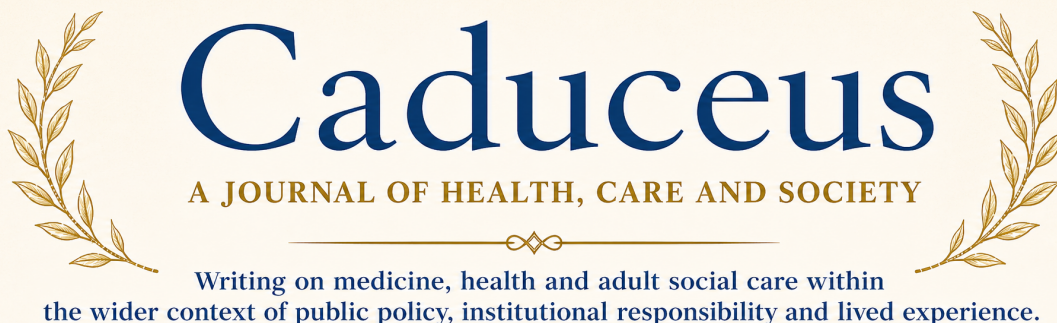




A Personal Account of the Early Development of ISO 9000 Quality Management in the USSR and Russia

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A historical record based on personal recollection and surviving contemporaneous correspondence

Prepared July 2026 Purpose and scope

This account records my recollection of a sequence of events beginning in the mid-1980s and continuing into the 1990s concerning the possible application of BS 5750 and ISO 9000 quality-management principles to Soviet and later Russian industry.

I do not claim that I personally introduced ISO 9000 to the USSR or Russia. The subsequent development and adoption of quality-management standards involved many people and institutions. My part was to identify a possible application of the developing quality-management approach to a problem I believed I had observed in Soviet industrial production, to communicate that idea through people who understood the Soviet institutional system, and to remain involved in later discussions with Lloyd's Register, Soyuzexpertiza and British organisations concerned with standards and certification.

The names Michael Pudaloff and Michael Barratt in the surviving record refer to the same person. In this account I use my present name, Michael Pudaloff, while retaining the name Michael Barratt where it appears in contemporary documents.

TECMA and the instruction to 'light a few fires'

In the mid-1980s I worked for TECMA, a joint Soviet-Australian company. The Chief Executive was Vadim Efremov. He later held a senior position in the USSR Chamber of Commerce.

Mr Efremov asked me, in broad and characteristically memorable terms, to 'light a few fires'. By this I understood that I should identify Soviet industrial technologies, equipment and processes which might have commercial potential in the Australian market.

I examined a number of Soviet technologies and industrial products. My impression was mixed. Some of the underlying technologies appeared innovative and, in certain cases, highly imaginative. However, I was often disappointed by the final products. The technical idea did not always seem to be fully realised in the manufactured result. This led me to become interested in the gap between technical innovation and the quality of the finished product. I did not conclude that Soviet scientists or engineers lacked ability. Rather, I began to wonder whether quality was being lost during the passage of an idea through very large and complex industrial organisations.

The freight-container problem and Lloyd's Register in Melbourne

One practical matter concerned Soviet freight containers. Containers were being used to transport goods to Australia and could then be returned empty to the USSR. I began to consider whether the containers themselves might be certified and sold in Australia rather than shipped back empty.

This question took me to the Melbourne offices of Lloyd's Industrial Register. During that visit I saw an advertisement on the office wall concerning the developing ISO 9000 quality-management approach, based on the British BS 5750 standard. I asked the manager to explain the standard to me.

The explanation produced what I can only describe as a Eureka moment.

My understanding was that the system did not concern itself only with inspection of the finished product. I saw it as a sequence of goods or services in, a controlled process, and goods or services out. This applied not only to the organisation as a whole but also to the boundaries between departments, workshops, stores, technical offices and administrative functions.

In simple terms, each department head, or a delegated person, could identify and document what the department received, what it did, and what it was required to pass to the next part of the organisation. The process could then be examined, rationalised, documented and made reproducible.

