Preliminary Proposal. UA027.001.001.00009. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

a share in glasnost.”³¹ Images of Sherwin, Gorbachev, and Velikhov adorned the pages of American newspapers. Jean Mayer was on record claiming that this program would be the first in a long line of courses, “the beginning of the use of space-technology for academic exchange, particularly in the field of peace.”³² Media expectations were clearly elevated through the fall and into the winter of 1987.³³

The conservative international weekly newspaper *The Economist* was much more skeptical. On December 5, 1987, the publication ran a piece titled “Gimmickry or glasnost?” Writing on the performative nature of the Global Classroom Project, the article predicted that, in spacebridge programs, the ideological differences between the American and Soviet panels would be vast. “On one side....will sit uninhibited academics, most of them critical of their government”, the piece began, describing American panelists. “...On the other, government agents (Mr. Velikhov is a member of the Central Committee of the Communist party). The result will be an asymmetry and an anti-American bias that the Tufts students may not grasp.”³⁴ This account of the events is rooted in the same conceptions of Soviet and American journalism held by Peter Jennings

³¹ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1970-1993. Collage of newspaper articles on television broadcasts between Tufts University and Moscow State University, photocopy 1987. UA027.001.001.00079. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

³² *Boston Globe*, September 11, 1987, in “Global Classroom Project Selected Press Clippings”. Courtesy of Martin Sherwin (currently in the possession of the author).

³³ The program drew skepticism as well as enthusiasm. *Time* headlined an October 12 article “Iron Curtain Raising on Campus.” Invoking the 1950’s Churchill metaphor of division, the magazine describes the flurry of interest in Soviet studies that had been fueled by nuclear threats, the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and glasnost with a rather glib tone. The article concludes with a neutral statement on the precedented nature of Tufts’ joint course with MGU.

³⁴ *The Economist*, December 5, 1987, “Global Classroom Project Selected Press Clippings”. Courtesy of Martin Sherwin (currently in the possession of the author).

in his introduction to *Spacebridges*. While some press seemed to understand and emphasize the idealism of the GCP, some media outlets on the relative political right-wing of news coverage worked to paint the project as sympathetic to the Soviets or even anti-American.



A cartoon from The Economist on Dec. 5 1987, stereotypically depicting students from Tufts and MGU accompanied by the doves of peace.

Meanwhile, Sherwin and his partners were busy putting finishing touches on the GCP prior to its spring 1988 start. Tufts students were already enrolled in the Spring 1988 course “HIST 192A: The Soviet Union, United States, and the Nuclear Arms Race in Historical Perspective.”³⁵ On September 25, Sherwin and Fenstermacher went to Videocom Telecommunications’ office in Boston to discuss the American end of teleconferencing production . Minutes taken by Fenstermacher, as well as the set of preliminary proposals made by Videocom for

³⁵ *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, February 24, 1988, in “Global Classroom Project Selected Media Press Clippings” packet. Courtesy of Martin Sherwin (currently in possession of author).

the upcoming set of programs, reveal the complexities of staffing requirements, budgeting, and other planning details.

Tufts, MGU and Videocom agreed to the production of five spacebridge programs throughout the course of 1989.³⁶ The Tufts cohort of roughly 350 students would convene in the Tufts Sackler center in downtown Boston, while the MGU group of around 700 students would join from an auditorium at Moscow State.

The specific topics of the 1988 joint course were generally selected, but still loose as of the fall of 1987. As Sherwin told Steve Curwood of the *Boston Globe* on September 11, 1987, the first spacebridge focused on “putting strategic stability in historic perspective.” The second covered the early history of international attempts to control nuclear weapons, while the third discussed the Cuban Missile Crisis. The fourth topic, as of September of ‘87, had yet to be determined. Sherwin was eager to discuss the “economic, cultural, and political impact of nuclear arms,” but his MGU partners wanted to discuss SALT II, an arms limitation treaty initiated by Carter that was never ratified by the US Senate. “We’ll work it out,” Sherwin told Curwood during his 1987 interview. “Three out of four isn’t bad.”³⁷

Working out the final spacebridge topic, it turned out, would be one of the least complicated issues facing the GCP team between the fall of 1987 and the spring of 1988. Videocom Associates, while preparing a preliminary outline of

³⁶ Report, “Tufts University Moscow Videoconference Proposal,” UA027.001.001.00009. p. 2

³⁷ *Boston Globe*, September 11, 1988, in “Global Classroom Project Selected Media Press Clippings” Packet. Courtesy of Martin Sherwin (currently in possession of author).

the upcoming broadcast, of the first spacebridge planning detail a list of fourteen “issues to address” in late 1987.³⁸ Many of these seemed more suitable for Hollywood than a university lecture hall. Security, pre- and post- production, and meals, rooms, and parking for the crew had to be sorted out.

These production-focused hurdles in Boston were compounded by more serious obstacles abroad. Sherwin and the American GCP team were preoccupied with the need for “US technical support in Moscow.” Whether it be finding an interpreter for technical coordination at Moscow State, handling facility arrangements for the Moscow end of production, or making sure that the Soviet team recognized their responsibility for certain aspects of transmission, negotiations with Videocom in the United States reveal that the American team was seriously concerned about Soviet willingness and ability to uphold their end of the agreement.³⁹

The cost of the programs was another major concern. As Sherwin remembers, when it came to the GCP “the next step was always finding funding” from sources such as Hale and Dorr (a Boston-based international law firm), the MacArthur Foundation, and United Technologies (an aerospace company that has since merged with the defense contractor Raytheon).⁴⁰ Staffing a single spacebridge program cost about \$26,050 (\$60,740 in 2021 USD) for make-up personnel, video engineers, a director, three camera operators, lighting crew and audio crew. spacebridge event was . Transmission costs were nearly as high.

³⁸ Report, “Tufts University Moscow Videoconference Preliminary Proposal.” UA027.001.001.00009. p. 6

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Martin Sherwin, Email to author, December 27, 2020.

Two-and-a-half hours broadcasting through a satellite uplink and downlink was billed at roughly \$17, 250 (depending on exchange rates and tariffs). Once equipment rentals and other expenses were factored in, the total cost of a single spacebridge event was roughly \$43,300 (\$100,961 in 2021 USD).⁴¹

Sherwin, the manager of most of the GCP's fundraising, preferred a "bare-bones" approach to production in order to keep costs down. Fenstermacher, in contrast, felt it important to impress their Soviet counterparts. At their planning meeting with Videocom's Frank Cavallo on September 25, Fenstermacher asked Sherwin and Cavallo to "consider the media value of production" and how it could impact "Soviet reaction." Fenstermacher recommended that they set aside funds to handle cost overruns.⁴²

Yet despite all of these financial and technical hurdles, the American GCP team's biggest hurdle lay before them. The GCP's relationship with their designated studio in the USSR, Gostelradio, was about to cave in.

On January 29, 1988, Sherwin received a Telex from a "V. Lazutkin of USSR Gosteleradio." After several months operating under the agreement reached between Velikhov and Sherwin in June of 1987, already well into the spring semester with the scheduled first spacebridge a little over a month away, the Soviet national radio station was casually withdrawing from the arrangement. This succinct message opens, "we have thoroughly studied your proposals...and

⁴¹ Report, "Tufts University Moscow Videoconference Preliminary Proposal." UA027.001.001.00009. p. 5.

⁴² Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1970-1993. GCP 1 (R) 1986 -- 1987.Meeting Minutes, September 25, 1987, Videocom Meeting 10 am Communications Office. UA027.001.001.00009. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

find them very interesting” (originally the message was sent in Russian but was translated into English with a Russian version kept for reference).⁴³ However, “we regret that you asked for our assistance too late. This means that we have already scheduled spacebridge programs for this year and we have no free slot for these broadcasts as well as money and stuff to produce them.”⁴⁴

Not accepting the excuse of a lack of “money and stuff,” Sherwin recalls this letter as a manifestation of resentment at being “forced into this program by Velikhov.” Sherwin clearly recalls his panic on the morning that he received Gostelradio’s telex message. Reflecting back on this crucial moment in the program’s history, Sherwin recounts that “all our work, our fundraising, the expectations of the students....was about to shatter.”⁴⁵ Something had to be done, immediately.

Later that same day, Sherwin sent back his calculated response. Signed by Jean Mayer and Martin Sherwin, the GCP’s reply makes it clear how deeply the program was already in production. It was far too late to back down. Citing the importance of wide US-based news coverage, Sherwin and Mayer argued that these spacebridges “are seen to be of international historic significance.”⁴⁶ Sherwin and Mayer also noted that Sherwin met in Moscow with “S. Erofev” at Gostelradio on January 18, only eleven days before Gostelradio’s abrupt

⁴³ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1987-1993. Gostelradio GCP Letter 1987 -- 1993. Telex, January 29, 1988, V. Lazutkin to Martin J Sherwin and Joseph D. Bakan. UA027.001.001.00048. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Martin Sherwin, Email to author, December 27, 2020.

⁴⁶ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1987-1993. Gostelradio GCP Letter 1987 -- 1993. Telex, January 29, 1988, Mayer and Sherwin to Velikhov. UA027.001.001.00048. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

withdrawal.⁴⁷ After meeting with Erofev, Sherwin signed an agreement with the Boston PBS station WGBH to add the upcoming spacebridge to its broadcasting schedule.⁴⁸ In addition to GBH, Sherwin was in negotiations to open up the spacebridges to broadcasting on another 225 public stations using the Westar Satellite network. Finally, segments of the GCP spacebridges were also to be carried on “ABC World News Tonight.”⁴⁹ Having already made several accommodations for Gosteleradio’s broadcasting schedule (such as moving back the initial broadcast date), “we cannot understand ... why Gostelradio is now saying that it cannot fulfill the commitments for the Soviet side...we await your prompt reply.”⁵⁰

Covering his bases, Sherwin sent a message directly to Velikhov (copying Dr. Andrej Kokoshin, Velikhov’s GCP deputy from ISKAN). Attaching the telex he had sent in response to Gostelradio’s Lazutkin, Sherwin emphasized how the program was already eagerly anticipated in the US. Backing down was not an option. The MacArthur Foundation had “provided a major grant to Tufts to help support the cost of the Spacebridges.” Sherwin closed by holding Velikhov to his word, “we hope and trust, academician Velikhov, that you will be able to rectify what appears to be a lack of understanding on the part of Gosteleradio.”⁵¹

Still not satisfied, Sherwin decided that the only way he could be sure of rescuing the program from destruction was to speak with Evgheny Velikhov

⁴⁷ The assigned Gosteleradio producer for the Global Classroom Project was a man by the full name of Sergey Erofev.

⁴⁸ Telex, January 29, 1988, Mayer and Sherwin to Velikhov.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid, 2.

directly. How Sherwin was able to receive a visa to Moscow and schedule a meeting with Velikhov on such short notice is forgotten. However, as Sherwin recalls, he got on a plane to Moscow the next day with a packet of press clippings in hand.⁵² After a fitful sleep in a Moscow hotel, Sherwin met with Velikhov the next morning. Emphasizing the ideological importance of the GCP, Sherwin argued that a Soviet cancellation of the GCP would “seriously harm” US-USSR relations.⁵³ Borrowing some of the most generous language of the US news outlets that extended Gorbachev’s political agenda to the Global Classroom Project, Sherwin took every opportunity to mobilize *glasnost* rhetoric in order to keep the GCP alive.

Whatever Sherwin said to Velikhov that day...worked. According to Sherwin, Velikhov picked up his phone and contacted several higher-ups at Gosteleradio, quoting the US news clippings that were before him. Assuring Sherwin that all would be well, Velikhov sent Sherwin to meet right away with Gosteleradio’s GCP producer. As Sherwin recalls, the producer he spoke with “was unhappy but clearly had his marching orders.” “Unhappy” is a likely quite the understatement. Regardless, from his point of view, this was enough for Sherwin “to return to Boston triumphant.”⁵⁴

A letter addressed to Sherwin on February 8, 1988 verified this triumph. Received from one Leonid Zolotarevsky of the Gosteleradio department of international relations, this correspondence represents an improved understanding

⁵² These press clippings are the very same mentioned above in this work.

⁵³ Telex, January 29, 1988, Mayer and Sherwin to Velikhov, p. 2.

⁵⁴ Martin Sherwin, Email to author, December 27, 2020.

of the new norms for further partnership set by Sherwin's recent visit to Moscow.⁵⁵ Recall that Zolotarevsky was a moderator of the "Capitol-to-capitol" spacebridge program alongside Peter Jennings. It is indicative of the Soviet broadcasting establishment that such a prominent journalist served as the head of a department in the State Committee for Broadcasting.

In this letter, Zolotarevsky confirms that "Soviet TV" will commit to five spacebridges. These events, as detailed in the letter, were now set for March 5, April 9, and April 30. The original four spacebridges of HIST 192A were cut back to three simultaneous collaborative sessions. This limiting was one example of earlier "cooperation" that Sherwin had agreed to per Gosteleradio's request). Beyond the limits of the current course, Zolotarevsky also enlisted Gosteleradio in the production of two programs in "the autumn", the specifics of which would be determined by July 1, 1988.⁵⁶

Second, in order to make these programs happen at all, Sherwin had to commit to a greater funding commitment. As Zolotarevsky writes, "it is understood that the US side will undertake all hard currency expenses involved to cover Intelstat orders for two-way video and audio channels."⁵⁷ Unlike earlier understandings of the financial agreement reflected in the September 25 Videocom meetings, Sherwin and "the US side" would now be held responsible

⁵⁵ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1987-1993. Gosteleradio GCP Letter 1987 -- 1993. Letter, February 8, 1988, Zolotarevsky to Sherwin.UA027.001.001.00048. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

for handling the satellite transmission expenses for both American and Soviet transmissions.

Finally, Zolotarevsky's letter signaled that the GCP was changing hands within the Soviet broadcasting bureaucracy. Going forward, all correspondence concerning the GCP would be funneled directly through the USSR state committee for TV and radio broadcasting's department of international relations. Zolotarevsky, the department's head, would ensure that at least these five spacebridges would be realized.

This early narrative history and near crisis in the Global Classroom Project highlights some key themes going forward. With different office cultures and educational organization, the tension that spiked between Velikhov, Sherwin and Gostelradio would not go away. There were some fundamentally different understandings of "educational agreement" going on here.

Additionally, the financial rearrangement of Sherwin's partnership with Soviet broadcasting highlights a simple limiting factor of many state institutions, whether it be in the late Soviet Union or in the United States today: funding. As the Soviet Union progressed further into the 1980's, falling oil prices and a shifting economic launched the country into a terrible economic recession. By the early 1990's, the United States joined the USSR in this downward spiral. This economic pressure underscores much of the program (even more so than the typical academic status quo, which already is seemingly always short on funds).

Lastly, this first installment of GCP history demonstrates the centrality of glasnost to the success of this entire initiative. Invoking glasnost (and echoing the

US news media's connections between the GCP and Gorbachev's greater project of "openness"), Sherwin convinced Velikhov to command Gostelradio to support the program. Critical to this understanding of glasnost however, is the visibility rendered to the program by media coverage. Glasnost was a performance that had to be constantly played out. The extensive news coverage, particularly by American news networks, painted the GCP as a performance of glasnost and held Velikhov accountable to treat it as such. Overcoming this critical obstacle with less than a month before the first spacebridge was scheduled, all that was left for the GCP team to do was stick the landing and prepare for their first broadcast.

Chapter Two The Old Men and the Bomb

On Saturday, March 5, 1988, after several weeks of the semester, frantic trips to Moscow and round-the-clock telexes, the Global Classroom Project had its first public test. The first spacebridge session of the GCP, the first synchronous, international joint-classroom venture of its kind, had arrived. Titled “The Origins of the Nuclear Arms Race”, this lecture centered on esteemed panelists from the US and USSR moderated by Martin Sherwin and Evgheny Velikhov, respectively. This first bridge, like all programs after it, ran two hours long. The first part of the time dedicated to panelist discussion with the latter half set aside for student questions.

It is critical to understand Tufts Professor Sherwin’s larger intellectual approach in order to understand the aspirations behind this first bridge. This session was the purest manifestation of Sherwin’s academic expertise over the course of the Global Classroom Project. Sherwin’s debut book, *A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (1975) drew from thousands of documents and dozens of personal interviews to tell the story of Manhattan Project scientists, the atomic bomb and its development, and the dynamics of Truman, Stalin, and Churchill at the Potsdam Conference. One reviewer, James A. Huston, wrote in *The American Historical Review* that Sherwin “ventured into an area of immense complexity and has emerged with a model of clarity” and had “done the prodigious work that makes this a nearly

definitive history, and makes one shudder on approaching it.”¹ This book helped Sherwin get his first faculty appointment at Princeton, followed by a long career at Tufts. Constantine Pleshakov, a Russian scholar and former ISKAN analyst who currently teaches at Amherst College, is a friend of Sherwin’s and someone who existed in the Soviet scholarly community during the GCP (though he never interacted with it directly). From Pleshakov’s contemporary point of view, Sherwin’s cultural interest in the arms encompassed a unique set of guiding values. Sherwin brought into his work a “humanism....a belief in some sort of higher common good” that defied much of the realist international politics of his contemporaries.²

Sherwin’s “humanistic” approach was on display that Saturday morning in Tufts’ Sackler Center in March 1988. The panelists, both Soviet and American, were largely prominent nuclear scientists from the golden age of atomic history. These original architects of the race gathered together to bring their historical perspective to the contemporary issue of nuclear descalation. Jim Hershberg, a former teaching assistant for HIST 192A who is now a professor of history and international affairs at George Washington University, remembers being particularly impressed with the first spacebridge’s inclusion of Yulii Khariton on the Soviet panel.

