

A FUTURE FOR SOCIALISM IN THE USSR?

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The fate of socialism is linked to the crisis in the USSR, the first nation to profess socialism as an ideal. But as the Soviet Union prepares to drop "socialist" from its name,¹ it is opportune to inquire whether there is a future for socialism in the USSR. Whether we think so, however, depends in part on whether we think it had a past. "Actually existing socialism" — we need a new term, perhaps "formerly existing socialism" — is not socialism as historically understood, for example, by Marx, involving a democratically controlled economy and a state subordinate to society. The Soviet system is not socialist in this sense but is essentially Stalinist, both in its historical origin and its character, involving a command economy and a dictatorial state.²

The Stalinist system forfeited its moral authority by repressiveness and lost its economic legitimacy by unsuccessfully competing with the West on the consumerist grounds that favour capitalism instead of the democratic ones that favour socialism. Having delivered neither prosperity nor democracy, it is in disintegration. Socialism in the USSR would thus require not reclaiming a lost revolutionary achievement, for, despite the early aspirations of the Bolsheviks, the USSR was never socialist, but a systematic transformation of society, not a restructuring (perestroika) but a revolutionary reconstruction.

In a crisis situation prediction is speculative, but the short-term prospects for a socialist reconstruction of Soviet society, in the classical sense of the term, are slim. Such a project finds support in some sectors of an increasingly organized and mobilized working class, at least in the Slavic republics, but Soviet workers are sharply divided along ethnic and national lines. Moreover, socialism is not on the agenda of the main groups struggling for mastery in the Soviet elite. Gorbachev's programme of perestroika appears to have run its course as he turns to force to maintain the Union against nationalist separatism. The increasingly dominant liberal intelligentsia, rallying around Boris Yeltsin in the Russian Republic, are explicitly pro-capitalist. But the split in interests between the working class and the new middle classes as well as growing centrifugal nationalism

threatens a liberal capitalist reconstitution of Soviet society as much as a socialist one. To many Soviets, political deadlock, civil war, and authoritarian nationalism seem more probable for the present than either a socialist or a liberal outcome. Any happier resolution of the crisis will have to overcome these tendencies.

Stalinism versus Socialism

Given the current doubts in the USSR and elsewhere about whether "socialism" has any definite meaning, it is worthwhile to explain why that sense fails to apply to the USSR. Both analytical clarity and the prospects of the left require a sharp distinction between Stalinism and classical or Marxist socialism. This distinction has a long tradition on the non-Stalinist left and is widely echoed in the USSR today. Most of the leading Gorbachev supporters interviewed by Stephen Cohen and Katrina vanden Heuvel in 1989 agreed that the Soviet system was not socialist.¹ No society fully lives up to its ideals, but the USSR was at best an authoritarian welfare state. If we say it was "backward" or "deformed" socialism, we will need a new term for what Marx meant.² While noncapitalist because it abolished private property in the means of production, Stalinism is closer to what Marx dismisses as "crude communism", a "levelling down to a preconceived minimum", an "abstract negation of the whole world of culture and civilization".³

The essential features of the Soviet system were constructed by the Stalinist bureaucracy in the 1930s.⁴ They involved: (1) a single party dictatorship, in which all public life was dominated by a Party bureaucracy and (2) a command economy, in which decisions about production and investment were made by bureaucratic fiat. Rather than being the expression or result of workers' self-rule, the establishment of the system was due, as Soviet economists Nikolai Shmelev and Vladimir Popov argue, to the dominance of the Soviet bureaucracy, a stratum whose interests "directly opposed [the] interests" of the workers and peasants, as shown by the tremendous resistance broken only by forced collectivization and the Great Terror of the 1930s. "The command-administrative system", Shmelev and Popov argue, "was the logical way for the bureaucracy to develop, given the absence of effective control from below".⁵ In an isolated and relatively backward country, lacking strong democratic traditions, and where a militant but extremely small working class had been decimated by civil war, the bureaucracy was able to impose Stalinism as a noncapitalist crash modernization programme.

Contrast this to Marx's socialism, not out of deference to the Master's Voice but to undermine the Soviets' claim to Marx's legacy and because the ideal of socialism has, to this day, no more powerful proponent. With respect to politics, Marx gave the party no special

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role (much less a monopoly one) in a socialist society. [¶] He was deeply suspicious of state power. He opposed

set[ting] the state 'free'. . . as in Russia. Freedom consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate to it, and even today forms of the state are more or less free to the extent that they restrict the 'freedom of the state'.[¶]

Rather than creating an omnipotent dictatorship, the workers' state, in Marx's account of the Paris Commune, would "amputate" the "merely repressive organs of the old governmental power" [the army and the police], returning its "legitimate functions" to the responsible agents of society, democratically elected and modestly compensated. "Nothing could be more foreign to the spirit of the Commune to supersede universal suffrage by hierarchic investiture,"¹⁰ i.e., by the principle of nomenklatura or bureaucratic rule which underpins Stalinist politics.