I immediately thought of the great industrial behemoths of the Soviet Union. If quality was being degraded between design, stores, workshops, purchasing, administration and production, then a system that forced each part of the organisation to define its inputs, processes and outputs might help identify duplication, irrational procedures, delay, defects and loss of quality.

One afternoon, I had seen a pattern that I thought might be useful.

Dr Tikhanov and Vadim Efremov

Vadim Efremov had by then returned to Moscow. I shared my thoughts with Dr Tikhanov, the USSR Trade Representative in Australia and a very good friend of Mr. Efremov. In my view, Dr Tikhanov was the key lynchpin - the hinge in the transmission of the idea. He understood the Soviet institutional environment and was able to judge whether the possible application of a quality-management system to Soviet industry was worth communicating further.

Vadim Efremov possessed the seniority, influence and institutional position necessary to advance an idea of this kind. My role was to see the possible pattern and application. Dr Tikhanov provided the crucial link into the Soviet system. Mr Efremov had the position and authority to help move the idea forward. The initiative was therefore collaborative. It should not be described as the work of one person.

The Lloyd's Register documentary record, 1987-1989

A Lloyd's Register telex dated 21 December 1987 records that a meeting had been held at Lloyd's offices at 71 Fenchurch Street, London, and states that the meeting had been arranged at my request. The telex records that TECMA had been approached by the USSR to investigate the possibility of Lloyd's Register certifying engineering equipment manufactured in the USSR for export. The equipment listed included freight containers, welded steel static storage tanks and packaged gas-turbine generating sets.[1]

The same telex states that the 'central theme' of Lloyd's revised container certification scheme was manufacturers' quality assurance. In relation to storage tanks, Lloyd's requested details of fabricators' quality-control procedures and proposed the preparation of a quality plan showing inspection hold points. It also proposed surveillance at suppliers' works, witnessed testing and examination of material and dimensional checks.[1]

These documents show that the discussion had moved beyond inspection of an isolated finished product. It was addressing manufacturers' quality assurance, factory procedures, quality-control systems and documented quality plans.

In January 1989 Lloyd's Register wrote to me under the name Michael Barratt concerning a memorandum I had prepared entitled 'Lloyd's Operations in the USSR - A Personal Viewpoint'. The letter stated that points raised in my memorandum reflected discussions held in Moscow with senior Soviet industrial figures, including Mr Efremov, and referred to the improvement of product quality and the introduction of quality into factory procedures.[2]

I recall Mr A. Sokolov as part of the Lloyd's Register technical and certification machinery associated with the Soviet work. The January 1989 Lloyd's correspondence copied Mr A. Sokolov. Lloyd's also had a presence in Nikolaev, now Mykolaiv, Ukraine. In practical terms, technical representation on the ground was necessary if discussions about certification and quality assurance were to be translated into industrial practice.[2]

The transition from the USSR to the Russian Federation

The collapse of the Soviet Union changed the institutional and commercial environment in which the work was taking place. The original problem I had perceived - the gap between innovative technology and the quality of the realised product - remained, but the context increasingly concerned the development of certification systems in the Russian Federation and their relationship with international standards.

I had direct contact with Soyuzexpertiza. This was not simply an organisation later mentioned to me by the British Government. I was directly involved in discussions concerning its possible commercial development and the establishment of ISO 9000 programmes in Russia.

Moscow, October 1993, and Soyuzexpertiza

I was in Moscow during the constitutional crisis of October 1993 and the storming of the Russian White House. I returned to Moscow from a business trip on 1 October and stayed at the Intourist Hotel. I later published an eyewitness account of those events in The Moscow Times in September 2013.[3]

On my first day back at work after the storming of the White House, I visited the offices of Soyuzexpertiza, situated in the USSR Chamber of Commerce complex near the Kremlin. I held talks with Mr Mironov and another colleague.

We discussed the commercial position of Soyuzexpertiza and the need to avoid, in effect, 'running with the hare and hunting with the hounds'. The potential difficulty was that an organisation could face a conflict of function if it both certified Russian or former Soviet industrial entities to ISO 9000 quality-management requirements and at the same time undertook inspection, conformity-assessment or certification work in relation to foreign goods entering Russia.