Khariton, 84 years old at the time, was a highly esteemed member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.³ Along with his mentor Igor Kurchatov, Khariton

¹ James A Huston. *The American Historical Review* 81, no. 5 (1976): 1075-1076.

² Conversation with Constantine Pleshakov, January 19, 2021.

³ Constantine Pleshakov, in personal conversation, underscored the social importance of scientists to Soviet society, particularly atomic scientists and physicists.

was a member of the special committee appointed to develop an atomic bomb for the Soviet Union after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.⁴

Khariton was immortalized in the world of Soviet science after the successful development of such a weapon in 1949.⁵ Deemed too important to fly and given his own train car when travelling within the USSR, Khariton was a highly surveilled Soviet citizen. Shocked that someone of such importance and esteem to the Soviet Union was able to participate in the GCP, Hershberg recalls Khariton's involvement as "quite a coup."⁶

Joining Khariton on the Soviet panel was Professor Igor Nikolaevich Golovin.⁷ Another nuclear physicist involved in early efforts to nuclearize the Soviet Union, Golovin was the head of a department within the Kurchatov Institute of Atomic Energy at Moscow State University since its inception in 1944 and a deputy director of the institute under Kurchatov himself. As Velikhov recalled during his introduction, it was Golovin who took Velikhov under his wing when he himself was a student at Moscow State.⁸

Rounding out the Soviet panel was non-physicists Andrej Afanasevich Kokoshin. Recall that Kokoshin, as the deputy director of ISKAN, was appointed

⁴ Readers may recognize Kurchatov as the namesake of the I.V Kurchatov institute of Atomic Energy at MGU, a government-advising organization led by Velikhov during the Global Classroom Project. Additionally, he is also the persona behind Kurchatov medal for outstanding work in nuclear physics awarded by the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Kurchatov was later the main topic of *Citizen Kurchatov* (1999), a documentary which Sherwin produced.

⁵ For his contributions to and achievements for the Soviet state, Khariton was subsequently awarded the "Hero of Socialist Labor" medal three times.

⁶ Conversation with James Hershberg, January 15, 2021.

⁷Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1970-1993. GCPI [Transcripts] 1987. Transcript, March 12, 1988, Spacebridge One. UA027.001.001.00010. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

⁸ *Ibid*, 4.

by Velikhov, his mentor of sorts, to coordinate with Sherwin on the production of the Global Classroom Project and had been involved in the development and organization of this project for months.⁹



Andrej Kokoshin (left) and Martin Sherwin (right) meeting in the former's ISKAN office in Moscow to discuss the Global Classroom (1989). Photo courtesy of Martin Sherwin, currently in the possession of the author .

ISKAN (the Russian acronym for “Institute for US and Canadian Studies”) was a Communist Party think tank based within the Soviet Academy of Sciences. The institute produced reports and analyses on American/Canadian media culture, foreign policy, military strategy, and related topics for the Central Committee of the Communist party.¹⁰ Kokoshin, though trained as a

⁹ Based off of both conversations with Jim Hershberg and Martin Sherwin, it seems that Kokoshin himself visited the Tufts campus in the spring semester of 1988 after this first spacebridge session. This visit was when Kokoshin was much more involved in the regular occurrences of GCP, serving as a de facto assistant director for the Soviet side of the program.

¹⁰ This institution is also occasionally referred to as “ISKRAN” or the “Institute for US and Canada of the Russian Academy of Sciences”, was founded by the famed Dr. Georgy Arbatov in 1967 to fill a demonstrated need and interest within the Soviet organizational structure. Though Arbatov ceased his leadership of the institute in 1995, it continues to exist today within the Russian Federation. Constantine Pleshakov, an analyst for the ISKAN at the time of the GCP,

mathematician and physicist, took on a social science role at ISKAN. While involved with the institute, he served as a permanent chairman of the Committee of Soviet Scientists for Peace and Against the Nuclear Threat.¹¹

Completing the “Soviet” panel was an American: William Taubman, a professor of political science at Amherst College. Taubman was a top American analyst of detente politics and the Moscow Spring who went on to pen a Pulitzer Prize winning biography of Nikita Khrushchev (2003). That day in 1988 however, Taubman, as Velikhov put it, “preferred to be on our side...speaking Russian.”¹²

The American panel mirrored the balance of the Soviets, with two leading nuclear scientists, a non-physicist, and an international visitor. Profs. Philip Morrison and Victor Weisskopf, both with appointments at MIT at the time and “distinguished alumni” of the Manhattan Project, represented American nuclear physics.¹³ Morrison had worked very closely with and was mentored by Robert J. Oppenheimer, often referred to as the “father of the atomic bomb.” Weisskopf, having originally come from Austria, had spent time in the Soviet Union and was considered a “corresponding member” of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.¹⁴ Providing a cultural edge to the panel was Everett Mendelsohn, professor, and chair of the history of science department at Harvard. In addition to this academic work, Mendelsohn founded the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences Committee on Science, Arms Control and National Security.

feels as though ISKAN’s work was poorly funded and of little consequence during his tenure from 1982-1996. From his understanding, the organization is of even less relevance today.

¹¹ Transcript, March 12, 1988, Spacebridge One. UA027.001.001.00010, p. 5.

¹² Ibid, 4.

¹³ Ibid, 3.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Furthermore, he was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Committee on International Security.¹⁵ Prof. Mikhail Anisimov was the Soviet representative on the panel. Anisimov was just in the final stretches of a “tour” in the US that included stops at the University of Maryland and MIT. Anisimov held a regular academic position as the chairman of the physics department at the Moscow Oil and Gas Institute while still managing to perform all sorts of frequent diplomatic actions, considered a “very active participant” in collaborative US-Soviet science projects. Snagging Anisimov just before returned to the Soviet Union that Tuesday, Sherwin and Velikhov were able to ensure that the panels on both sides reflected on another.

The first spacebridge of the Global Classroom Project began promptly at 8 o’clock am (Boston time), after an hour of rehearsal. Tufts’ Sackler Center was filled with students and interested community members. The eight TAs for the course, tasked with handling the mass of Tufts students that was well beyond the size of any other class that semester, served as ushers, patrolling the aisles.¹⁶ The Moscow State Auditorium, too, was brimming with students (mainly drawing students from the history and physics departments). Once the crowds had settled, the director (speaking into Sherwin’s earpiece) gave the go-“ahead” and the GCP’s opening hymn, an instrumental track of Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy”, resounded throughout the auditorium. Marty Sherwin looked straight at the

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Conversation with Philip Nash, January 6, 2021

camera and offered viewers in Boston, Moscow, and at those watching from home in both countries a hearty “Hello, Moscow!” and a heavily accented “как дела?”¹⁷

After pleasantries and introductions exchanged between the Soviet and American panelists, the session began with a film. The screening was a concise history of the nuclear arms race and ultimately proclaimed that “[WWII] forever linked science and technology to national security.” The crux of the armament issue was traced back to the development of the American and Soviet nuclear programs and mutual escalation of the 1950’s and ‘60’s. In the film’s view, the final and potentially deadly stage of the Cold War centered on the development of thermonuclear weapons.¹⁸ Proceedings were turned over to the panel for discussion.

Yulii Khariton kicked things off with an essay he had written for the occasion, one that recounted Soviet nuclear history with remarkable openness. Khariton spoke of his experience as a 22-year-old working in nuclear laboratories, correspondence between Stalin and his lab about the Americans developing an atomic bomb in secret, and information sent to the Soviets from Klaus Fuchs, a German/ British immigrant and member of the German Communist Party who worked at Los Alamos while serving as a spy for the Soviet Union.¹⁹ Khariton continued on for quite some time. Sherwin remembers not being aware at the time of quite how important Khariton was to the Soviet nuclear program. At one point, as Khariton was in the midst of his long speech, Sherwin, appealing to the

¹⁷ Translated as “how are you doing”, this phrase, which Sherwin repeated at the beginning of many spacebridges, roughly phonetically transcribed, sounds like “kak dela.”

¹⁸ Transcript, March 12, 1988, Spacebridge One. UA027.001.001.00010, p. 5.

¹⁹ Ibid, 7.

audience that had to sit through his long speech and not knowing the cameras were on him, made a gesture by shrugging his shoulders and turning up his palms in resignation. Sherwin now looks back on this moment as perhaps not giving Khariton the full airtime he deserved.²⁰

When Khariton came to a pause in his speech, Sherwin took the opportunity to transition the conversation, calling on Professor Morrison to chime in on how international politics influenced physics research in the 1940's. The team and crew had only rehearsed with the panel for an hour beforehand and there was a lot of ground to cover. As the program's director whispered into Sherwin's earpiece, he had to push things along in order to ensure that every panelist was consulted and that questions were taken from both the Soviet and American audience within the rather expensive two-hour transmission window.

The remaining majority of this first spacebridge session was spent with Golovin, Weisskopf, and Morrison discussing the horrible position that they found themselves in after the atomic bomb had been developed by both of the great powers of the Cold War. Again, the panelists discussed this subject matter was discussed with a remarkable honesty and vulnerability.

Weisskopf claimed that during the Manhattan Project, "it sometimes looked as if the bomb was impossible, and I sort of hoped that would be so, but it turned out it was possible."²¹ Golovin remembered the panic of Soviet foreign policy analysts when the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings were performed without coordination from their American allies. He recalled that these attacks

²⁰ Conversation with Martin Sherwin, January 21, 2021.

²¹ Transcript, March 12, 1988, Spacebridge One. UA027.001.001.00010, p. 8.

quickly transformed his relief that the Americans had developed the bomb before the Nazi regime into fear that the Americans felt comfortable actually using such a weapon. In Golovin's eyes, August 6 and 9 of 1945 forced the Soviet hand and "put us in an awful position."²²

Morrison was most vulnerable when he recalled his involvement in the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, having both developed the bombs and surveyed the damage afterwards. "I was in a position to go, I was required to go," Morrison began to recount. "I volunteered, in fact, to help prepare the bombs for their actual use on the cities. I was then close to Japan, and again I volunteered to visit Japan to talk to the Japanese scientists and to see what had happened at Hiroshima, never got to Nagasaki."²³

Strikingly, the American and Soviet scientists who played major roles in launching the Nuclear Age and arms race feverishly shared the same anti-nuclear sentiments while still being honest about their roles in in the atomic bomb. This was, as Peter Jennings had hoped for during the "Capitol-to-Capitol" program in 1987, a moment of high-stakes shared humanity played out in televised real time. The first program of the GCP produced a nearly textbook version of bilateral *glasnost*.

What allowed for this performance of *glasnost* to play out? First, it helpful to consider the nuclear taboo. Unlike standard weapons discourses wherein the introduction of a particular military asset leads to its eventual legitimation, nuclear weapons do not operate within that framework. Instead, they are

²² Ibid, 10.

²³ Ibid, 18.

surrounded with a normative “de facto prohibition” of their use.²⁴ This taboo did not become popularized in the United States until the 1950’s, when both the Soviet capability to retaliate with a nuclear strike and the effects of nuclear radiation became concerns in popular consciousness.²⁵ The original proponents of nuclear taboo, these founding fathers of the bomb were, in part, speaking to this end.

Other interpretations of nuclear disarmament advocacy have demonstrated the political agendas tucked within global arms control. Historically, advocacy for nuclear non-proliferation in 1970’s and ‘80’s was used for keeping other rising nuclear powers in check and “preserving the global dominance” of the US and USSR.²⁶

While all of these panelists shared sentiments that contained genuine human experience and regret. It is critical to remember that scientific celebrities, particularly during the Cold War bore human subjectivities.²⁷ Buffered by history,

²⁴ Nina Tannenwald. "Stigmatizing the Bomb: Origins of the Nuclear Taboo." *International Security* 29, no. 4 (2005): 8.

²⁵ “Nuclear taboo” such that Tannenwald describes was not firmly cemented in US foreign policy however until the 1987 Gorbachev-Reagan summit in Washington DC. Afterwards, the two effectively issued a statement that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.”

²⁶ Christopher F Chyba and Robert Legvold, "Conclusion: Strategic Stability & Nuclear War." *Daedalus* 149, no. 2 (2020): 222-37.

²⁷ Generally, scientists are often considered to be totally rational beings that operate within a pre-ordained set of scientific ethics. During the Cold War, seeing scientists as outside of politics was a particularly politically convenient narrative that allowed for American and/or Soviet scientists to learn from the other without fear of political corruption. A prime example of this traditional narrative is Alan T. Waterman’s 1965 essay, “The Changing Environment of Science” in the American journal, *Science*. This piece argues how the need for a science that engages with the public is an uncomfortable but needed concept. Waterman writes, “In normal times our allegiance is strongly to our science; to attempt to direct our efforts toward causes of national importance is ordinarily confusing and disturbing.”(1) For a notable exception to this narrative, see Jessica Wang’s 1992 “Science, Security, and the Cold War: The Case of E.U. Condon” which documents the McCarthyist persecution and perceived politically vulnerability of American physicists.

the push of politics, and the common rhetoric of a need for mutual “stability”, this discussion was made possible on live television.

When the floor was opened to questions and comments from students, their contributions loudly called for international cooperation in surviving the outcome of the present nuclear moment. Asking the first student “question” of the entire Global Classroom Project, a Soviet student stood and made an announcement of sorts. “I think there is not a single person here who would be sure that he would be able to survive nuclear bombs. I think there is not a single person here who would think that a nuclear war is possible or necessary”, he proclaimed. Continuing with an appeal across the Atlantic, he then addressed his American counterparts, “I should like to call on those who are now in Boston to think about this together with us, because we have those generations who are not able to do it behind us, and ahead of us lies the future.”²⁸

This statement seemed to make an impact in both auditoriums on either side of the Atlantic. To what degree was this question coordinated beforehand? Did Sherwin or Velikhov encourage their students to make these sorts of broad international appeals for cooperation? It feels relatively clear that this first broadcasted student question of the program was scripted, but this student’s rhetoric set the tone for the conversation. Not missing an opportunity to recognize this student and to make clear that the purpose of this program was to make international friends, Sherwin asked the student to state his name. “Could the Soviet student please identify himself because, as you know, a large part of this

²⁸ Transcript, March 12, 1988, Spacebridge One. UA027.001.001.00010, p. 14.

class is visiting Moscow, and we're hoping that we'll be able to—.” The student spoke over Sherwin a bit, identifying himself as Alexey Belyaev, a senior at the Institute of Physics and Outer Space.²⁹ The Global Classroom began to take on its directly personal diplomatic element.

This spacebridge session was steadily steeped in *glasnost* ideology throughout. There were multiple mentions of “Gorbachev’s new thinking” from the American side of the panel and then the great difference it made in diplomacy when compared to Stalin and his ideology.³⁰ Whenever this thinking was evoked, it was done so to great applause from both audiences. *Glasnost* narratives were also applied to the American past, as not to solely demonize the Soviet political system. Velikhov himself made this gentle correction, noting that the “audience agrees that Stalin had an old way of thinking, as we say now.... but, on the other hand, it seems to me that Truman also not have a new way of thinking ... I merely want to put the facts together correctly.”³¹

Overall, this first program can be seen as a successful first foray by the Global Classroom Project into the world of spacebridge lectures. Sherwin remembers the first event as a bit of a let-down, again wishing that he had made better use of Khariton’s presence. Despite this, the lecture wrapped up nicely. Towards the end, Sherwin made a pithy and poignant call that “we need more physicists looking at history”, perhaps the overall thesis of this iteration of the project.³² After a round of gratitude by a combination of Velikhov, Kokoshin, and

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ See Victor Weisskopf’s comments on p. 19 and William Taubman’s comments on p 22.

³¹ Ibid, 24.

³² Ibid, 25.

Sherwin, Sherwin concluded by wryly remarking, “And since we are a capitalist country, it is important that we thank the foundations that have supported this: the MacArthur foundation, the Sloan Foundation, and others.”³³

The reception of this first spacebridge event was overwhelmingly positive. The day after the event, Patricia Wen of *The Boston Globe* penned an enthusiastic review emphasizing both the technological and symbolic.³⁴ Titled “Satellite links Tufts, Soviet students for arms talks”, Wen’s article begins with the sensational act of connecting students from these major world powers by satellite and expands from there, telling the story of the Global Classroom. Significantly, Wen gave a thoroughly Mayer-centric account of the project’s origin, excluding any mention of Sherwin or Von Hippel. Perhaps Wen was repeating what she was told, as a narrative crediting Mayer for the GCP fit neatly within the narrative of Tufts at the time by presenting it as another in a long line of bold successes in the world of higher education.

Wen took a particular interest in the Soviet audience and its reactions. Quoting Morrison’s sentiment that “there is no sense” to nuclear war, Wen reported that this anti-nuclear remark was received with resounding applause from students in Moscow. Wen also covered “less serious” moments of Soviet boredom during Khariton’s “rather longwinded” speech, the stray glance at a watch or errant drink from a bottle of soda.³⁵

³³ Ibid, 27

³⁴ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1970-1993. Boston Globe article, March 6, 1988, "Satellite links Tufts, Soviet students for arms talks," photocopy 1987 -- 1988. UA027.001.001.00078. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

³⁵ Ibid.



A portion of the photo accompanying Patricia Wen's 1988 *Globe* article. Here, Soviet students are seen on the monitor of a piece of the spacebridge's recording equipment in Boston.

Wen also gave due attention to the ephemeral object of glasnost. Citing Weisskopf's opinions that "Gorbachev has done a lot," much of the circumstances of that allowed for this event were attributed to Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power. Lastly, keeping with her emphasis on the importance of ideology and symbols, Wen closed her article by quoting HIST 192A TA Gerry Gendlin that "I think everyone learned something, perhaps intangible."

