



EXAMINER/KIM KOMENICH

Tom Boellstorf, Bay Area gay activist and editor of *Tema*, a Soviet gay publication, uses his Mac in Moscow.

Famed Mac ad came true

Apple computer did eventually help smash 'Big Brother'

By Carla Marinucci
OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

S EVEN YEARS ago, Apple Computer Inc. stunned the ad world with a futuristic commercial called "1984," which introduced the Macintosh to the world.

The spot showed a runner with a sledgehammer smashing a drab world ruled by "Big Brother." It carried one enduring message: the power of information.

This year, the prophetic commercial became reality, in the Soviet Union.

Those who played key roles in the Soviet revolution of 1991 say that, indeed, it was the Mac — in private homes, offices and tiny desktop publishing enterprises — that served as the technological sledgehammer to help smash the coup efforts and spread word of a democratic resistance.

Soviet President Mikhail Gor-

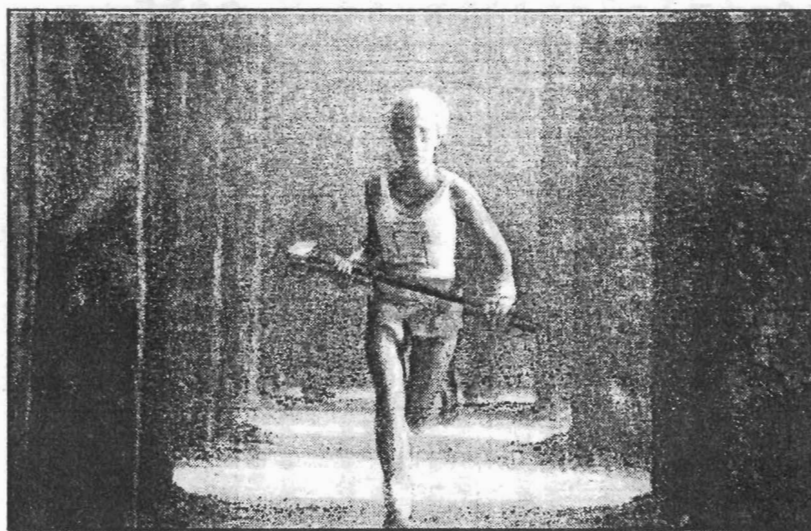
batchev has a Macintosh, as does Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin. Other Soviet Mac users include Abel Aganbegyan, former senior economic adviser to Gorbachev, and Evgenii Velikov, another top Gorbachev aide and a fellow board member with Apple Chairman John Sculley on the International Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity.

"The Mac has been at the leading edge of some profound sociopolitical movements in the Soviet

Union," says Roger Macdonald of San Francisco's Interlegal Network. Macdonald was responsible for selecting and outfitting Macintoshes and laser printers for Yeltsin and Aganbegyan.

"We always believed once you have enough of a (computer) network . . . you could no longer reverse the democratic process," says Henry Dakin, whose namesake Dakin Inc. is in South San Francis-

[See ADVERTISING, C-5]



Apple's legendary "1984" Macintosh ad: How prophetic it proved to be!

◆ ADVERTISING from C-1

Legendary Mac ad came true

co and who donated thousands of dollars in Macintoshes and related equipment to democratic groups in the Soviet Union. "This was the first real test we had of it."

The intriguing question now: How much will Apple use its marketing expertise, advertising and goodwill for public relations to maintain its Soviet edge?

While there are "vastly more" IBM PCs and clones in the Soviet Union in business enterprises, Macintoshes are favored by "innovators and leaders of social movements... because they are the be-all and end-all in user friendliness," says Macdonald, a specialist in Soviet political and technological issues. "You can teach yourself how to use it. The database and desktop

publishing capabilities are profound, even in the hands of a novice... and you can print in Cyrillic magnificently."

Among groups that used Macs during the coup are:

► Foundation for Social Innovations, a nonprofit group outfitted in part by Dakin with 10 Macs throughout its offices in 17 Soviet cities. The group networked information by Mac via electronic mail, fax and modem throughout the U.S.S.R. and published information on nonviolent resistance during the August crisis.

"We looked upon it as a window to the world," says Nellie Gregorian of the FSI Moscow office, "especially during those three days when we were isolated from everything."

► Interlegal Research Center, a group of independent lawyers and journalists dedicated to the development of democracy in the Soviet

Union. Its related organization, Postfactum, is one of the Soviet Union's largest independent news services.

The groups, headed by Nina Belyaeva, compiled information from Yeltsin's camp inside the Russian Parliament building. They used Macs, connected with San Francisco offices through E-mail, fax and modem, to distribute coup information to U.S. and international news organizations and then to Radio Liberty — heard by millions worldwide, including the captive President Gorbachev.

► Tema, a Soviet gay publication headed by Roman Kalinan, 24, of Moscow, and assisted by Tom Boellstorf, a 22-year-old activist from the Bay Area. The two collected information at the Russian Parliament building, entered it in their home Macintosh LC, printed it out and distributed it "to people in the streets and even soldiers in the tanks," said Boellstorf.

The work — on equipment donated by the Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission of San Francisco just two weeks before the coup — continued covertly even as independent publications were declared illegal.

► Moscow News, whose printing presses were closed during the coup. It used Macs, also donated by Dakin, to compose an emergency newspaper handed out on the streets during the coup.

► Sov-Am Teleport, the San Francisco group that has provided a major electronic communications link between the U.S.S.R. and the West. It used Macs in both Moscow and San Francisco to trade information between Mac users. Glasnet, another major communications link for nonprofit organizations, also used Macs for similar purposes.

With all that activity, observers say, now it may be a perfect time for Apple to nurture the relationships between some of the top So-

viet thinkers and its Macintosh to gain a competitive edge in the future.

Macdonald says it is would be appropriate, first, for the company to reassess its advertising to trumpet its role toward change in the Soviet Union. Unlike Pepsi, which used the demise of the Berlin Wall for advertising purposes, Apple's role in the Soviet democratic movement "was very substantial, very real," he says. (Company officials say they haven't considered any advertising related to the August events.)

Macdonald has already approached company officials to also consider donations and sales agreements with key Soviet groups and nonprofits on the leading edge of change.

"When you plant the seeds for intellectual freedom and innovation, those seeds can't help but have a great crop of rewards," says Macdonald. "Apple understood this when they hooked up a genera-

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tion of California schoolkids with their product, and they're still reaping the benefits."

Some observers of the company, however, doubt that will happen soon, since the Soviet market is still perceived as a risky one, even for Apple, a company that likes to think of itself as leading-edge.

"The problem is that Apple used to consider itself the opposite of the big corporate bureaucracy," says one public relations expert, "and now, it has become one big corporate bureaucracy."

But Sculley has always had a deep interest in the Soviet Union, and so far, says Macdonald, Apple officials "are certainly taking a fresh look because of the dramatic change in circumstances that the coup brought about."

"What's beginning to dawn on them," McDonald says, "is you can still have profit and principal at the same time... that being a visionary and earning money are not, by any means contradictory."