The possible solution discussed was to separate these functions. One activity would concern the development and certification of Russian or former Soviet organisations to ISO 9000 requirements. The other would concern the conformity assessment, inspection or certification associated with foreign goods entering Russia.

Such a separation could help preserve the institutional credibility of the certification process. It also had a clear commercial advantage: the work associated with foreign goods entering Russia offered the potential to generate foreign-currency income.

The discussion therefore concerned more than the promotion of a quality standard. It concerned the commercial and institutional architecture of certification in the rapidly changing post-Soviet economy - including independence of function, credibility and the need for a commercially sustainable source of income.

British Government correspondence and ISO 9000 programmes in Russia

On 1 December 1993 the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Technology, Patrick McLoughlin MP, wrote to the Hon. Nicholas Soames MP concerning correspondence from me. The Department of Trade and Industry described my proposal as one 'to assist a Russian certification body to establish ISO 9000 programmes in Russia' and specifically referred to my proposals regarding Soyuzexpertiza.[4]

The DTI letter explained that the Department had been largely responsible for promoting BS 5750 in the United Kingdom, describing it as the national equivalent of ISO 9000. It also drew attention to the European Community TACIS programme and a project concerning the modernisation and commercialisation of standards, testing and certification in Russia. The stated objectives included assisting Gosstandart in integrating Russian standards with international standards and making testing and certification more commercial and ultimately self-supporting.[4]

The DTI also referred me to RESOURCE (Science & Technology Expertise) Ltd, a body supported by the Department and established through a joint initiative involving the DTI and the British Standards Institution. The letter stated that RESOURCE was actively pursuing the TACIS project with the European Commission and the authorities in the Russian Federation and suggested that RESOURCE would welcome discussion of areas of mutual interest with me.[5]

In October 1995 RESOURCE wrote to me concerning the 'TACIS Project on Standards and Certification in Russia and the Ukraine'. The Deputy Director sent me, strictly in confidence and for my personal use, a copy of the project's terms of reference and invited my written comments.[6]

The surviving correspondence therefore records a continuing line of involvement: from the Lloyd's Register discussions of 1987 and my 1988 memorandum on Lloyd's operations in the USSR, through

direct work concerning Soyuzexpertiza and ISO 9000 programmes in Russia in 1993, to confidential consultation concerning the TACIS standards and certification project in 1995.

The organisational idea

The central idea that interested me was simple. A large organisation can contain able people, good science and innovative technology and still produce a disappointing result if quality deteriorates during the passage of work through the organisation.

I saw the quality-management approach as a way of forcing the organisation to ask, at each internal boundary:

What do we receive?

What are we required to do with it?

How do we know the process has been carried out correctly?

What exactly do we pass to the next department, workshop or office?

My interest was not primarily in the certificate itself. It was in whether documented and rationalised internal processes could reduce the loss of quality, duplication and inefficiency between parts of a very large industrial organisation.

Later evidence from Russian manufacturing

In 2015 Veronika A. Vynaryk and Aoife Hanley published a Higher School of Economics working paper entitled 'Effects of the QMS ISO 9000 Certification on Russian Manufacturing Companies'. The study used a sample based on the 2009 monitoring of the competitiveness of manufacturing industries and applied propensity score matching to compare certified and uncertified Russian companies.[7]

The authors' principal finding was that possession of an ISO 9001 certificate by a Russian manufacturing company stimulated profitability and reduced costs, although it did not lead to increased sales or asset turnover.[7]

The paper described ISO 9000 implementation as potentially initiating the elimination of unproductive activities and the reduction of waste, defects and reclamations. It stated that business-process rationalisation could avoid duplicated operations, loss of resources and excessive costs.[7]

In reporting its results, the study found that costs per rouble of sales decreased. The authors linked this to stronger discipline, rationalisation of resource use, continuous monitoring and early action to eliminate defects. They concluded that the standardisation and documentation of operating procedures led to increased productivity and that the observed cost reduction reflected more efficient use of productive resources.[7]

The authors further concluded that the positive internal effects were most likely connected with the restructuring of internal organisational processes in accordance with ISO 9001 requirements. The most perceptible changes were increased profitability and reduced production costs.[7]

These conclusions closely resemble the potential I believed I had seen many years earlier in Melbourne: not simply better inspection of a finished object, but improvement in the internal passage of work through an organisation.