Two days after the event, Sherwin received a handwritten note on Tufts letterhead from John Schneider, an adjunct lecturer and colleague of Sherwin's in the Tufts history department. Schneider played up the division between the two sides of the auditorium. "*Our* panel was concise and effective," Schneider wrote. Schneider continued, with a seeming nod to Khariton and his longwinded opening speech, "and I thought you did a superb job in moving everything along."³⁶

³⁶ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1970-1993. GCP 1 (R) 1986 -- 1987. Note, March 7, 1988, John Schneider to Martin Sherwin. UA027.001.001.00009. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

Writing on the same day, Theresa Pease of MIT's Office of Resource Development congratulated Sherwin on a job well done. Although Pease had not been in the Sackler Center on Saturday, news of the spacebridge had already spread. "Congratulations on pulling it off! I hope it went as well as it panned in the Globe," Pease beamed. "I know Tufts must be proud of you!"³⁷ This first spacebridge was just the beginning as the GCP continued strong throughout its inaugural semester.

Tufts and MGU held additional spacebridges on April 9 and April 30. The April 9 session was titled, "At the Crossroads: Nuclear Weapon Strategies" and featured the likes of Soviet Major General Vladimir Makharevsky and McGeorge "Mac" Bundy, US National Security Advisor to Presidents John F Kennedy and Lyndon B Johnson. Both of these figures were major political players. Sherwin returned as the moderator of the US panel while Andrei Kokoshin expanded his GCP involvement and replaced Velikhov as the moderator for the Soviet panel.³⁸

During this session, Bundy reoriented the central divide of the arms race to focus not on the division between the US and the Soviet Union but on the division between political and military thinking. Reexamining the root of the false perception held by the political elite in the 1950's and 60's that a nuclear war could be successfully fought and won, Bundy explained that "military doctrine,

³⁷ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1970-1993. GCP 1 (R) 1986 -- 1987. Note, March 7, 1988, Theresa Pease to Martin Sherwin. UA027.001.001.00009. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

³⁸ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1970-1993. GCP 1 (R) 1986 -- 1987. Essay, Date Unknown, Debra Trione Paper. UA027.001.001.00009. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA. p.16

military speeches and military procurements have contributed to that misperception.”³⁹

Students in Moscow at this second spacebridge became quite exuberant about the importance of the emergent “new way of thinking” about American-Soviet mutual security and consolidated efforts to reduce the proliferation of nuclear arms. One Soviet student suggested that the US and USSR could join military forces to corral other nations (i.e., Iran) “around to order.”⁴⁰

The second spacebridge was also notable for its inclusion of the only female panelist that spring from either side, Antonia Chayes, who served as undersecretary of the US Airforce during the Carter administration. Chayes, invoking the importance of “stability” through both treaties and military power rebuffed another Soviet student’s idea that the standard image was of a Soviet citizen to Americans was not that of an enemy, but of a friend. Chayes retorted that the current opinion in the US towards the Soviet Union is far more complicated, emphasizing that American opinion towards the USSR centered on a delicate balance between the want to embrace *glasnost* and improve relations and fear that the situation in the Soviet Union could regress in the other direction.⁴¹

The April 30 spacebridge centered on the Cuban Missile Crisis, an event that Sherwin participated in firsthand during his time in the US Navy.⁴² In Sherwin’s recollection, it was the most interesting of the spring series and thus the

³⁹ Essay, Date Unknown, Debra Trione Paper. UA027.001.001.00009. p. 19.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 20.

⁴¹ Ibid, 21.

⁴² Sherwin explored this topic in full depth in his 2020 Knopf publication, “Gambling with Armageddon: Nuclear Roulette from Hiroshima to the Cuban Missile Crisis.”

one that he submitted to serve as a sample program in his bid for the Global Classroom Project to receive MacArthur Foundation funding. In all other program productions, the GBH production team followed the strict instructions to use two separate audio tracks overlaid with the video in order to clearly separate dialogue in English and dialogue in Russian. With the production of this third recording, the team at GBH instead combined all audio onto a single track, resulting in a program sample that the MacArthur Foundation deemed as “too difficult to follow.”⁴³ This production error cost the GCP potential MacArthur sponsorship, a major faux pas that complicated the GCP’s already troubling financial situation. This faux pas was a difficult way to end the inaugural semester of the program, but the recovered and kept with nuclear topics into the fall of 1988.

Spacebridge Four, “The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Debate” (October 28, 1988) seems to not have elicited many meaningful memories from Sherwin’s perspective.⁴⁴ In stark contrast, Sherwin remembers Spacebridge Five as the most successful program from the Nuclear phase of the GCP. Switching gears from science and politics, this program explored the psychology and culture of the Nuclear Age, featuring the writers Kurt Vonnegut, Robert Lifton, and E.L. Doctorow.

For Sherwin, the crowning moment of Spacebridge Five was a film presentation by a Soviet filmmaker titled “The Night After.” Set in a freshly

⁴³ Martin Sherwin, Email to author, December 30, 2020.

⁴⁴ “The Global Classroom Project: Internationalizing Education for the 21st Century.” 1992. Courtesy of Martin Sherwin (currently in the possession of the author).

nuclear winterized apocalyptic world, an old man raises children in a cave, preparing them for a new world beyond modern society. At the end of the film, the man instructs each of the children to don a gas mask before he leads them out of the cave and into the snowy abyss. Sherwin recalls that the end of the film left both audiences, Soviet and American, absolutely speechless.⁴⁵ Working at the intersection of nuclear politics, art and culture, this moment from Spacebridge Five is a key expression of why Sherwin thought that exploring the arms race through a cultural and historical lens, instead of a weapons-analysis approach, would be worthwhile.

This chapter documented the narrative details of the Global Classroom Project's inaugural spring semester of 1988 into the fall of that same year. Uniquely situated within Sherwin's area of academic interest when compared to the rest of the GCP, this "Nuclear Phase" of the program's history was passionately organized and enthusiastically received. These five spacebridges, organized within two semesters of the joint course, "The Soviet Union, United States, and the Nuclear Arms Race in Historical Perspective" took on the prescient issue of Nuclear disarmament from an alternative approach that played out nicely on live television. Discussing personal and cultural experiences with expert panelists while still discussing matters of international diplomatic importance made the GCP spacebridges a space wherein panelists felt comfortable to be fairly honest and open in real time.

⁴⁵ Conversation with Martin Sherwin, 1/21/21

Spacebridge One, “The Origins of the Nuclear Arms Race”, is perhaps the best example from this phase of the program of how the spacebridge format utilized political *glasnost* and Gorbachev’s “new thinking” in order to have an open bilateral discussion on the American and Soviet origins of the atomic bomb. Spacebridge One is also a prime example of the public reverence of scientists during the Cold War period.

Boasting an impressive era of celebrity appearances, this first phase of the GCP represents the original heart of the original diplomatic heart of the program , bringing together experts in a more spontaneous environment to discuss pressing diplomatic issues. This would hold true throughout the program’s history. Given the turbulent financial demands of running a spacebridge lecture series in tandem with an educational institution operating under different norms and expectations, the GCP soon profoundly shifted. However, before turning to this shift, it is time to backtrack and examine the other educational aspect of the Global Classroom Project, physical international exchanges.

Chapter Three: Through the Iron Curtain

The Global Classroom Project was more than a set of parallel classes and joint lectures. The program was punctuated by a series of American visits to Moscow. Taking place over spring break, these trips of Tufts undergraduates, faculty and teaching assistants occurred in 1988, '89, and '90. Undergraduate students in the GCP came face-to-face with their international counterparts on these trips, humanizing one another in the process of learning names and idiosyncrasies. The exchanges of the GCP were the most prominent displays of Soviet-American "citizen diplomacy." Continual emphasis of friendship, cooperation, and the unprecedented role of the program clearly identified these trips as diplomatic performances. For these excursions, the 300-odd Tufts students in HIST 192A were pared down to just around seventy or so.¹ Generally, this number was determined by a self-selecting willingness-to-pay. All of Sherwin's Teaching Assistants were invited to Moscow free of charge.²

The first and largest exchange, in 1988, made a lasting impression on those involved. The teaching assistants who accompanied the class returned with

¹ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1970-1993. GCP 1 (R) 1986 -- 1987. Essay, Date Unknown, Debra Trione Paper. UA027.001.001.00009. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA. p.16

² The comprehensive list of GCP TAs on the initial Moscow Spring Break trip was as follows: Tanya Gassel, Hans Fenstermacher, James Hershberg, Gerry Gendlin, Philip Nash, Daniel Lieberfield, Yaacov Tygiel, Daniel Horner. Most of these students were receiving MALD (Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy) degrees from the Fletcher School at Tufts University. Hershberg was a unique case as a PhD student of Sherwin's in the history department. Many of these students also served as fellows of the NAAHC, working on nuclear age history projects and research outside of the GCP setting. Philip Nash jokingly remembers referring to close-knit group of students as the "Sherwin Mafia." Nearly all of this initial group of TAs pursued an additional advanced degree and a majority currently work in an academic career.

mixed impressions. While some remember the exchange as a definite product of glasnost-era thinking and politics, others simply remember thinking that the exchange was an interesting way to take a free trip to the Soviet Union.³

Sherwin's assessment was that "these [students] are only 20 years old. Deep down inside, most of those who go on this trip will never believe the Soviet people are fundamentally evil, even if they disagree with Soviet policy."⁴

Starting with a bus ride from Boston, a flight from Kennedy International Airport to Helsinki, Finland, and a train ride from Helsinki to Moscow, participants' recollections of the 1988 Tufts to Moscow spring break trip are peppered with vivid anecdotes and meaningful memories. Philip Nash, then a graduate student at the Fletcher School and now a professor of history in Pennsylvania, vividly remembers entering the Soviet Union by train. When leaving Finland and crossing into Soviet territory Nash recalls driving through metal gates bigger than any he had seen before or has since. "If there was an Iron Curtain somewhere," Nash recalls, "this was it."⁵ Tanya Gassel, a Soviet-born Fletcher graduate student and Sherwin TA who went on to be a lecturer in the Russian department at Tufts, also has vivid memories of the train ride into the Soviet Union on that late March trip. Stopped in the middle of the night, the train was boarded by a number of Soviet border police demanding documentation from all of those onboard. Gassel remembers thinking that this was quite the introduction to the Soviet Union for the unseasoned American students onboard.⁶

³ Conversations with James Hershberg, 1/8/21 and Philip Nash, 1/6/21.

⁴ Essay, Date Unknown, Debra Trione Paper. UA027.001.001.00009. p. 16.

⁵ Conversation with Philip Nash, 1/6/21.

⁶ Conversation with Tanya Gassel, 1/7/21.

Once in Moscow, the experience of this first group of Tufts students travelling to the Soviet Union with the Global Classroom Project was documented by a film camera in the amateur hands of Gerry Gendlin, an American graduate student at the Fletcher School and one of Sherwin's nine teaching assistants that semester. Gendlin's video, now housed in the Tufts University Digital Collections and Archives, is an invaluable record of this first student exchange trip.⁷

At the train station in Moscow the Tufts delegates were greeted by myriad hosts from both MGU and ISKAN. Among these greeters was Sergei Tikhanov, the ISKAN analyst assigned to Sherwin.⁸ During Sherwin's usual visits to Moscow, often in a frenzied rush for a series of meetings or an audience with Velikhov, Sergei met Sherwin, fully equipped with a car and driver to take Sherwin wherever he needed to go. In doing his job as designated by ISKAN, Sergei is said to have been Sherwin's "handler" of sorts.⁹ Sherwin and Tikhanov became good friends, later visiting one another's homes and staying in touch. Upon their arrival on the train platform, the cohort of approximately 70 students was greeted by a small cadre of Russian hosts, Tikhanov among them.

⁷ The exact digital copy of this film is courtesy of the Fletcher School's Russia and Eurasia program which sponsored the conversion of several GCP-related tapes from VHS to digital format and then uploaded them onto their YouTube channel.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUMEy7mswpm6_sPtMOLCgcYzf3g-Yi0h

⁸ Conversation with Martin Sherwin, 1/21/21

⁹ Conversation with Hans Fenstermacher, 1/17/21



Tufts undergraduates arriving on the platform in Moscow. Courtesy of the Tufts Digital Collections and Archives and the Fletcher Russia and Eurasia program.

Unloading their items from the train and led off the platform by Gassel, the undergraduates settled into the Hotel Intourist, a facility constructed in 1970 (torn down and replaced with a Ritz-Carlton in 2002) to house foreign visitors to the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, Sherwin and all of the TA's were housed in the Akademichikaya Hotel, which housed foreign scholars visiting the USSR.¹⁰ The elevated tourist accommodations provided for the undergraduate students were far nicer than those given to the faculty staying in the typical housing for scholarly visitors. Once settled, the students went to meet Sherwin and the TA's who had already gathered at Moscow State University for the big kick-off event.

¹⁰ Conversation with Tanya Gassel, 1/7/2021



Sign made by Russian students to greet the Tufts students. Visible from the entrance to the Georgy Flyorov Auditorium. Courtesy of the Tufts Digital Collections and Archives and the Fletcher Russia and Eurasia program.

Apologizing for a late arrival on the behalf of the Tufts students, Sherwin and his teaching assistants waited in the lobby of the Moscow State auditorium where the Global Classroom Project had its first session. After a few minutes of pacing, Sherwin and company were joined by Velikhov and Kokoshin, dressed in thick fur coats and hats for the Russian spring. Talking amicably, standing close together and laughing filtered through interpretation almost as though they were old friends, Sherwin and Velikhov seemed to fritter away the time, only interrupted by eager teaching assistants coming up to shake Velikhov's hand.

After the arrival of the American undergraduates, the first exchange programming got underway. American and Soviet students met in a large lecture hall, a "historical room" dedicated to Academician Georgy Flyorov (a Soviet nuclear physicist known for his discovery of spontaneous nuclear fission and a letter sent to Josef Stalin to construct the atomic bomb during the second World War, the namesake of the periodic element flerovium). Velikhov and Sherwin kicked off the event. Velikhov spoke through Hans Fenstermacher, while a

woman whom Sherwin never get the name of or met again served as his personal interpreter for the event. Velikhov introduced the university and the current setting. In a standard administrative act of deference, Velikhov gave a nod to the University Rector, Anatoly Alexeyevich Logunov. Several Tufts came up in accordance with standard American educational custom and addressed the entire auditorium, presenting a pale blue banner bearing the Tufts crest directly to Velikhov himself. After some remark from the students, inaudible on the recorded audio track, Velikhov responded with some equally quiet comment. Perhaps Velikhov uttered a near silent quip, the audience erupted in applause and general amusement.



Tufts undergraduates presenting a flag bearing the Tufts crest to Evgheny Velikhov (center right) while Hans Fenstermacher (far right) looks on. Courtesy of the Tufts Digital Collections and Archives and the Fletcher Russia and Eurasia Program.

Sherwin gave a few remarks following the presentation of the Tufts banner, sharing how “delighted” he was to be at Moscow State University, expressing his gratitude at the warm welcome of his Soviet hosts. Sherwin went on to express how

the “historic” nature of the lecture hall was fitting for the “historic occasion” upon which everyone in that room was now embarking.

Then, a truly bizarre event took place. Sherwin had brought to Moscow a videotape of Stanley Kubrick’s *Dr. Strangelove Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. A classic film about an overburdened bureaucratic machine powerless to stop one insane general from setting off a nuclear holocaust, *Dr Strangelove* is an black comedy that makes a meaningful and upsetting commentary on the nature of superpower rivalry, military industrialism, and the nuclear arms race. In what was probably the first public showing of the film in the Soviet Union, Sherwin and Velikhov decided it would be a good idea to kick off the exchange program by screening *Dr. Strangelove*. Every teaching assistant or organizer for the Global Classroom Project that was engaged in the creation of this thesis remembers this exceptional episode in GCP history and remembers it well.

Hans Fenstermacher, highly regarded among his peers for his command of six languages (including Russian which he studied during his time at Princeton), was given the task of translating the film over a microphone as it played in real time. A herculean feat, even for the most skilled of interpreters. James Hershberg remembers the reactions of Soviet students being wildly mixed, with the history students in the bunch seeming to understand the satirical tone of the film while Velikhov’s physics students were aghast that such a horrific reality was being made fun of onscreen.¹¹ Hershberg also noted that some bits of the movie were

¹¹ Conversation with James Hershberg, 1/8/21

missed by all Soviet students in the auditorium. For example, when prompted to break into a Coca-Cola vending machine for spare change to fund a phone call that might call off the nuclear apocalypse, Colonel “Bat” Guano warns the visiting RAF officer, Captain Lionel Mandrake, that Mandrake will “have to answer to the Coca-Cola company.” This famous line, mocking American consumerism and the worship of big companies, was supposedly completely missed by Soviet students. None of them laughed. To them, it was not a joke. Sherwin remembers that none of the Soviet students particularly found the movie to be funny, regardless of area of study.¹² After the film, as part of the student question and answer period, one Soviet student quietly asked if “Americans think this a real possibility.” In response, an American TA plainly explained their opinion that Kubrick’s nightmare scenario could indeed come to pass. They reemphasized the importance of communication between the world’s two contemporary superpowers.¹³



GCP Administrators gathered at the front of Georgy Flyorov Auditorium answering student questions after the showing of Stanley Kubrick’s Dr.

¹² Conversation with Martin Sherwin, 1/21/21

¹³ Fletcher Russia and Eurasia Program, “Tufts Students Visiting Moscow in 1988,” July 16, 2019, video, 1:21:38, <https://youtu.be/qYEUK7RvcMU>.

Strangelove. Pictured here (from right to left) are an unidentified Soviet educator, Hans Fenstermacher, Martin Sherwin, Sherwin's unidentified interpreter, and Evgheny Velikhov.

There are not many more moments remembered from the initial 1988 Moscow trip that offered the same degree of interaction between Soviet and American undergraduates. In the remainder of the film recorded that trip, Tufts undergraduate students mostly travelled around Moscow with their Tufts TAs and chaperones. Students embarked on a guided bus tour of Moscow, visiting all of the classic tourist destinations from both the Tsarist and Soviet period in the Russian capitol. The touristic nature of this initial trip demonstrates a particular limit to the project of *glasnost*. American undergraduates continued to meet various intellectuals and officials in Moscow, but their interactions with Soviet students seemed to be limited. On this trip, the students stayed in a separate hotel and largely kept to themselves. Of the various Teaching Assistants consulted for this work, few if any of them seemed to have meaningful interactions a Soviet counterpart. A spring break trip to Moscow was certainly rare, but it does not seem as though the Teaching Assistants and students involved viewed themselves as some sort of retinue of citizen diplomats. They were going on a trip to an interesting place and learning what they could.



The iconic St. Basil's Cathedral, located in Red Square, perhaps the singularly most distinct symbol of Russian history and culture, as captured on the 1988 GCP Student visit film reel.

The Tufts undergraduates, after their tourist's stint of the Soviet capitol, paid a visit to the Institute of USA and Canada (ISKAN). Recall that ISKAN, as a diplomatic thinktank and research arm of the Soviet government housed within the Soviet Academy of Sciences, was a critical partner with Tufts in the GCP. Additionally, Andrej Kokoshin, the deputy director of the organization, was a dedicated aspect of the exchanges with Tufts. It is only natural then that Tufts students, all gussied up in dresses and blazers, attended a lecture and discussed at ISKAN's Moscow headquarters.



Tufts undergraduate students waiting for a lecture to begin at the Institute for US and Canada (ISKAN) in Moscow. In the recorded film, the focus of this frame slowly shifts from the students to the wooden engraving of Lenin's profile in the background.

Sergey Rogov welcomed Tufts to ISKAN. Rogov was then an analyst at ISKAN who became the director of the institute in 1995 and still directs ISKAN to this day. Rogov launched into a speech on the issue of Soviet and American proxy war in the Middle East, how the United Nations would be a much more preferable player to broker Middle Eastern peace (because the US and USSR “do not have any moral ground to be policemen of the world”) if not for the reality that the UN is “of course powerless” without “any real authority or force.”¹⁴ Eventually, this discussion of an international security issue devolved into an ideological debate in the student question and answer section, with an elaborate and rather fragile metaphor involving walls and the ideologies that are painted on respective walls (one student cleverly pointed out this devolution, yet continued the painful metaphor, stating that the matter at hand was not discussing walls but instead “building a roof over them”).

¹⁴ Fletcher Russia and Eurasia Program, “Tufts Students Visiting Moscow in 1988,” 33:35-36:12

Throughout the entire discussion, which veered from topics such as the Cuban Missile Crisis and hemispheric power to the historic importance of the 1956 20th party congress in the Soviet Union, the importance of generational difference was an underlying theme. Rogov himself (perhaps ironically due to his notable seniority when compared to all others in the room besides Sherwin) evoked generational difference the most. He discussed American nuclear fear (the sort of “Nuclear Warrior” mentality expressed in the early years of the Reagan administration) as a generational issue. When referencing Gorbachev, Rogov made it clear that the General Secretary was a “child of the 20th party congress” and thus cut from the cloth of a new political age.



ISKAN analysts Sergei Tikhanov (front left) and Sergey Rogov (center left) next to Martin Sherwin (center right) and an unidentified American student during the Tufts visit to ISKAN.

After this visit to ISKAN, the Tufts undergraduates rounded out their spring break trip to Moscow with a visit to Spasso House, the residence of the US Ambassador, and a lecture from Philip Taubman, a *New York Times* analyst based in Moscow (and the brother of a GCP panelist that semester, William Taubman).

Lastly, the cohort of GCP undergraduates paid a visit to “Oginiok”, a magazine that had existed since 1899 but became wildly popular during the period of *Perestroika*. The students spoke with the man often seen as responsible for that popularity, Vitaly Korotich. Korotich, editor-in-chief of the publication throughout the late 80’s is often described as “guiding *Oginiok* to a pro-American and pro-capitalist position.”¹⁵ During his speech to the Tufts students, Korotich described the magazine as a reminder to the Soviet public that “we look strange from the outside” and described its wild rise in popularity with the onset of “new thinking.” “We start to touch things that were illegal for many years and now it start to be popular.”¹⁶

The Moscow spring break trips represent the other sector of the Global Classroom Project’s program. However, these trips were not accessible to everyone. Only a minority of the students involved with GCP courses each semester were able to attend. There is record of three such trips in GCP history: 1988, 1989, and 1990.¹⁷ The ‘88 trip was the strongest and best attended trip in the program’s lifespan.

This first trip was mainly about finding where and what *glasnost* was. What were the limits of “new thinking” in the Soviet Union? Could a group of American and Soviet students gather around a movie about nuclear apocalypse

¹⁵ David M. Kotz, Fred Weir. *Revolution from Above: The Demise of the Soviet System*. (London: Routledge. 1997), p. 97.

¹⁶ Fletcher Russia and Eurasia Program, “Tufts Students Visiting Moscow in 1988,” 1:17:07.

¹⁷ The second exchange of the GCP, in March 1989 is not discussed here. In the recollection of James Hershberg, the exchange still focused on nuclear topics. However, by 1989, the GCP had moved into partnership with the Tufts Center for Environmental Management and was focused on environmental topics. Additionally, 1989 marks a moment where the GCP was between partners, working the Mendeleev Chemical Institute (see next chapter) but not yet fully removed from partnership with Moscow State University.

and discuss it? Yes. Would American students see the tangible effects of the democratization of the press and feel able to openly discuss these changes? Yes. Would throngs of American students get to know Soviet peers in a lasting manner? No. Could a discussion between Tufts students and ISKAN officials promote some sort of miraculous common ground of mutual understanding? Not evidently. Through the examination of the 1988 Spring Break trip to Moscow, one can observe faculty and students testing boundaries, finding where *glasnost* has made considerable change in the Soviet Union and where dreamy, idealized notions of new Soviet and American understandings of political “openness” might have fallen short.

By the end of 1988, the Global Classroom Project was in transition. This transition mirrored a larger shift in the world of Soviet-American diplomatic relations. Now five years away from Ronald Reagan’s famous speech wherein he dubbed the Soviet Union an “evil empire”, Reagan was stepping out of office to be replaced by his Vice President, George H. W. Bush. Additionally, Reagan and Gorbachev’s 1987 summit in Washington DC, built upon the 1985 Geneva conference which came before it, promoted a climate of nuclear deescalation. No longer the heightened object of mass public concern, the nuclear arms race took a back seat to issues that gaining new international attention.

A powerful surge of global environmental thinking launched by the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment that resulted in the creation of the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). This, in turn, led to a string of conservationist policies that spoke to a new human responsibility to the

environment. 1980 marked the dawn of the Reagan administration and a downturn for American environmental thinking. Other than the legislation of the Lois Gibbs' Superfund, little coordinated action environmental action characterized 1980's America. By the late 1980's however, general lack of non-human concern prompted a turn to global networks of environmental action. This sentiment was only strengthened once the international community caught wind of the effects of the Chernobyl disaster, the world's largest nuclear accident, by the end of 1986. 1987 marked the drafting of the Montreal Protocol, a largely successful framework for phasing out the use of atmospheric ozone depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) through the use of an international treaty. By 1988, the UNEP established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Global Environmental frameworks were popular by 1988, and American educational institutions wanted to put the time, energy, and money, into exploring them.¹⁸

¹⁸ One may note that this broad account of "global" environmental history at the end of the 20th century is centered on the United States and Soviet Union, perhaps overemphasizing these two superpower countries and ignoring the plethora of other state actors tangled in environmental crises. This is an intentional demonstration of how, much like the nuclear disarmament problematic that came before it, the framework of "global environmental issues" helped to consolidate attention and power within the Soviet-American axis.

Part Two:

The Global Environmental Series (& Aftermath)

(1989-1992)

Chapter Four: The Environmental Turn

If you were a family sitting down to watch the GBH, Greater Boston Area local news network on the morning of Saturday, March 4, 1989, you would have seen Martin Sherwin's massive grin and distinctive facial hair crackle onto your television screen. With his signature greeting of "Hello, Moscow!", Sherwin brought a newly focused iteration of the Global Classroom Project underway.

While the first five spacebridges of the Global Classroom Project were focus on the topics of the Nuclear Arms race, the next five spacebridges would concern the environment. Leaving behind the course title of "The Soviet Union, United States, and the Nuclear Arms Race in Historical Perspective", the GCP was now housed within a course titled "The Environment and the Superpowers." Spacebridge Six, the first in the new series, bore the title of "Is Clean Water Possible?"

In his joking opening remarks to the program, Sherwin acknowledged the transition in terms of global progress. "When we first began to plan that project on the nuclear arms race... the arms race was running at high speed", Sherwin began. "When we completed the series in December 1988, it had slowed down considerably, indeed, perhaps even reversed. We're now going to try to do the same thing for the environment." It can be assumed that this statement referred to the December 1987 Intermediate-Range Forces (INF) Treaty, the end result of which was 2,692 missiles being brought offline by June 1, 1991.¹

¹ "The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty at a Glance," *Arms Control Association*. October 22, 2018. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/INFtreaty>

Though the audience broke out in laughter, understanding Sherwin's statement as a joke, these words capture a certain optimism that seems to be so emblematic both of the Global Classroom Project and this greater point in the history of US-Soviet relations. A changing diplomatic relationship between these two world powers seemed clear, but no one seemed to know what exactly this change might bring. While a joint satellite lecture series was certainly not the reason the arms race had decreased, such a program could not have existed in a different political climate. Though a bit facetious, Sherwin's statement contained a kernel of truth.

The Global Classroom Project's turn to environmental issues reflected the global contexts, trends, and narratives of Soviet environmental stewardship that emerged during the late 1980's and that became particularly noteworthy after the USSR's collapse in late 1991. Whereas nuclear disarmament was clearly contentious topic of political discussion from the beginning, the environment and its degradation were popularly regarded as more of a "safe topic" in international, political discussion.²

This "safe topic" status was generally the case for environmental problems due to the fact that the Soviet Union, United States, and all countries of the world could be implicated in environmental damage. Yet the GCP's discussions of the environment were inherently political, though less obviously so than the earlier nuclear topics had been. To recall a point made during the first spacebridge,

² Recall the example from the 1987 "Capitol-to-capitol" spacebridge program and the frustration of Peter Jennings when a Soviet panelist attempted to discuss Soviet forest security as opposed to disarmament. This is sort of rhetoric is pervasive in Cold War era scientific diplomacy.

World War II “forever linked science and technology to national security.”³ This statement most obviously holds true when discussing nuclear weapons, but it undeniably applies to thinking about nuclear energy as well. Environmental issues are inherently political issues, and there was no environmental issue at the time more haunting than Chernobyl.

Although Soviet officials announced on May 6, 1986, that the Chernobyl fires were out and proclaimed the danger over, the radioactive graphite that had once composed the core continued to burn on its own for another week. Studies of the disaster after the collapse of the Soviet Union revealed that radiation emitted from the Chernobyl disaster totaled around 200 curies of radioactivity, though the official party line proclaimed that the danger was over as soon as May 1986. As civilian life around the disaster zone returned to normal by the end of May, the ruined power plant clandestinely released an amount of radiation comparable to four Hiroshima-sized bombs into the global environment.⁴ Eventually, through a network of whistleblowers and scientists, word of the disaster’s realities began to spread by the end of 1986. The calls for government transparency in the aftermath became one of the major pillars of *glasnost*.

The Communist Party imposed a media blackout on sanctioned coverage of Chernobyl until 1989. And, even when officially permitted, many stories on the disaster were not allowed to see the light of day until after the Soviet collapse in

³ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1970-1993. GCP I [Transcripts] 1987. Transcript, March 12, 1988, Spacebridge One. UA027.001.001.00010. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA. p. 5

⁴ Brown, *Manual for Survival: A Chernobyl Guide to the Future*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2019). p. 8.

1991⁵ Throughout the official media blackout, the International Atomic Energy Agency and its general director, Hans Blix, openly celebrated the Soviet government's response. In light of the accident, Blix and the agency often made sure to remind anyone in the international community who would listen that nuclear power was a renewable, clean source of energy that did not contribute to the buildup of earth-warming gasses in the atmosphere.⁶ Through both state-sponsored and NGO narratives, both the media and the larger awareness of global atmospheric pollution became inextricable elements of the Chernobyl story.

While the Soviet government is often demonized for their response to this accident, and for good reason, it is critical to recognize that they were not alone in this. The world's other global superpower had its own sort of nuclear glasnost in the 1980's. First, the partial meltdown of the Three Mile Island powerplant in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania went down in American nuclear history as the country's most significant. During this decade, several reports revealed that American scientists from the Department of Energy (DOE) had secretly, systematically exposed thousands of people to radiation during the early decades of the cold war. Human radiation experiments involved spraying neighborhoods with radioactive material, injecting and feeding Americans with radioactive substances, and even irradiating subjects with radioactive material through the walls of hotel-like rooms. Many of the victims subject to these "experiments"

⁵ Ibid, 47;147.

⁶ Ibid, 146.

sued for reparations. Public cries for the release of the records of these events grew louder.⁷

It was not one political superpower that was the enemy of the environment during the 20th century. Instead, the strict conditions of secrecy and superpower privilege under which both of the US and USSR operated is to blame for much of the global environmental damage inflicted throughout the course of the cold war. These mounting environmental hazards were matched by a burgeoning awareness of the climate and environment in both countries.

June 23, 1988 was a nearly 100-degree day in Washington, DC. Practically already insufferable even in the open air, the temperature was even more excruciating for the US Senate, sweating through the collars of their suits, packed into the Capitol's Senate Chamber. The Senate convened that day to discuss perhaps the most relevant topic that afternoon: the temperature. Dr. Jim Hansen, the Director of NASA's Goddard Institute stood on the floor of the chamber, sounding the alarm bells of a new trend of global warming at this hearing on climate change. Back in 1967, Hansen had cut his teeth in climatology with a thesis on the climate of Venus, a planet completely enshrouded in gasses due to thick layers of particulate matter insulating the atmosphere.

By 1988, there was already a significant body of scientific work suggesting that Earth could be headed in a similar direction. The Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii, initially under the supervision of Dr. Charles Keeling (the namesake of the "Keeling Curve" model that depicts the accumulation of carbon

⁷ Ibid, 151.

dioxide in Earth's atmosphere), had released extensive data suggesting that the amount of greenhouse gasses in Earth's atmosphere were changing dramatically. Hansen, as a high-level American scientist reporting what he observed to be the global trend, addressed the senate during the hearing that day in 1988, a year which was the first of a string of subsequent years to be deemed "hottest on record." Hansen, in his since-famous address, informed the senate that "the greenhouse effect is large enough to begin to affect the probability of extreme events such as summer heat waves...It is changing our climate now."⁸ In the that day was a young environmental lobbyist named William Moomaw. Moomaw soon became a central figure in the Global Classroom Project.

Hansen's emphasis in his Senate on thinking globally about environmental problems resonated well with the cooperative internationalist ideology central to the GCP. So too did Hansen's deployment of science to influence high-profile policy decisions. In fact, he was joined by countless others who, together, had a loud voice in formulating significant political decisions with remarkable cultural power in the late 20th century.

Playing the role of the protagonist in this nuclear fable is the 20th century scientist. Scientists, throughout a long period of history in euro-American popular culture have been seen as decidedly rational figures, objective agents. As many contemporary scholars have since argued, that much is not the case. Scientists have interests, political, cultural and commercial, much like any other human

⁸ Kevin Krajick, "James Hansen's Climate Warning, 30 Years Later", Columbia Climate School, State of the Planet Blog, Accessed May 7, 2021, <https://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2018/06/26/james-hansens-climate-warning-30-years-later/>

being that imbues their personal outlook with an inherent subjectivity. Often thought of as a theoretical practice, strongly moored in material reality not interested idealism, the scientific process is actually rife with conflicts of interest, one where actors stand to lose and gain.

This is not to say that all scientists act with some sort of tacit hidden agenda, nor have they historically. Simply put, this popularized belief of scientific rationality, strengthened in the Post-war period and then maintained throughout the Cold War, allowed, rather ironically, for scientists to play an increased role in international politics. Perceived as being without the usual political subjectivities, scientists were often placed the spotlight of Cold War diplomacy. Science and Technology exchanges were massively expanded throughout the 1970's, with the latter half of the decade witnessing about a thousand Soviet scientists visiting the United States each year.⁹ These scientific exchanges (the second most popular category of which became "environmental protection") were politically motivated. From the American point of view, they encouraged the interdependent nature of Soviet science that would promote more moderate behavior on the behalf of the Soviet Union.¹⁰ Politics and science, far from kept apart, continually reinforced one another after WWII.

The Global Classroom Project benefitted from this dynamic of celebrity science. This support started as early as 1987, with the involvement of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) and their

⁹ Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange & the Cold War : Raising the Iron Curtain*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), p. 69.

¹⁰ Ibid.

head, Nobel Laureate Dr. Bernard Lown. Evgheny Velikhov is another example of the celebrity science dynamic.