Certification and the danger of formal compliance

The 2015 study also identified a problem that became increasingly important as ISO 9000 certification spread. It referred to stakeholder distrust arising from formal implementation of quality-management systems and dishonest certification practices. In such circumstances the existence of a certificate could cease to be accepted as reliable evidence of genuine quality.[7]

This distinction is important. A quality-management system can be used to examine and improve real organisational processes. It can also become a formal exercise in documentation and audit. The existence of procedures and certificates does not, by itself, prove that the underlying system produces quality. The question is therefore whether a system genuinely produces quality or merely demonstrates procedural compliance.

Subsequent harmonisation of Russian and international standards

After my direct involvement had ended, the relationship between Russian standards and international standards continued to develop. Russian national standards increasingly incorporated or harmonised selected international standards within the GOST and GOST R framework.

In 2013 Rosstandart stated publicly that it planned to increase harmonisation between Russian national standards and International Standards to as much as 70 per cent and was working on Russian-language versions of existing ISO standards.[8]

The later history should therefore not be understood simply as ISO replacing GOST. A more accurate description is selective harmonisation and incorporation of international standards within the Russian national standards system, alongside continuing use of ISO certification.

As of 2026, the Russian Federation, through GOST R, remains listed by ISO as a full member body. The wider geopolitical environment has profoundly affected many Western commercial and technical relationships with Russia, but the formal ISO membership relationship has not been completely severed.[9]

Summary of my role

I do not claim to have invented ISO 9000 or to have introduced it single-handedly to the USSR or Russia.

My recollection is that, while working for TECMA and examining Soviet technologies and products for possible introduction into Australia, I became concerned by the gap between innovative ideas and the quality of some finished products.

A practical question concerning Soviet freight containers took me to Lloyd's Industrial Register in Melbourne. There I saw an advertisement concerning the developing ISO 9000 and BS 5750 quality-management approach and asked for an explanation. I recognised a possible application to the internal processes of the very large Soviet industrial organisations I had encountered.

I shared the idea with Dr Tikhanov. In my view, he was the crucial hinge in its transmission. Vadim Efremov possessed the institutional authority and position to help advance the project. Lloyd's Register supplied technical and certification expertise. Mr Sokolov formed part of the practical

technical and certification machinery. Soyuzexpertiza provided a Russian organisational base with which I had direct contact and in relation to which I later proposed the development of ISO 9000 programmes.

I remained involved through discussions with Lloyd's Register, Soyuzexpertiza and later British organisations concerned with Russian standards and certification. The contemporary correspondence records this involvement.

My part began with a practical problem and an observation: a technically good idea can be degraded as it passes through a large organisation. One afternoon, I saw a pattern that I thought might be useful. I passed the idea into a network of people who had the knowledge, relationships and authority to take it further.

Chronology

Date	Event
Mid-1980s	Worked for TECMA, a joint Soviet-Australian company. Vadim Efremov asked me to 'light a few fires' by identifying Soviet industrial technologies, equipment and processes with potential in Australia.
Mid-1980s	A practical freight-container question led me to Lloyd's Industrial Register in Melbourne. I encountered an advertisement for the developing ISO 9000/BS 5750 quality-management approach and recognised a possible application to Soviet industrial processes.
Mid-1980s	Discussed the idea with Dr Tikhanov, USSR Trade Representative in Australia and a close friend of Vadim Efremov. I regard Dr Tikhanov as the crucial hinge in transmission of the idea.
21 Dec 1987	Lloyd's Register telex records a London meeting arranged at my request concerning possible certification of USSR-manufactured engineering equipment for export and refers to manufacturers' quality assurance and documented quality-control arrangements.
1988-1989	Prepared 'Lloyd's Operations in the USSR - A Personal Viewpoint'. Lloyd's replied in January 1989, referring to discussions in Moscow with senior Soviet industrial figures and the introduction of quality into factory procedures.
1-4 Oct 1993	Present in Moscow during the constitutional crisis and storming of the White House; later published an eyewitness account in The Moscow Times.
Oct 1993	On my first day back at work after the storming of the White House, visited Soyuzexpertiza in the Chamber of Commerce complex near the Kremlin and discussed commercial and institutional separation of ISO 9000 certification for Russian/former Soviet entities from conformity or certification work associated with foreign goods entering Russia. The latter also offered foreign-