Velikhov was not widely published in the scientific community, and though he is often cited for his contributions to the clean-up efforts after the Chernobyl disaster, other accounts of the incident and its aftermath omit any mention of Velikhov whatsoever.¹¹ Hans Fenstermacher admits that he “doesn’t know how much of a scientist Velikhov was.”¹²

Velikhov’s importance as one of Gorbachev’s main scientific advisors and director of the Kurchatov Institute (the main atomic research center of the Soviet Union, persisting into the Russian Federation), however, is beyond question. His status in the scientific community gave him a prominent position in Late Soviet politics. As former ISKAN analyst Constantine Pleshakov made clear in conversation, Velikhov set himself apart from his colleagues in the Communist Party precisely because he was a scientist.¹³ The importance of individual actors in the GCP, and what their involvement in the program meant is crucial to consider going forward, as the cast of characters shifted considerably into 1989.

¹¹ The aforementioned Boston Globe article (September 11, 1987) and a 2015 Vladimir Putin speech both reference Velikhov’s efforts to handle the aftermath of the nuclear disaster. However, Kate Brown’s account of the events (2019) excludes all mentions of Velikhov entirely.

¹² Conversation with Hans Fenstermacher, 1/31/21.

¹³ Conversation with Constantine Pleshakov, 1/19/21



Evgheny Velikhov sitting at the direct left of USSR General Secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev. Image courtesy of Martin J. Sherwin. Image originally published on the cover of the Soviet Communist Party newspaper, “Pravda”, on January 16, 1988.

1989 marked a turning point in the history of the Global Classroom Project. New key players joined the program. Dr. Anthony Cortese graduated from the Harvard School of Public Health in 1976 with a doctorate in Environmental Health Sciences. After completing his ScD, Cortese worked for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, specializing in air quality supervision until he was appointed commissioner of the entire state’s Department of Environmental protection.¹⁴ After his stint in public service, Cortese served as the director of the Tufts Center for Environmental Management from 1984 to 1989. ¹⁵According to Martin Sherwin, Anthony “Tony” Cortese and the Center for Environmental Management were financially well-endowed, signaling the beginning of

¹⁵ Sol Gittelman, *An Entrepreneurial University : The Transformation of Tufts, 1976-2002*. (Medford, MA; Hanover, N.H.: Tufts University Press ; University Press of New England, 2004). p. 231.

environmental programs gaining influence at Tufts. As the story goes, Sherwin was looking for funding while Cortese was looking for a platform to discuss environmental issues. The Global Classroom Project and the Center for Environmental Management partnered up, each providing the other with what they needed.

Cortese became the Dean of Environmental Programs at Tufts in 1989.¹⁶ In the same year, Cortese founded the Tufts Environmental Literacy Institute, integrating environmental literacy topics into curricula across 175 courses at Tufts.¹⁷ Now too busy to manage all of his responsibilities, Cortese hunted for his replacement to direct the Center for Environmental Management. By mid-1989, Cortese had found him: a physical chemist by the name of William Moomaw.

After earning his PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1965, Moomaw worked at length in the Washington DC policy sphere on climate, energy and pollution initiatives.¹⁹ By the time he arrived at Tufts, he had developed an expertise in both the topics of international policy and environmental science. He combined these two spheres of expertise at the Fletcher School of Law Diplomacy at Tufts University. Moomaw, a chemist by training, naturally brought a very different way of thinking about the world to internationalist diplomacy than someone such as Martin Sherwin. Moomaw is another example of a scientist who fueled diplomacy. His diplomatic involvement

¹⁶ This position and entire branch of the institution does not exist today. The fact that, in 1989, Tufts had a separate dean of Environmental Programs was typical of the “academic entrepreneurialism” that defined the University during Jean Mayer’s presidency.

¹⁷ Conversation with William Moomaw, January 25, 2021.

¹⁹ Ibid.

encompassed conferences in Georgia, Belarus, and other Soviet Republics numerous times prior to his work with Tufts and the GCP.²¹ The American counterparts of the GCP were not the only side that went through changes into 1990.

The cast of characters from the Soviet Union also underwent a renovation as the GCP entered its second phase. On the Soviet side of things, the most important theme of 1989 was institutional broadening. Starting in the spring of 1989, both Mendeleev Chemical Institute and Kazan State University were brought into the Global Classroom Project, while Moscow State University curtailed its involvement in the GCP.

Throughout 1989, MGU pulled away from the program, and in early 1990 representative faculty of MGU clarified a lack of interest in being the primary Soviet partner in the exchange. The third scheduled spring break trip to Moscow State, planned for 1990, was dropped by MGU just months before the program, necessitating hasty preparations for the Mendeleev Chemical Institute as the new host. One might ask, “where did Moscow State’s enthusiasm for the Global Classroom Project go?” The simple answer: such enthusiasm was never there.

Recall that from the very beginning of the MGU partnership with the Global Classroom, the MGU administration had seldom been consulted. From the eyes of Martin Sherwin and Hans Fenstermacher, as soon as the GCP’s planning stage of 1987, it was clear that Velikhov had very strict control over MGU’s partnership with the GCP. However, every now and again the MGU

²¹ Ibid.

administration would flex their muscles in an act open to interpretation as either bureaucratic resistance or intellectual independence. On a visit to Moscow in the fall of 1987 to arrange the first semester of spacebridge programs in the spring, Sherwin and Fenstermacher became the unwitting audience to one of these performances. Sitting down for a “meeting” at MGU, Sherwin and Fenstermacher were faced with a “phalanx of MGU administrators” across the table.²³ The administrators began to speak rapidly in Russian for roughly a half hour, Fenstermacher only just barely being able to fit in bursts of interpretation during natural pauses for breath. From what Fenstermacher can recall, the central point of this speech was that MGU was furious at being wrangled into the GCP by Velikhov. Referring to MGU as the bewildered bride in the “shotgun wedding” that was the GCP, one of the men spouted, “I’ve been brought to the altar without being asked.”²⁴ No wonder that MGU opted to pull back from the program when it was possible to do so.

On March 1, 1990, Bill Moomaw received a letter from Nikolai Marfenin, a professor of ecology and biology at Moscow State University. Marfenin, serving as a representative from the MGU administration wrote Moomaw in clipped, bureaucratic language and called off MGU’s involvement in the GCP...again. “I realized that we understood the word ‘agreement’ differently”, Marfenin wrote. “We always understand an agreement to be a multi-year agreement, that is, at

²³ Martin Sherwin, Email to author, July 30, 2020.

²⁴ Conversation with Hans Fenstermacher and Martin Sherwin, 1/31/21.

least three years.”²⁵ Historical precedent would tell Marfenin that he was not wrong. The formal “Agreement Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Exchanges in the Cultural, Technical, and Educational Fields” was signed on January 27, 1958. This act of diplomacy, commonly referred to as the Lacy-Zarubin agreement, authorized official exchanges of resources and personnel in science and technology, agriculture, radio and television, motion pictures, scholarship, and more. A renewal of the agreement was signed by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev at the diplomatic turning point that was their 1985 Geneva Summit. In a command economy such as the Soviet Union, it was necessary to directly spell out conditions of exchanges clearly and directly not just for ideological consistency but also to allow for participating government ministries and industries to allocate the resources for such exchanges.²⁶ Formal agreements had long been the norm in American-Soviet exchange, and the GCP was not in compliance. While there is record of an initial draft agreement sent shared between Sherwin, Mayer and Velikhov, there is no clear evidence that this agreement was ever revised and more widely circulated. Diplomatic practice seems to have been concentrated on Velikhov himself and was less concerned with institutional partnership.

Administrative contact (or, rather, lack thereof) was also a grievance of Marfenin’s. Feeling as though the University’s administration was being undervalued, Marfenin clearly stated that “any letters not from Tufts

²⁵ Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records, 1990 – 2012. Events, 1990 – 2012. Soviet Agreement with Tufts. Letter, March 1, 1990, Marfenin to Moomaw. UA228.001.002. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

²⁶ Richmond, *Cultural Exchange & the Cold War*, 15-16.

administration are not relevant documents for our Rector's office and will not be read by it."²⁷ Despite a letter from Jean Mayer to MGU Rector, Anatoly Logunov, in September of 1989, points of tension in the agreement that were later described via a letter to Sherwin on January 2, 1990, were not corrected. Marfenin felt as though contacts with the MGU administration, when they were in fact made, were not done so seriously.

Finally, Marfenin referenced the command-centric origins of the program as a source of frustration. Velikhov held MGU in a de facto agreement with the GCP since 1987. Gesturing back to this shaky foundation of relationship, Marfenin references the Foreign Department of the University when he plainly states, "they naturally do not like it when a collaboration is forced upon the University, as was unfortunately done from the very beginning of relations between Tufts and MGU....You can imagine what they now think of this project!"²⁸

Moscow State, seemingly unable to leave the program, remained involved with the GCP through the end of the project. Despite being unable to completely remove themselves, MGU did become much more distant as a new primary Soviet partner took the stage, thanks to changes in the Soviet educational structure.

The Soviet Ministry of Education merged with the Ministry of Higher and Middle Special Education and the State Committee for Vocational and Technical Education on March 5, 1988. Newly reorganized, these institutions now operated

²⁷ Letter, March 1, 1990, Marfenin to Moomaw. UA228.001.002.

²⁸ Ibid.

under the banner of “The State Committee for People’s Education of the Soviet Union.” Gorbachev appointed a man by the name of Gennagy A. Yagodin to head this new department.²⁹ Consistent with the General Secretary’s outward facing political program of nuclear disarmament, even Gorbachev’s minister of education was an expert in atomic relations. Yagodin approached the issue diplomatically, having worked as the deputy director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for several years.³⁰ Minister Yagodin was also the former rector of the D.I. Mendeleev Chemical Institute.

Mendeleev Chemical Institute (simply referred to as “Mendeleev” going forward) was where you wanted to go if you were a Soviet student pursuing a future in chemistry. Initially founded as a technical college in order to commemorate Russian Tsar Alexander II’s reign, the institute gained increasing visibility throughout the 20th century. Its namesake, Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev (1834-1907), was a chemist responsible for early visions of the periodic table.

The D.I. Mendeleev Chemical Institute had little to lose and much to gain in the late 20th century. The Institute, unlike Moscow State which was the clear home to the USSR’s educational elite, had little reputation and more fluid expectations. In this way, it can be considered rather parallel to Tufts University. While at Mendeleev in the 1970’s and early 1980’s, Yagodin worked directly with faculty in ecological sciences, forming a close professional relationship with

²⁹ Popularly, Yagodin’s given name can also be transliterated as “Gennady.”

³⁰ Inspired by President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s “Atoms for Peace” address to the United Nations General Assembly on December 8, 1953, the International Atomic Energy Agency was created under the UN’s umbrella to “promote safe, secure, and peaceful nuclear technologies.” The IAEA continues to operate today.

a young academic by the name of Natalia Tarasova with an education in radiation chemistry. In 1983, when forming the academic chair of industrial ecology (the first in the Soviet Union and one of the first in the world) at Mendeleev, Yagodin asked Tarasova to serve in the position.³¹

As the newly appointed Minister of Education, Yagodin was certainly aware of the Global Classroom Project during its first semester in the spring of 1988. Speculating on the exact date of the meeting, Yagodin met with Martin Sherwin sometime in the autumn of 1988 to discuss the program and its future direction. At this meeting, it can be assumed, Yagodin brought in the several new Soviet institutions onboard that joined Tufts and MGU in for the spring version of the Global Classroom. At this point, Mendeleev needed a GCP representative.

Natalia Tarasova, in her industrial ecology chair, was conducting expansive research on global problems in general. Additionally, she was fluent in French and English. Selecting her for the position, Yagodin asked Tarasova to have a meeting with Sherwin and himself at the Ministry of Education in late 1988. Thus began the collaboration between Sherwin and Tarasova, which soon developed into a fast friendship. When MGU pulled out of the Global Classroom Project in March of 1990, these contacts at Mendeleev were ready to pick up the slack and work to ensure that the students of the GCP still received the international experience for which they enrolled.

The Tufts administration and GCP coordinators had learned a valuable lesson dealing with MGU over the years and were better behaved in their

³¹ Natalia Tarasova, Email to author, February 7, 2021.

partnership with the Mendeleev Chemical Institute. On March 20, 1990 two documents were drafted. Both of these documents, one deemed a “Memorandum of Understanding” (MOU) and the other a “Protocol of Agreement,” clearly stated the expected terms of exchanges between these two institutions. While the “Protocol of Agreement” functioned truly as a planned agreement between these two institutions, solidifying future interactions, the relationship had developed so quickly that the “Memorandum of Understanding” was drafted and signed three days into the Tufts visit to Mendeleev.³³

This memorandum established important features of the Tufts and Mendeleev relationship, starting with an agreement that it fell under the “auspices of the US-Soviet Agreement on Education and Training in the Field of Environmental Studies.” Deviating from its origins as simply “a professor doing something interesting” (as Sherwin retrospectively mused at one point), the formality and structure of these larger relations reflected the importance of the GCP as an international political phenomenon. It also formalized “environmental studies” as the official topic of the Global Classroom Project. At the same time, the document left open the possibility that future engagements would shift into “other fields of mutual interest.”

Emphasizing the importance of this flexibility, the “Memorandum of Understanding” also opened up the possibility of Mendeleev working with other American institutions under the US-Soviet Agreement on Environmental Studies

³³ Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records, 1990 – 2012. Events, 1990 – 2012. Soviet Agreement with Tufts. Memo, March 20, 1990, “Memorandum of Understanding.” UA228.001.002. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA

to explore “possible areas of collaboration.” Viktor F. Zhilin, the Vice Rector of Mendeleev, signed this document along with Natalya Kruchinina, the Dean of Mendeleev’s Environmental Engineering Department. Signing from Tufts was Richard Wetzler, the research division director of the Center for Environmental Management and Hans Fenstermacher, now the Assistant Director of the Global Classroom Project.

A twin document, the “Protocol of Agreement,” was also signed between Tufts and Mendeleev on March 20, 1990. This protocol was more limited in scope. It committed both schools to the mutual exchange of 25 person groups over 7-day periods in 1991. It was planned that Mendeleev undergraduates would visit Tufts in January or February and Tufts would return the visit in March. In addition to these visits, Mendeleev and Tufts also agreed to enter into faculty and graduate student exchanges. Though the agreement is not as strict as Moscow State’s desired standards when discussing the timing of the programs, it does conclude with the explicit caveat that plans for all exchanges need to be presented by either side no later than six months prior to the proposed exchange.³⁵

These two agreements shed light on the politics of higher education in the Late Soviet Union. Within the minutiae of these documents, there is an attitude that Mendeleev Chemical Institute is willing to, in some ways, settle on Soviet educational cultural norms in order to reap the major benefits of a solid educational exchange partnership with the United States. The fact that this

³⁵ Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records, 1990 – 2012. Events, 1990 – 2012. Soviet Agreement with Tufts. Letter template, March 20, 1990, Draft Protocol of Agreement. UA228.001.002. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

document was drafted shortly after Marfenin's rejection of GCP partnership earlier in the month would seem to indicate that institutional rivalries were at play. These dynamics would not go away, instead only building and further shifting throughout this phase of the program.

In 1990, the course was taught jointly on the Tufts end by William Moomaw and Martin Sherwin. This course, titled "The Environment and the Superpowers," was a continuation of earlier nuclear age themes through a new environmental lens.³⁶ Joining Moomaw and Sherwin as collaborators were Richard Wetzler (division director of the Center for Environmental Management), Anthony Cortese (Dean of Environmental Programs), and Dr. Nay Htun (Asia and Pacific Regional Director for the United Nations Environmental Program), who was serving as a fellow at the Center for Environmental Management in 1990.³⁷ In addition to the usual independent coursework, the semester featured one spacebridge broadcasts.³⁸ Spacebridge 8 (April 21, 1990) focused on "The Environment and Our Future."³⁹

While the 1989 iteration of the course was a spring semester with two spacebridges, the second course iteration in the spring of 1990 only featured one.

Finally, the last spacebridge of the Global Environmental Series on Global

³⁶ Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records, 1990 – 2012. Events, 1990 – 2012. Soviet Agreement with Tufts. Letter template, March 29, 1990, Spacebridge Invitation Template. UA228.001.002. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ The year before, the first two broadcasts of the Global Environmental Series took place in what can be assumed to be a similar course format. Spacebridge 6 (March 4 of 1989) was titled "Is Clean Water Possible?" Spacebridge 7 (April 22, 1989) covered "Global Atmospheric Pollution."

³⁹ Spacebridge 9, the final installment in the Global Environmental Series of the GCP took place on April 20, 1991 at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, commemorating the 20th anniversary of Earth Day.

Warming was produced roughly a year after its predecessor. With changing institutions, topics, and team members, the GCP became a bit bogged down. Compared to the early energy of 1987 and '88 that kept Sherwin, Fenstermacher, and whoever else that could keep up with them running to Ballou Hall at midnight to receive a Telex or hopping on a last-minute flight to Moscow without a visa, it is clear that this same enthusiasm is no longer as present. Things are already beginning to slow down.

The Global Environmental Series also featured spring break trips to Moscow in 1989 and 1990. The former trip is thinly documented, but the latter was a well-documented landmark in the story of the GCP. The 1990 Moscow trip marked three key shifts in the program. First, Bill Moomaw oversaw Tufts' involvement in the exchange. Recall that Moomaw joined the Center for Environmental Management (CEM) as its director when he arrived at Tufts in 1989. Due to funding concerns, the GCP had been housed within the CEM. When Moomaw signed on to direct the CEM as Anthony Cortese's replacement, he thus signed on to join the GCP team as well. Given his area of expertise, Moomaw himself recalls providing considerable direction to the program during this period, building off of the foundation that Sherwin had built during his work in the Nuclear Weapons Series of the program. As Moomaw recalls, he and Tarasova worked together on the management side of this phase of the GCP. Moomaw even remembers proctoring one of the spacebridge lectures, with Tarasova moderating business on the other end of the satellite transmission.⁴⁰ Though transcripts and

⁴⁰ Conversation with William Moomaw, 1/25/21

taped recordings of these events point to Martin Sherwin moderating every spacebridge throughout the life of the GCP, Moomaw's recollection does accurately reflect his now key role in running the program.

Though he did not go on the 1990 trip, Moomaw was clearly the organizer and main representative of the Tufts group, receiving letters of confirmation from Soviet institutions and occasional progress reports on the experiences of the students. Both fresh and familiar faces assisted Moomaw with the oversight of the excursion. Hans Fenstermacher, still a graduate student at the Fletcher school, was Moomaw's main point person while in Moscow.⁴¹ Reprising her role as a GCP TA, Tanya Gassel joined Fenstermacher in supervising this trip. In fact, Gassel was a major fixture of the GCP and supported it as a teaching assistant and administrative support throughout its history.⁴² Gassel is rarely referenced in official GCP documentation, if at all. In contrast, Gassel is often referenced as key player in spoken historical accounts. One possible explanation for this dissidence is that this is a case of a woman doing far more work than she is given credit.

Two staff members of the Center for Environmental Management became most involved in the management of the Global Classroom Project from the environmental end, Richard "Rick" Wetzler and Hugh Pilgrim. Wetzler was the CEM's "Research Division Director." Never going to Moscow himself, Wetzler was frequently a point of contact between the CEM staff and Sherwin.

⁴¹ Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records, 1990 – 2012. Events, 1990 – 2012. Soviet Agreement with Tufts. Memorandum of Understanding. UA228.001.002. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

⁴² Conversation with Tanya Gassel, 1/7/21

Amplifying CEM's contributions to the program staff was Hugh Pilgrim. Pilgrim had worked for the Center of Environmental Management as an analyst since November of 1987 and brought his direct experience with the CEM into the GCP.

⁴³ In addition to these shifts in personnel, this 1990 trip marked an official switch in main Soviet partner institution, from Moscow State to Mendeleev. Lastly, this spring break trip was the first and only trip (in fact, it is the last GCP Moscow trip on record) to cover environmental problems as its main focus. Understanding how this exchange trip went about covering its subject matter provides valuable information on the late-stage health of the program and how the GCP sought to fully navigate the transition from nuclear weapons to matters of environmental decline.

⁴³ It should be acknowledged that Hugh Pilgrim, an African-American man from Barbados, leveled a case in front of the First Circuit of the United States Court of Appeals that he faced workplace discrimination while at Tufts. Due to disciplinary restrictions and attitudes that he faced from his CEM supervisor, Kurt Fischer, Pilgrim initially filed a complaint with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) on October 2, 1991. On October 31 he was notified of his termination at the end of the year. Both Moomaw and Cortese were referenced in the federal court case.

Chapter Five: The Last Spring in Moscow

On March 17 of 1990, twenty-two students from Tufts University stepped off the plane to begin their Soviet spring break.¹ For the next week, these American students shared housing, lecture halls, and buses with a similarly sized group of students from the Mendeleev Institute. After a brief period 48-hour period to settle in, the American students and faculty walked onto Mendeleev's campus and kicked off this iteration of the Global Classroom.

On Monday, March 19, 1990, the group of Americans were officially welcomed by Mendeleev's Vice Rector, Viktor F. Zhilin.² Focusing on the importance of what his institution was doing in the fields of chemistry and its ecological implications, Zhilin gave the audience a few animated, excited remarks before opening up the floor for Soviet and American students to ask questions of their counterparts, exchanging greetings for the first time. Later that same day, this international cohort sat attentively and listened to two recent Mendeleev graduates who had participated in the preliminary clean-up from the Chernobyl disaster, less than five years after this horrifying accident.³ This sort of conversation was defiantly above the norm in the Soviet Union at the time.

¹ Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records, 1990 – 2012. Events, 1990 – 2012. Soviet Agreement with Tufts. Mendeleev Institute Draft Protocol of Agreement. UA228.001.002. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

² Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records, 1990 – 2012. Events, 1990 – 2012. Soviet Agreement with Tufts. Letter, March 16, 1990, Pilgrim to Moomaw. UA228.001.002. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

³ Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records, 1990 – 2012. Events, 1990 – 2012. Soviet Agreement with Tufts. Letter, April 4, 1990, Fenstermacher to Moomaw. UA228.001.002. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

While 1989 marked an official end to state-sanctioned censorship on the incident, it is commonly believed that there was a popular media blackout on the topic up until the USSR's collapse in 1991.⁴ Despite “openness” and “new thinking” being the rallying cry of the moment, to have a truly candid conversation with a group of American students on the disaster and its ramifications would have been *glasnost* beyond *glasnost*. The exact content of this critical side note of a moment during the 1990 Moscow trip is only described in a few sentences, the overall content and context of this brief presentation left largely unclear.

Pilgrim, in his letter to Moomaw reporting on the proceedings of the Moscow visit, makes a comment that potentially indicates a candid deviation from contemporary official narratives. Recounting the event, Pilgrim writes, “while the official explanations of the accident emphasize operator error, as I understand the comments, the fundamental concerns involve policies on nuclear energy.”⁵ In variation to “official explanations”, this talk posited Chernobyl as a systemic issue of nuclear energy that went beyond the simpler explanation of operator error. However, this explanation was still largely apolitical. Focusing on global systemic explanations for Chernobyl's failure, these presenters prominently featured a discussion of all the major nuclear accidents in history.⁶

While a survey of historical events is certainly helpful for context, global environmental concern is also a convenient way to dilute accountability for

⁴ Kate Brown, *Manual for Survival : A Chernobyl Guide to the Future* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019), 47; 147.

⁵ Letter, March 16, 1990, Pilgrim to Moomaw. UA228.001.002.

⁶ Ibid.

individual environmental incidents, particularly those with such state-specific political implications. It is far easier to blame the larger global system of nuclear power than bring attention to, for example, the fact that the RMBK reactor model (the very same design of the Chernobyl plant and one among several other possible Soviet designs) was known to physicists at the Kurchatov Institute to be faulty and difficult to control or that these intentional faults could be interpreted as justified by the potential for the RMBK reactor to produce plutonium (the material at the core of nuclear bombs) as a byproduct of energy production.⁷ This is a prime example of how global environmental, systemic narratives can be used to apoliticize environmental events with clear state motivations.

Moving on from this blip of a moment in the day, the students of the Global Classroom toured Mendeleev's campus before going back to their shared homes for the evening.⁸ The next several days were equally as eventful. The students attended more joint lectures from both American and Soviet faculty, much to the excitement of both parties.⁹ One day, the group met again with ISKAN researchers and participated in discussions on perestroika and political life in the USSR.¹⁰ The next day, the students toured a nature preserve on the outskirts of Moscow.¹¹ This group was even given the privilege of being paid a visit by Alexey Yablokov, an academic of the Supreme Soviet, who was "as straightforward as one can be about the USSR and environmental issues."¹²

⁷ Brown, *Manual for Survival*, 53-54.

⁸ Letter, March 16, 1990, Pilgrim to Moomaw. UA228.001.002.

⁹ Letter, Fenstermacher to Moomaw, Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

Yablokov, a leading Soviet ecologist at the time, had already gained a reputation for environmental whistleblowing in the Soviet Union. At around the same time, he worked with Greenpeace to publish a compendium of local work on the effects of the Chernobyl disaster that contested the falsified UN party line.¹³ With a reputation that preceded him, Yablokov is another prominent example of the power of celebrity scientists. When Moomaw and Sherwin reached out to invite collaborators from other schools to participate in the April 21 spacebridge (what would later become a program called, “The Environment and Our Future”), a number of potential Soviet panelists had been provided at a March 20 meeting at Gostelradio.¹⁴ However, of all these potential names, the only one that Moomaw and Sherwin chose to advertise as a panelist on the Soviet side was Yablokov’s.¹⁵

While undergraduate students talked nuclear disasters and toured sustainable forests, Tufts and Mendeleev faculty convened in conference rooms, private offices, and radio studios as they designed the “Environment and our Future” program. The main topic of conversation at these meetings, mostly at Gostelradio headquarters, was the upcoming spacebridge on April 21, 1990. Fenstermacher, who attended these meetings, reported to Moomaw that the GCP team, following the advice of Gostelradio, had decided that the Mendeleev Institute partner with both Kazan University and Moscow State University in order to avoid the “complicated issue of naming a sponsor *per se* for the program

¹³ Brown, *Manual for Survival*, 284.

¹⁴ Letter, March 16, 1990, Pilgrim to Moomaw. UA228.001.002. p. 2.

¹⁵ Letter template, Spacebridge Invitation Template, “The Environment and Our Future”, Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records.

on the Soviet side” (original emphasis).¹⁶ It is not clear why MGU continued to participate. Perhaps they had been ordered to do so by Velikhov, Yagodin, or some other higher-up. Whatever the reason, MGU’s Nikolai Marfenin met with the GCP team on March 23 and said that Moscow State would be “organized to actively participate” in the spacebridge at the end of the next month, and indeed met and worked with the Tufts students during the spring break visit. It seems that, even though Moscow State might have been pulled back into the GCP by outside political or reputational forces, they ultimately came out on top; Moscow State was able to reap the benefits of participation without the toils of organization.

Leaving Moscow after a college spring break well spent, the Tufts students said goodbye to their Soviet counterparts until June, when roughly 25 students from the Mendeleev institute planned to fly to Boston via New York and repeat this process nearly all over again.¹⁷ In the interim however, it was time for the first and only GCP spacebridge of 1990.

April 21, 1990, the 20th Earth Day, was deemed the ideal time to discuss matters of the natural world and cultural survival.¹⁸ Sherwin began the proceedings that morning with his typical Russian pleasantries and an acknowledgement that, although Moscow State Lomonosov University had

¹⁶ Letter, March 16, 1990, Pilgrim to Moomaw. UA228.001.002, p. 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 3; Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records, 1990 – 2012. Series 1: Events, 1990 – 2012. Soviet Agreement with Tufts. Letter, May 11, 1990, Pilgrim to “Rick.” UA228.001.002. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

¹⁸ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1990 . GCP VIII [Transcripts] 1990. UA027.001.001.00033. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

started the program along with Tufts back in 1988, this program of the Global Classroom was organized by Tufts and the Mendeleev Chemical Institute. Though moderation on the Soviet side was not always consistent, reprising his role as main Soviet moderator for this lecture was none other than Evgheny Velikhov himself.

As the title might suggest, this spacebridge hinged on speculating on coming global environmental degradation. In his opening remarks, Sherwin provides a window into what environmental issues were most salient from himself, the panelists, and the students in the audience. At the time of this lecture, Sherwin seemed nervous at the contemporary population figures, noting that 5.3 billion was already double that of the population forty years prior. Positing a growing population as the central environmental issue of the age, Sherwin brought a various host of other ills into overpopulation's orbit. "Can we raise enough food for ten billion people without poisoning their diet with pesticides?", Sherwin asked. "We are not succeeding today." Also on Sherwin's mind was the role of in widespread energy access in the face of pollution to both the air and global water supply. Overall, the central questions guiding this lecture centered on the ideal role of technology, politics, and policy in shaping the environmental future.

The Berlin Wall had come down on November 9, 1989. Sherwin boldly declaring at the beginning of the April 1990 spacebridge session that "the cold war has ended and all of us, everywhere in the world want to thank President

Mikhail Gorbachev for that.”¹⁹ Yet there was still another conflict in Sherwin’s mind that was far from over: “The devastating war that we are waging on the environment is continuing unabated.”

On the Soviet side, the panel to wage this war against degradation was a group of leading Soviet ecologists. Chairing the panel and its proceedings was Evgheny Velikhov. Academician Nikolayevich Moiseev, a prominent mathematician and member of the Academy of Sciences (and the later organizer and leader of the Russian section of Mikhail; Gorbachev’s organization, Green Cross International, in 1993) was first up on the panel. Joining Velikhov and Moiseev was Nikolai Nikoliovich Vorontsov, Chairman of the Committee for Environmental Protection and a prominent geneticist.

Completing the Soviet panel for spacebridge six was Alexey Vladimirovich Yablokov, known for his work with Green Peace on the Chernobyl disaster in the late 1980’s. In Bill Moomaw’s recollection, Yablokov, a good friend of both himself and Sherwin’s, was a Soviet thinker and ecologist who “began understanding environmental damage issues long before anyone else did...and managed to stay out of prison by publishing scientific papers and not getting involved in advocacy and so forth.”²⁰ Yablokov, by this point, was selected by Gorbachev to be the Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Soviet on Environmental Protection, a position that Moomaw likened as the closest thing to a Soviet version of the EPA.

¹⁹ Ibid, 5.

²⁰ Conversation with Bill Moomaw, January 25, 2021.

Representing ecological thinking for the Americans at this panel were three members of the MIT community and a federal senator. First, was Russell “Rusty” Schweikart, astronaut, MIT graduate, founder of Association of Space Explorers and former chair and commissioner on energy in California.²¹ Schweikart had been brought in specially to open the day’s proceedings with a keynote address. The next panelist was Bill Moomaw himself. Joining Schweikart and Moomaw was another academic, Prof. Judith Kildow. Kildow was a professor of international environmental policy at the Tufts Fletcher School as well as a professor of ocean policy in the engineering school of MIT. The final panelist was Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts. Kerry, a returning spacebridge participant from the sixth installment, was an established friend and collaborator of the GCP. In his political career, Kerry had already worked to establish himself as an environmental advocate, the author and proponent of many pieces of legislation on acid rain and the 1990 co-chairman of Earth Day in the New England Area.²²

Though Tufts and Mendeleev had organized the event, students from Moscow State University, Kazan University, the Moscow Physical Technical Institute, Moscow Engineering Physics Institute, and Dartmouth College all gathered around one end of the satellite transmission to get in on the proceedings. For several of these institutions, this was their first and last time participating in the GCP. This seems rather typical of the GCP’s energy as it entered the 1990’s.

²¹ The Association of Space Explorers (ASE), as the only professional association for astronauts, is open to anyone who has “completed at least one orbit of earth in a spacecraft.” The association presently joins 400 members from 38 countries.

²² Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1990 . GCP VIII [Transcripts]. Transcript, April 22, 1990. Spacebridge Eight. 1990. UA027.001.001.00033. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

Events were much less regular. However, when the program was active, it was active in usually unprecedentedly large ways. The GCP from 1990 until its end in 1992 is characterized by a few events over a longer period of time with many involved institutions and ever-widening scope of focus.

Tufts President Jean Mayer gave the opening remarks at this event, as had become the custom by this point in time. This opening ritual demonstrates both deference to Mayer's influence in starting the program and his stature as an administrator, but also his immense personal interest in Tufts' reputation as an environmentally literate undergraduate institution. Whereas he was not present at any of the earlier spacebridges of the Nuclear Weapons series, Mayer gave an address at nearly all of the Global Environmental series spacebridges (even when, in the instance of Spacebridge 9 in 1991, they took place in Ohio).

Jean Mayer used these opening remarks as an opportunity to address cultural narratives of blame, employing other dialogues to shift agency from individual state actors to a 'global community.' Mayer described the main contemporary dialogues of blame as follows, "the problem of pollution of the Earth has been blamed in free enterprise countries on excessive quest for profit, in socialist countries on excessive bureaucracy and disregard of the wishes of the people, in developing countries on the need at any cost to develop industry regardless of consequences. The fact of the matter is we're all responsible for the problems we encounter now, and the solutions can only come if all of us work together."²³

²³ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1990 . GCP VIII [Transcripts] 1990. UA027.001.001.00033. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

Stowed inside these sentiments is a cornucopia of larger ideologies and agendas. Mayer, in his open articulation of environmental blame, tacitly divides the world's countries into three categories. While using the terms 'free enterprise', 'socialist', and 'developing', these named categories are analogous to the well-known, post-war classifications of "first", "second", and "third" world countries to describe the United States and NATO allied countries, Soviet Union and other countries of the Soviet Bloc, and the other countries of the world within their orbit, respectively. Thus, in an indirect way, Mayer's remarks approach the world from the perspective of a pre-ordained hierarchy. Mayer's use of the term "free enterprise" to describes countries such as the United States is also rooted in histories that, as cultural theorist and scholar Lawrence Glickman traces in *Free Enterprise: An American History*, normalized libertarianism and other potentially materially extractive ideologies in America by the end of the 20th century.

Mayer is also referencing a long history when he describes the blame that can be placed on socialist countries. Blaming an overburdened Soviet bureaucracy attempting to rapidly development is a common trope to explain the staggering and eventual collapse of the Soviet Union, both from inside and outside the USSR.²⁴ Most interesting of all however, it that Mayer ultimately relies on globalism to absorb all of the previous blame that he named. Any form of extraction, capitalist or socialist, American, or Soviet or British or Chinese, is now the collective problem of the "global community." This analysis is not intended to discredit Mayer or the sincerity of what he thought the GCP could

²⁴ Recall Murray and Feshbach Jr's *Ecocide in the USSR*.

achieve. It is, however, intended to once again demonstrate that global environmental thinking and solutions are more complicated than the simple, usual frameworks of cooperation among international “friends.”

After Mayer’s remarks, it was time to introduce another special guest of the Global Classroom that day. Russell Schweikart, an American astronaut who flew in the Apollo 9 mission of March 1969, stood and gave his special keynote address to the GCP students that morning. Schweikart, often referred to as “Rusty” in the letters around the proceedings, was no stranger to spacebridge programming. As Velikhov fondly recalled when introducing him on the morning of Spacebridge Eight, Schweikart was a partner and collaborator in Velikhov and MGU’s early spacebridges of 1983. This time, Schweikart was recruited through the CEM, specifically the work of Sandra Lewis, the center’s director of development. Lewis, updating Schweikart on the GCP’s plan for a 1990 spacebridge back in February, envisioned Schweikart’s presentation to “include footage from space that points out the beauty and fragility of the planet/atmosphere.”²⁵ From his perspective as an astronaut, Schweikart could speak to experiencing dramatic visuals that put the planet and the degree of its impending degradation in stark visual perspective. Lewis wondered if Schweikart could show the students the size of the ozone layer relative to a feature on the Earth’s surface or what clearcutting might look like from space.