	currency income.
1 Dec 1993	DTI correspondence formally described my proposal as one to assist a Russian certification body to establish ISO 9000 programmes in Russia and specifically discussed Soyuzexpertiza.
13 Oct 1995	RESOURCE sent me confidential terms of reference for the TACIS Project on Standards and Certification in Russia and the Ukraine and invited my written comments.
2015	Vynaryk and Hanley reported that ISO 9000 certification in Russian manufacturing was associated with increased profitability and reduced production costs and linked these effects to rationalisation, monitoring, standardisation and documentation of internal organisational processes.

Summary

The institutional landscape has continued to develop since the early 1990s. Russia now possesses established structures for standardisation, technical regulation and conformity assessment, operating alongside its continuing participation in international standardisation. The harmonisation of Russian and international standards, which formed part of the technical and commercial discussions of the early post-Soviet period, has remained an important element of standardisation policy. This process has also developed within the wider framework of interstate and Eurasian technical regulation, where common standards and conformity-assessment requirements are used to reduce technical barriers and facilitate trade between participating states.

The subsequent development of ISO-based management-system certification, together with the continuing harmonisation of national, interstate and international standards, suggests that the underlying issues were not passing concerns. The circumstances are therefore very different from those encountered immediately after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, when knowledge of ISO 9000 certification was still developing and Russian organisations were seeking a greater understanding of Western certification practice and international recognition.

Source notes

[1] Lloyd's Register Industrial Division, telex dated 21 December 1987, subject: inspection by Lloyd's Register of equipment manufactured in the USSR for engineering export. Surviving personal papers of Michael Pudaloff.

[2] Lloyd's Register, letter dated 11 January 1989 to Mr M. Barratt concerning 'Lloyd's Operations in the USSR - A Personal Viewpoint by Michael Barratt'. Surviving personal papers of Michael Pudaloff.

[3] Michael Pudaloff, 'My Eyewitness Account of White House Attack', The Moscow Times, 25 September 2013.

[4] Patrick McLoughlin MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Technology, Department of Trade and Industry, letter to the Hon. Nicholas Soames MP, 1 December 1993, concerning Michael Barratt's proposal to assist a Russian certification body to establish ISO 9000 programmes in Russia and proposals regarding Soyuzexpertiza.

[5] Department of Trade and Industry continuation letter, 1 December 1993, referring to the Institute of Quality Assurance and RESOURCE (Science & Technology Expertise) Ltd.

[6] R. J. Peacock, Deputy Director, RESOURCE (Science & Technology Expertise) Ltd, letter to Michael Barratt, 13 October 1995, 'TACIS Project on Standards and Certification in Russia and the Ukraine'.

- [7] Veronika A. Vynaryk and Aoife Hanley, 'Effects of the QMS ISO 9000 Certification on Russian Manufacturing Companies', Basic Research Program Working Papers, Series: Management, WP BRP 39/MAN/2015, National Research University Higher School of Economics, 2015.
- [8] International Organization for Standardization, interview with Rosstandart leadership concerning the 36th ISO General Assembly, 2013; Rosstandart stated its intention to increase harmonisation between Russian national standards and International Standards to as much as 70 per cent.
- [9] International Organization for Standardization, ISO Members listing and ISO in Figures 2025. Russian Federation - GOST R - listed as a member body.

Documentary basis

This account combines personal recollection with surviving correspondence from Lloyd's Register, the United Kingdom Department of Trade and Industry and RESOURCE, together with a later Russian manufacturing study and the published Moscow eyewitness account. Where a statement concerns personal discussions or recollection not fully recorded in the surviving correspondence, it is presented as personal recollection rather than as an independently documented fact.