²⁵ Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records, 1990 – 2012. Series 1: Events, 1990 – 2012. Soviet Agreement with Tufts. Letter, February 22, 1990, Sandra Lewis to Russell Schweikart. UA228.001.002. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

Schweikart's keynote on April 21, 1990 mobilized his experience as an astronaut to convey the fragility of the environment. Displaying dramatic photos of the planet taken from space, Schweikart strongly continued to promote the importance of a global environmentalism. "We are all one family, all one life," Schweikart proclaimed. "We live within a single, highly interconnected biosphere. Furthermore, we are not only connected to one another, to each other spatially no matter what country we live in... we are also inextricably connected to all the people in the future."²⁶ Drawing off more than just his own experience in space to ground his dramatic encounters with the planet, Schweikart also quoted his "good friend", Soviet cosmonaut Major General Vladimir Shatalov. Shatalov was the Director of the Cosmonaut Training Center in the Soviet Union. A member of the famous 1975 Apollo-Soyuz joint mission wherein Soviet cosmonauts and American astronauts docked in orbit and allegedly marked the end of the space race, Shatalov belonged to another class of scientific celebrity from the bygone era of detente. Quoting his Soviet friend, Schweikart recalled Shatalov's experiences understanding the sheer importance of the ozone layer which buffers Earth from the "emptiness" of space. "The boundless blue sky, the ocean which gives us breath and protects us from the endless black and death is but an infinitesimally thin film", Schweikart quoted. "How dangerous it is to threaten even the smallest part of life."²⁷ Clarifying the nuances and solutions for this danger was now the task of the students and panelists for the rest of the day.

²⁶ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1990 . GCP VIII [Transcripts] 1990. UA027.001.001.00033. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA. 4.

²⁷ Ibid.

The structure of “The Environment and Our Future” was unlike any other spacebridge in that centered prominently on the student experience. Instead of featuring panelist opinions on student issues, it was time for the undergraduates to run the show themselves. As Sherwin himself put it, “The students at Tufts University and the Moscow Mendeleev Institute for Chemical Technology have been working all semester to construct a series of proposal not just to put out on the table, but a series of proposals for action.” These joint ‘proposals for action’ centered on three main categories: population, agriculture, and energy.²⁸ Instead of starting with direction from the panelists, each of the student leaders assigned to one of these three subtopics of environmental security stood and addressed the audience, getting the conversation rolling.

Vicki Dennis, a Tufts student and the leader of the student group on “overpopulation in developing countries” was the first student to stand up and direct the conversation. Dennis opened with the concept that “developed countries” (i.e., the US and USSR) should fund the activity of organizations such as International Planned Parenthood to educate and provide contraceptives to ‘developing societies’ (much of the general focus of the term ‘developing’ was used to describe countries in Africa). Most interestingly, Dennis argued that ‘developed’ nations are both responsible for and affected by the conditions of overpopulation in the ‘developing’ world. These conditions, Dennis reasoned, directly affected the security of ‘developed’ nations and the world as a whole. As

²⁸ Ibid, 5

a result, supplementary funding to aid NGOs could be taken from the defense budgets of countries such as the United States and Soviet Union.²⁹

Sergei, a second-year student at Mendeleev's ecological department, brought the issue of hunger and malnutrition to the table. Sergei cited "official data" that on average a half billion people suffer from chronic hunger while one billion suffered from chronic malnutrition.³⁰ He also echoed Vicki's idea that military spending (which he claimed to be a cumulative 900 billion USD globally in 1990) could be shifted with a change in attitude on the importance of military expenditures.

Senator Kerry responded to these students concerns with the sentiment that "population control is obviously at the root of all the problems that we face in the context of development."³¹ In his estimate, the global population was presently 5 billion, with some saying that it might double or reach 13 to 14 billion by 2020. For Kerry, the main difficulty around population policy in America was essentially political, with population program funding having "tragically" been caught in "the abortion issue." However, Kerry derived hope from a feeling of change in congress. When prompted by Sherwin to elaborate, Kerry referenced a global political climate of increasing calls for democratic representation (and the general dissolution of the Soviet Bloc). He gave the examples of Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Germany. In order, Kerry was thus referencing the impending free and fair federal elections held in Czechoslovakia in 1990 after the Communist

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Incorporate Brown University's 1990 Hunger Report. Estimates here seem to be different than Sergei's 'official data'

³¹ Ibid, 6.

Party of Czechoslovakia gave up power, the dissolution of the Polish United Worker's Party and the scheduled elections in Poland, and the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent reunification of Germany. Kerry also derived hope from the "attempt in China", a sure reference to the June 1989 Tiananmen Square protests.

Nikita Moiseev, in response to Kerry's thoughts on overpopulation, called for a "consensus" between "European technical civilization" and "Eastern traditional society" in order to slow current trends of growth. In response, a Tufts graduate student called for further discussion on the matter of consumption. Additional topics woven into this discussion involved an acknowledgement that ecological problems were "particularly acute" in the third world, the concession that technical issues are not derived from issues with technology but essentially "human problems", and greater accountability for governments to act in the face of ecological disaster (an example used by Kerry was the "Valdez Crisis at Exxon").³² After this set of comments, the structure that Sherwin laid out for the spacebridge collapsed and student questions with panelist responses took the conversation in a multitude of directions. Eventually the conversation came to touch on agriculture (after some intensive steering by Sherwin) through a discussion on biological fertilizers and chemical pesticides, and lightly trod on the matter of nuclear waste as a gentle way to broach the topic of energy. However, before ending on these structured, pre-ordained matters of discussion, spacebridge eight took a tangent following the relevant and potentially fraught topic of the

³² Ibid, 9, 10, 12

Soviet Congress of People's Deputies and the broad importance of "environmental literacy."

Throughout 1987 and into 1988, Gorbachev talked the government into holding free elections. By 1988, Gorbachev unveiled a restructuring of the system of soviets (direct, democratic club-like entities intended to govern local principalities that had, in concept, been the focus of governance since the 1917 revolution). Instead of these dated and essentially defunct representative bodies, Gorbachev announced that local interests would now be represented by a new political body, the Congress of People's Deputies. This directly elected body would subsequently select politicians to represent the whole of the Soviet Union in a representatively elected, restructured Supreme Soviet. This attempt to increase representation worked. Many Communist Party officials who went up for reelection in early 1989 were voted out of office. This turnover and pluralism resulted in calls for increase democratization, calls that Gorbachev answered in February of 1990 when he formally relinquished the Communist Party's political monopoly on the USSR.³³

Spacebridge Eight took a moment to directly address this major restructuring. After the conversation swerved, with John Kerry making a impassioned statement about the importance of government and corporate accountability in America, Sherwin took the opportunity to turn the moment back to the Soviet panel. "Now that you are in a process of transition," Sherwin began, "what kind of processes are being put in place to hold the Soviet ministries

³³ Stephen Kotkin. *Armageddon Averted* 76-77.

accountable through the Congress of People's Deputies?" Sherwin addressed his question to Velikhov and Yablokov, themselves representatively elected members of the Congress of People's Deputies as well as ministers of Gorbachev's.

Velikhov took this opportunity to respond.³⁴ "It's true that we are trying to control our government," he answered, much to the applause and amusement of the audience. He went on to discuss how, when the ministers of the revamped Supreme Soviet were appointed by the Congress of People's Deputies, "there were three of four of them whom we rejected because they were just ecologically illiterate."³⁵ Gesturing to Yablokov, Velikhov continued. "Now, next to me is a minister who was elected as a minister precisely because he was ecologically literate and the entire Supreme Soviet supported him." He continued to describe the USSR's impending reckoning with the "moral and political responsibility" of Soviet leaders and the "ecological disasters" that they brought upon the state, citing the Ministry of Water Resources and its frivolous canals and irrigation systems that were wastes of both government time and energy.³⁶

Environmental literacy continued to be the dominant theme of this lecture, but not before the proceeding could be interrupted by a commercial break. Roughly halfway into the broadcast, after a conversation on the need for a UN Environmental Security Council and other international bodies to regulate the environment, Sherwin interrupted the proceedings with a prompt, "we're about to experience a historic moment... this discussion is being interrupted for a Soviet

³⁵ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1990 . GCP VIII [Transcripts] 1990. UA027.001.001.00033. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA. 12.

³⁶ Ibid.

commercial...Capitalism is alive and well.” Before running the commercial for air filters designed by the Moscow Chemical Technology Institute, Velikhov quipped back at Sherwin, “Capitalism? Here comes capitalism!”³⁷

After this bizarre interlude, Anthony Cortese, Dean of Tufts’ Environmental Programs, came on the Boston stage to both audiences and panels for strategies and commitments on how to realize Tufts’ goal of incorporating “environmental literacy”, teaching faculty and students how to blend ecology with humanitarian values, mixing inter-generational and international connections. Cortese publicly appealed to MGU, Mendeleev, and Kazan State to all join Tufts in this effort to have “environmentally literate people who will go out and work in our professions.”³⁸ This call was received with a round of enthusiastic applause.

These proceedings are the essential summation of spacebridge eight. The rest of the time alternated between student questions and panelist comments. Whereas a clear structure for the lecture was envisioned, environmental literacy and sensational commercial transitions took the lecture on a course of its own.

While the spacebridge was certainly a success, it is important to recognize that this event was intended to work in tandem with another project, a series of collaborative student policy proposals for the upcoming September 9 Helsinki summit between Presidents Gorbachev and Bush. This document, born from collaborative work across the spring semester of 1990 and intensely focused on during the 1990 Spring Break trip to Moscow, is a potent window into the environmental values of GCP students and divisions across the GCP faculty.

³⁷ Ibid, 16.

³⁸ Ibid, 17.

The topic of countless letters and memoranda, “The Joint USSR/USA Plan for Improved Global Environmental Security” was to be a culmination of all the hard work of the environmental phase of the Global Classroom.³⁹ In terms of actual report content, the topics are vast, stemming from the population crisis and necessary aid programs to the formation of a United Nations Security Council, to safe and clean vehicles used in the Siberian oil industry to the creation of an electronic database of toxic industrial chemicals.⁴⁰ In the end, the big vision for this document, a presentation to Presidents Gorbachev and Bush seems to never have been realized. Regardless, the “Joint Plan” as it will be referred to going forward, is worth examining in detail due to its symbolism of different opportunities for the GCP’s various organizers.

Whereas faculty and students from Mendeleev carried the Joint Plan forward with uniform enthusiasm, the American side of the GCP held a multitude of opinions on the ideal future of this critical piece of work. By the end of April 1990, the Joint Plan had a thorough enough of a draft that Martin Sherwin, chiming back in on GCP matters after the successful run of spacebridge eight, encouraged the CEM faculty to hold a Washington press conference centered on the work of students up until this point. During the lecture, Sherwin had voiced to the audience the typical understanding that “these proposals will be finalized and mailed next week to Presidents Bush and Gorbachev in the hope, well indeed, the

³⁹ Letter, Pilgrim to Moomaw, Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records.

⁴⁰ Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records, 1990 – 2012. Events, 1990 – 2012. Soviet Agreement with Tufts. Letter, September 30, 1990, Joint USSR/USA Plan for Improved Global Environmental Security. UA228.001.002. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

demand that part of the conference be devoted to environmental issues.”⁴¹

Mobilizing the political power that the program had acquired over its past two years of action, the Tufts GCP team seemed to think that it could impose particular international political agenda. However, after the spacebridge on April 22, 1990, Sherwin had additional opinions on how to make this political power even more potent.

Sherwin suggested that by condensing the timeline of the document’s progress and shortening the Joint Plan to a simple two-and-a-half-page document, the plan could be a snappy little piece of work ready for big publicity. In Sherwin’s mind, a friend of the GCP, Massachusetts Senator John Kerry (a panelist at spacebridges six and just coming off of presenting amongst students at spacebridge eight), would chair this conference, engaging with mostly faculty and several students. Emphasizing that the plan was a student-written, internationally cooperative blueprint for environmental security, by its nature a product of the GCP characteristically ahead of its time, Sherwin encouraged Rick Wetzler to condense the document .⁴² Sherwin wanted the GCP staff to act quickly, building on the “Earthday and spacebridge momentum” and also “forc[ing] aspects of the global environmental security issue into the agenda for the upcoming Bush/Gorbachev summit.”⁴³

⁴¹ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1990 . GCP VIII [Transcripts] 1990. Transcript, April 22, 1990, Spacebridge Eight. UA027.001.001.00033. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

⁴² Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records, 1990 – 2012. Events, 1990 – 2012. Soviet Agreement with Tufts. Letter, April 29, 1990, Richard Wetzler to Bill, Hugh, Kate, Sandra, Tony. UA228.001.002. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

⁴³ Ibid.

At this point in time, the Global Environmental Series had already had a successful trip to Moscow and ran several notable spacebridges on topics ranging from the contemporary state of water to the environmental future. Things were going well, albeit with less vigor than before. Sherwin, in the manner which characterized much of the early, Nuclear-focused phase of the program, encouraged the Global Classroom Project to use its novelty to grab attention and manipulate international diplomatic agendas. Sherwin's wording (at least as it is funneled through and quoted by Wetzler) is bold and presumptive. For the Global Classroom to be able to "force" an agenda on the upcoming Helsinki summit that September, Sherwin has to assume that the program and its students are worth hearing. Also, clearly, Sherwin believed in the spacebridge format and environmental security topic as a culturally popular way of being heard. Other members of the Tufts GCP staff did not seem to share Sherwin's faith. There is no record of such a press conference, and the conditions under which the Joint Plan moved forward to an American audience is unclear. Reflecting now, Sherwin personally has no recollection of this document, the momentum once behind it so strongly seemingly lost to time.⁴⁴ The date on a finished draft of the Joint Plan is marked September 30, 1990, well after the planned date for the Helsinki summit.

Despite its presently ambiguous impact on the program, the USSR/USA Joint Plan for Improved Global Environmental Security can be considered an appropriate culmination of the program and the thought it promoted up until this point. Moving forward, the form of the program would go through several

⁴⁴ Martin Sherwin, Email to author, March 21, 2021.

dramatic shifts before fizzling out into a slow non-existence after the end of the Soviet Union and the rebirth of the Russian Federation. The Joint Plan is one of the last coherent checkpoints on the GCP's trajectory.

The Joint Plan opens with a list of acknowledgements to all of its contributors. Of the 52 students referenced, 42 were Americans and only ten are from the Soviet Union.⁴⁵ The reason for this uneven distribution of students is unclear. Were Soviet students less motivated by the aims of this aspect of the Global Classroom? Was it difficult to draw the interest of students after the main Soviet sponsor for the program shifted its focus? Was the Joint Proposal mainly an American initiative that, therefore, generally excluded Soviet students by default? There are potentially multitudes of explanations for this phenomenon.

The 'Acknowledgements' section of the Joint Plan is much more straightforward. Adorning this page is an array of names comfortably familiar to anyone with a knowledge of the GCP. In order, Cortese, Moomaw, then Sherwin are recognized as the American administrative team. Fenstermacher and Gassel, along with Sandra Lewis and Hugh Pilgrim, are acknowledged as staff support from the Tufts end. Additional names in the American Column include panelists Hon. John Kerry, Dr. Judith Kildow, and Russell Schweikart. Sponsor names include the US Environmental Protection Agency, Johnson and Johnson Inc. and the Trust for Mutual Understanding, a nonprofit American grant organization that funds exchanges and academic projects in Russia and Eastern Europe up to this

⁴⁵ Center for International Environment and Resource Policy Records, 1990 – 2012. Events, 1990 – 2012. Soviet Agreement with Tufts. Letter, September 30, 1990, Joint USSR/USA Plan for Improved Global Environmental Security. UA228.001.002. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

day. Lastly, the Global Classroom Project itself as listed as a form of sponsor. Nowhere is the Center for Environmental Management or the Nuclear Age History and Humanities Center directly accredited for this product. Instead, the Global Classroom has been considered its own entity. In the Soviet acknowledgements, there are several notable exclusions. For example, though Moscow State University is listed as a collaborating institution on the cover of the Joint Plan, no one from Moscow State is included in the acknowledgements - not even Evgheny Velikhov. Instead, Drs. Viktor Zhilin and Pavel Sarkisov, the Mendeleev administrators, and Alexi Yablokov are the most recognizable names that adorn the Soviet sponsors of the program (Natalia Tarasova is credited as an editor). Institutionally, Gosteleradio and the Mendeleev Institute are named as sponsors of the report (note the repeated exclusion of MGU), along with Goskompiroda (the Environmental Ministry of the Soviet Union).

This proposal is relatively lengthy, with sixteen pages of text and nearly as many in endnotes. It is certainly not the two-and-a-half-page document that Sherwin called for when he was attempting to organize his press conference. The ambitious, wide-ranging subject matter and student-focused mission are traits of the early GCP that the Joint Plan continued, whereas its clear preference of Mendeleev over MGU as well its clear dissociation from the staff of the first phase of the GCP (as well as never mentioning Jean Mayer) clearly delineate a clear institutional transition within the program. The Joint Plan appeared to mean more to the Soviet delegations than it did for their American counterparts. In 1990, the completed Joint Plan was presented by Minister Gennady Yagodin at

the Third All-Union Conference on Environmental Education in Kazan.⁴⁶ This conference, inspired by all of the work presented, culminated in the Soviet Action Plan on Environmental Education (1990-2005). Though it was adopted in 1990, this policy never came to fruition due to the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991. On the Soviet side of things, the Joint Plan was a document given time and energy by the Soviet government due to the Soviet minister of education's connection to Mendeleev and the GCP. This same support for the Joint Plan was not clearly reflected by Mendeleev's American counterparts. Despite all of this work and success, by the end of 1990, global trends shifted again, and it was time to leave the Global Environmental Series of the GCP behind. The final broadcast in the series, Spacebridge nine was an unprecedented program in both its organization and subject matter.

Spacebridge nine was an entirely different project than its predecessor. Natalia Tarasova took the reins, organizing the lecture with interested sponsors at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green Ohio. This lecture took place on April 20, 1991 was on the general topic of "Global Warming."⁴⁷

After this far-fetched spacebridge, it is clear that the original enthusiasm for the GCP is not as centered on the Tufts campus. Instead, interest in the program has spread itself out across many institutions, with students and faculty across the country wanting a piece of the GCP.

⁴⁶ Natalia Tarasova, Email to author, 3/21/21.

⁴⁷ "The Global Classroom Project: Internationalizing Education for the 21st Century." 1992. Courtesy of Martin Sherwin (currently in the possession of the author).

The Global Environmental Series, beginning in the spring of 1989 and ending after April of 1991, marked several areas of departure for the Global Classroom Project. For one, there is a shift in the makeup of the staff and institutions responsible for the maintenance of the project at Tufts. This shift from the Nuclear Age History and Humanities Center to the Center for Environmental Management reflects a greater cultural shift in popular concern away from Nuclear weapons and disarmament and towards the degradation of the biosphere. Financial and human resource support is just one proxy for cultural importance. Accompanying this transition in Tufts personnel and popular attention was also a shift in the Soviet sponsor institution, with the mantle being passed from Moscow State University to the Mendeleev Chemical Technical Institute (in a rather messy manner, indicating the potential presence of command economy expectations, institutional rivalries, and political implications). Despite the many disruptions that the Global Environmental Series brought to the GCP the Joint Plan for Improved Global Environmental Security shines through as a defining learning experience of the GCP in the Global Environmental Series.

Epilogue:
Neither Impossible nor Irrelevant

The Global Classroom Project lost steam after the Global Environmental Series. By the April 20, 1991 spacebridge on Global Warming, the program could no longer secure adequate funding. With the Soviet economy nearing collapse and only becoming tighter in all sectors, Gostelradio no longer had the ample funds to pay for their end of the satellite transmission. This not to mention the loss of supportive stipends that so many Soviet academics and intellectuals were going through. Finances were also tight in the US with a serious recession that cost American President George HW Bush a second term.

Sherwin turned to United Technologies, a large military contractor, to fund both the American and Soviet ends of transmission. The company would do so only if their involvement was properly advertised, and Sherwin was in frequent contact with Soviet partners at Gostelradio to make sure that the proper advertising was in place to ensure funding.¹

No longer was GCP neatly organized around curricular Tufts classes and regular exchanges. Instead, it became an ad hoc educational organization, fitting into pre-existing umbrellas of exchanges teleconferencing projects with pre-arranged parcels of funding. Though much in the world of the GCP changed, Sherwin stayed the same. He continued to bring the same enterprising attitude that

¹ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1987-1993. Gostelradio (R) 1987 -- 1993. Letter. February 12, 1991. Sherwin to Zhenevskaya. UA027.001.001.00047. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

he had to the previous two iterations of the project, pushing the GCP along as much as he could.

Working with World View videoconferencing as his new domestic transmission partner (there is no clear record as to why Sherwin stopped working with GBH), Sherwin contacted colleagues in the Sovtelexport division of Gostelradio to organize a new series of visits and videoconferences on the behalf Andrew Abrams, the President of World View. Writing to a Mr. Andrey Borodin, Sherwin attempted to recruit the Soviet national television station into a series of teleconferences on the medical industry and pharmaceuticals, linking several American cities with London, Paris, and Rome. This series of bridges was funded by Merck and company, a major international corporation manufacturing and selling pharmaceuticals.²

Clearly, as the new tone of these spacebridges indicates, things both in the climate of Tufts interests, but also in the realm of international diplomatic relations between the US and Soviet Union were changing. With a weaker Soviet economy and self-antithetical Communist Party reform underway, there were increasingly more avenues for American business interests to enter into newly available Soviet markets.

On November 2, 1991, the GCP had its penultimate spacebridge on “Democracy and a Free Press.” This program, originally intended to a whole new series of lectures, was a simple one-off event with the Moscow School of

² Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1987-1993. Gostelradio (R) 1987 -- 1993. Letter. Sherwin to Borodin. UA027.001.001.00047. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

Journalism.³ In addition to this satellite lecture, Sherwin brought several Gostelradio staff members by the names of Anatoliy Antanyuk, Rozaliya Moroz, Valentina Surnina and Emmanuel Pinut to Tufts to speak to students on the nature of the transforming Soviet press. In addition to these lectures however, this visit to the Tufts campus was also to discuss matters of future spacebridge planning.

Tucked within these late letters of Sherwin's continues to be big plans for the future of the GCP. During this visit, the five of these colleagues planned to discuss the creation of a retrospective video program summary of the Moscow-Boston spacebridge series, the potential of launching a spacebridge series to join communities in Israel and Palestine by satellite, and a spacebridge series with Dr. Joseph Valleriani, the Director of Social Studies at Medford High School to facilitate satellite broadcast programming for high school-aged students.⁴

As Sherwin planned for the future, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was coming to an end. After a long period of economic decline and the democratic jettison of satellite states in the name of reform, 1989-1991 saw a series of decisive events that brought an end to the USSR. In 1989, Boris Yeltsin won election the Congress of People's Deputies by a landslide margin. By May of 1990, Yeltsin was popularly elected as the chair of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Republic of People's Deputies. In March 1991, Yeltsin added a second question of a Gorbachev-created referendum ballot to create a presidency for the Russian republic. In June 1991, Yeltsin was enthusiastically elected to this new

³ Nuclear History and Humanities Center Records, 1987-1993. Gostelradio (R) 1987 -- 1993. Letter. Sherwin to Moroz, Solnina, Antanyuk. UA027.001.001.00047. Tufts University. Digital Collections and Archives. Medford, MA.

⁴ Ibid.

position. As historian Stephen Kotkin has recounted, this effectively left Moscow with “two presidents”, one with parliamentary legitimacy (Gorbachev) and the other with popular legitimacy (Yeltsin).⁵

After unfavorable treaty negotiations on the fate the Union and its satellite states was reached by mid-summer, a group of top Soviet officials (the heads of the KGB, army, police and other enforcement bodies) approached Gorbachev at his home in Crimea and asked him to declare martial law. Upon being denied by Gorbachev, this small group of high-up Soviet leaders formed an eight-member State Emergency Committee to “uphold the integrity of the Union” and confined Gorbachev to his home in Crimea. Meanwhile, Soviet tanks rolled onto the streets of Moscow and seized control of the capitol.⁶

Eventually the disorganization and infighting amongst the members of the Emergency Committee led the military coup to be called off. Once Gorbachev returned to ‘power’ after the putsch, the state of his office was severely limited. Yeltsin publicly argued with Gorbachev about the state and effectiveness of the Communist Party. Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia quickly left the Union. After the additional formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States between Yeltsin’s Russian Republic, Ukraine, and the newly renamed Belarus (formerly Belorussia), Gorbachev was ready to step down. On December 23, he met Yeltsin and agreed to cede his power. On the December 25, 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved, and the red, white and blue banner of the Russian Federation flew

⁵ Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*, 97.

⁶ *Ibid*, 99.

above the Kremlin. The Soviet Union was gone, a confused new Russia in its place.

One more Global Classroom Project spacebridge occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union. On April 4, 1992, students from Tufts, Harvard, Columbia, NYU, Yale, Hunter College and Brooklyn College flocked to the economic and social council chamber of the United Nations in New York City, wired for satellite transmission. The topic of the day was “Russia’s Economy Recovery.” Many Soviet Institutions crowded into the auditorium in Moscow. MGU’s economics department, the Belman Moscow Technical Institute, the Russian Academy, the Mendeleev Chemical Institute and, finally, the International University. This final university, the first private university in Russia, was under the rectorship of Gennady Yagodin, former Soviet minister of higher education and good friend of the GCP. The Moscow panel was chaired by Evgheny Velikhov, now simply a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Andrey Kokoshin, an old organizer of the GCP who had travelled to Tufts early on in the program to organize the proceedings also sat on the panel again, this time in his new post as the Deputy Defense Minister of Russia. The American panel contained Dr. Padma Desai, the leading economic analyst of Soviet agricultural economics, was joined by the Russian Ambassador to the UN, a Fletcher graduate now working in policy planning for the US State Department, and two businessmen, both from financial sponsors of the transmission.⁷

⁷ Hale and Dorr, an international law firm and author of the fledgling “East-West Executive Guide” was one financial donor with a representative on the panel. The other was United Technologies International, the military contractor who would later go on to merge with Raytheon Technologies.

Throughout the lecture, the anxiety of both participating parties is palpable. When given an opportunity with the microphone, Russian students are quick to speak of the “crisis conditions” that they are currently living through. Velikhov tacitly called for government help bail out Russia universities and academics, struggling to scrape by without the presence of their pensions. Occasionally, the conversation dipped into rather spirited disagreements on the nature and importance of US aid to the new Russia. One Russian student, irritated at bold American attitudes that they will come in and teach the Russians something new metaphorically retorted, “the Russians might borrow a wheel, but it has to be a Russian wheel.”⁸ Many of the Russian students were more vocal than their predecessors had been at any point in GCP lectures leading up to this point. Additionally, many Russian students, more than any previous session, asked their questions of panelists in English, some even doing so in a heavy accent or clipped manner. The symbol of speaking English was now that important.

This rather solemn lecture, meditating on uncertainty, ultimately closed with a call for Americans who “look at [Russians] on television and wonder what things are like” to “come and see.”⁹ Ultimately, though riddled with disagreements and peppered with encroaching interests, this final iteration of the GCP had proven the program’s capacity to foster real dialogue that robustly engaged the complex political issues of the contemporary moment. Furthermore,

⁸ “The Global Classroom Teleconference on Russia’s Economic Recovery”, *Fletcher Russia and Eurasia Program*, YouTube.com. Published on July 16, 2019. Accessed May 17, 2021. <https://youtu.be/8bpMJDnPgak>. 1:07:49

⁹ Ibid, 1:52:00.

students seemed genuinely engaged and invested in one another. Yale University students referenced a recent trip to Moscow they had taken and wished passionate ‘privyet’s to many of their Russian ‘friends.’

In many regards, the intended interpersonal connection granted through satellite transmission across the world worked, bonds (perhaps not with individuals but more with the familiar idea of ‘Soviet/Russian’ and ‘American’ student) had helped this group of students and educators across the world navigate unprecedented change together. As Evgheny Velikhov indicated in his opening remarks, “In our sessions of the Global Classroom, I think we have generally become friends today...but during that time, I must say, a great deal has changed in the world.”¹⁰

The dissolution of the Soviet Union resulted in aftershocks that reverberate today. There are two however that are of particular importance to the story of the Global Classroom. First, it is worth noting that it was *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and the eventual dissolution of the Soviet Union that established the field of “Global Cold War History.”

James Hershberg, a GCP TA who studied under Martin Sherwin for his PhD in history from Tufts, remembers the Global Classroom in sequence with a number of other telling academic conferences in his book chapter, “The End of the Cold War and the Transformation of Cold War History: A Tale of Two Conferences, 1988-1989.” Hershberg places particular importance on an October 1988 conference in Athens, Ohio wherein young Soviet academics broke the

¹⁰ Ibid, 03:23.

historical party line established by their older colleagues, refuting the Stalinist era claim that the Korean War started in 1950 as a result of troops crossing the 38th parallel from the south.¹¹ In Hershberg's view, this conference and disagreement made it clear "that *glasnost* had extended beyond domestic Soviet history to encompass controversial topics related to foreign policy...one could no longer blithely speak or think of Soviet or Russian cold war historians collectively rather than as individuals."¹²

By late 1989, with anti-Communist revolution spreading across Eastern and Central Europe, it became clear that the intellectual climate surrounding the study of the Cold War was changing. With the collapse of the USSR in December 1991, the floodgates opened. With unprecedented access to Soviet archives and scholarship, a new, *global* study of the Cold War became the norm.

Whereas previous scholarship could approach the issue all from English-language sources, given limited academic resources, such behavior was no longer acceptable. New initiatives such as the Cold War International History Project at the Wilson Center in Washington, DC took it upon themselves to explore the diplomatic history of the 20th century from a variety of perspectives based on newly accessible archives not only in Russia, but in the former Soviet Bloc and China as well. Unprecedented historical awareness and intellectual community was being formed.

¹¹ James G. Hershberg, "The End of the Cold War and the Transformation of Cold War History: A Tale of Two Conferences, 1988-89," in Mark Kramer and Vit Smetana, eds., *Imposing, Maintaining, and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain: The Cold War and East-Central Europe, 1945-1989*, Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), p. 536.

¹² *Ibid*, 538.

Global Cold War History was not the only new intellectual movement taking off at the end of the 20th century. Accompanying the end of the Cold War was increased consciousness on the state of the environment. The international cooperation that defined the environmental movement of the late 20th century was born out of the diplomatic and global thinking created by the conditions of international nuclear conflict. For example, scholars have attributed the rise of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1989 to the growing optimism and cooperation that accompanied the fall of the Berlin Wall and anti-Communist revolution throughout Central and Eastern Europe.¹³ Recall the example which opened this examination of the Global Classroom, James Hansen's famous appeal to US congress on climate change occurring the same month in which the INF treaty was ratified. This is not a coincidence. With confidence in global efforts to curb the nuclear arms race, and a younger generation of environmentally minded individuals coming of political administrative age (e.g. Bill Moomaw), the major planetary problematic shifted between 1987 and 1992, slowly but surely.

In the early 1980's, the nuclear arms race was the chief concern of Soviet-American relations. By the early 1990's, pollution, limited water supply and climate change had taken over this role. Instead of being an innocuous shift to a "safer" topic of diplomatic discussion, these conversations were just as politically charged. Due to events such as the Chernobyl disaster of 1986 and public addresses such as Mikhail Gorbachev's 1987 speech in Murmansk, environmental

¹³ Caitlin E. Werrell and Francesco Femia, "The Thirty Years' Climate Warming: Climate Change, Security, and the Responsibility to Prepare." *Climate Change* XX, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 2018), p. 24.

calamities were locked in-step with nuclear issues by the mid-1980's. They carried comparable political weight and are thus handled with the same internationally cooperative framework.

When understanding this transfer of framework clearly, one understands that this is not a simple story of the rise of global activism. “Global Environmentalism”, like “Global Denuclearization” before it, served to recenter power along the Superpower axis of the United States and Soviet Union. Placing diffuse blame on the globe for issues largely stemming from either the US or Soviet Union, there is a use of narrative control that can be used to simultaneously exclude the Global South from “environmentalism” while also allowing for the most prominent perpetrators of military-industrial pollution to employ a savior narrative. Despite these subtle, unintentional intellectual structures that resulted from the GCP, this should not overshadow the fact that, at the basic human-to-human level, the project is representative of a profoundly specific period of humanist optimism.

After a period of tense international conflict that embroiled the planet in intense political and environmental stagnation, Gorbachev's rise to power in 1985, accompanied by the “new thinking” of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, offered a sudden period of opportunistic opening. For a brief period, few to no people knew what would come next in international or environmental politics.

The Global Classroom Project is a direct product of this moment. In order for the GCP to become what it was, a number of factors had to align just so. In addition to the unprecedented shifts in global contexts, Tufts itself was an

institution looking for change, to make a name for itself. In many regards, Martin Sherwin and Jean Mayer were just the right people at the right time to bring this sort of greater vision to Tufts University. Furthermore, the intellectual climate was just right from 1988-1992 for this sort of educational project.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was no longer the same degree of interest in Soviet studies, the mystique of the “dangerous Soviet other” lost. Additionally, the mass opening of archives and sources in the Soviet Union in the 1990’s made for the subject matter of the GCP to become much more commonplace. During its moment however, the coursework of the GCP was relatively unprecedented, using historical methods to investigate everything from the Manhattan Project to role of aid in the “developing world.”

Finally, the role of spacebridge technology as the medium of the Global Classroom should not be understated. Throughout the 1980’s spacebridge technology allowed common citizens in countries across the globe to meet and engage with another, see each other’s faces and hear the voices belonging to those faces. Spacebridge programs were popular ways to broadcast everything from rock concerts to petty conversation, to lectures on unprecedented topics. From the 1980’s until the mid-1990’s, spacebridge was the cutting edge. All of this factors, just at this right moment, gave the Global Classroom Project a sense of incredibly novelty and importance that justified all of the time, energy, risk and money poured into it.

After 1992, with the Russian economy in shock and the political situation increasingly uncertain, a profound wave of immigration, usually to the ‘West’,

deprived Russia of its academics and intellectuals. As Sherwin recounts, he probably knew more Russians from the GCP in America than were left in Russia by the mid-90's. It was this loss of personnel, and accompanying loss of enthusiasm that brought the Global Classroom Project, a fascinating chapter in the history of Tufts University and undergraduate citizen diplomacy, to an end.

As James Hershberg reflects upon it now, the GCP happened exactly when it was supposed to, “a couple of years earlier and it would have been impossible.... a couple of years later and it would have been irrelevant.”¹⁴

¹⁴ Conversation with James Hershberg, January 15, 2021.

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