With respect to economics, Marx does suggest wresting "by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie. . . centraliz[ing] all instruments of production in the hands of the State. . ." But given his view of the revolutionary state as "the proletariat organized as ruling class",¹¹ the proposal is best read as urging extensive workers' control rather than Stalinist nationalization. Abolition of markets, moreover, is not mentioned in the list of suggested measures in the Manifesto; market relations among worker-controlled enterprises are consistent with Marx's account of "the first phase of communist society" (usually identified with socialism).¹² Even in the "higher phase", where commodity production is supposedly abolished, Marx advocates not economic administration by bureaucratic diktat but

that socialized man, the associated producers, govern the human metabolism with nature in a rational way, bringing it under their collective control instead of being dominated by it as a blind power, accomplishing it with the least expenditure of energy and in conditions most worthy and appropriate for their human nature.¹³

Rather than having a bureaucratic state seize the surplus and hand out wages and welfare benefits, finally, Marx insists on workers' control of the social product (capital) as well as of production. The workers themselves deduct from this investment funds, "general costs of administration", and funds "for the common satisfaction of needs. . . and for those unable to work", and finally individual means of subsistence.¹⁴

The picture is of "an association of free men, working with the means of production held in common, and expanding their. . . labour power in full self-awareness".¹⁵ It is a picture and not a model (which is badly needed¹⁶), but the picture imposes constraints on any model which might be called socialist. These include three main features:

(1) a democratic, decentralized state in which the working class is politically dominant, and (2) workers' control of production, and (3) democratic control of investment. It is difficult to imagine anything further from the Stalinist system.

Whether classical socialism, so understood, is possible or likely is an open question. Neoliberal triumphalism to the contrary, history has pronounced judgment on Stalinism, but socialism has not failed because it has not been tried. Some may worry (or hope) that this defence consigns socialism to the museum of utopian ideals, condemned by **Marx's** own insistence that "Communism is not. . . an ideal to which reality [will] have to adjust itself [but] the real movement which abolishes the present state of affairs.""

Now my topic is the future of socialism in the USSR, not the future of socialism in general. But were I to address the larger topic, I would discuss working class movements, which time after time, in periods of upheaval throughout the world, reproduce, often without theoretical rationale, the democratic structures of workers' control which, despite his animadversions against "ideals", are **Marx's** ideal: from the Paris Commune of 1871, through the Russian soviets of 1905 and 1917, the workers' committees of the general strikes in Seattle in 1918 and San Francisco in 1934, the British general strike of 1926, the communes of Republican Spain in 1936-39, to the workers' councils of Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968, the Solidarnosc of 1979-81, and the Soviet miners' committees of 1989. A revolutionary class, **Marx** writes:

finds the content and material for its own revolutionary activity directly in its own situation: foes to be laid low, measures dictated by the needs of the struggles to be taken; the consequences of its own deeds drive it on. It makes no theoretical inquiries into its own task.¹⁸

On the historical record, such spontaneous strivings are clearly insufficient for socialism. While traditional vanguardism on the Leninist model is bankrupt, some sort of conscious organization and leadership would be required; what sort, no one knows today. Nonetheless the historical record offers some support for **Marx's** claim that the working class has the potential to be such a revolutionary class with the aspirations to and interests in collective self-rule he attributed to it, even if it could not attain these ends alone, without the active support (and without actively supporting) the aspirations of other oppressed groups.

A Future for "Socialism"?

Even in the Soviet Union, the term "socialism" has been tainted by its appropriation by Stalinism. The language of Marxism suffers today,

in Eastern Europe and to an increasing extent in the USSR, under an even stronger anathema than it does in the capitalist democracies. This lethal legacy in time may fade, particularly if the emergent capitalism in the East is of the predatory third world variety and living standards in the West continue to decline. The collapse of Stalinism may allow a renewal of socialism, finally free from Stalin's shadow. A renewed socialist movement might not call itself Marxist, but that is for the best. "Whatever may be the scientific value of a doctrine," Victor Serge remarked, "from the moment it becomes governmental, interests of State will cease to allow it the possibility of impartial inquiry [and] lead it . . . to exempt itself from criticism."¹⁰ Marxism's strength is as a critical theory of society; a socialist movement will be better served if it stays that way.

But socialists must face the possibility that the term "socialism" is not just tainted, but, like "Communism", irremediably poisoned. That does not mean the end of the socialist project if Marxist theory correctly identifies major sources of capitalist instability and class-based tendencies towards collective self-rule. The project depends not on the appeal of a theory but on the reality and power of the tendencies the theory identifies. But if the terms and theory are unusable for political reasons (rather than because they are empty or false), socialists would be in the position of the English peasant revolutionaries of 1381, of whom William Morris wrote:

. . . I pondered. . . how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes it turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name. . .¹¹

It is too soon to tell whether this is the fate of "socialism" as a term or Marxism as a theory; if it is, socialists will have to rediscover all the insights of the tradition under "another name". This would be extremely difficult. Just now we have no other name. "Democracy", a current favourite candidate among post-Marxists and ex-socialist radicals,¹² is at present too vague and theoretically underdeveloped. Today those who aspire to the kind of collective self-rule which is the traditional goal of socialists face the choice of explaining either why what they want *isn't* socialism or why *Stalinism* wasn't socialism. In both cases they must explain *what* they want. On the principle of not kicking away the ladder while we are climbing it, I take the latter choice. Socialism requires a reformation, doubtless. But after all, Luther still called himself a Christian.

The Character of Perestroika

At the beginning of 1991 it appears that Gorbachev's programme of

perestroika has failed. The programme has been abandoned in all but name by all the main elements in Soviet society, including Gorbachev himself. An analysis of the prospects for socialism in the Soviet Union, if any, therefore calls for an examination of the course of that programme as history. We may consider the situation from above and from below. First, the perspective from the Soviet elite. Here the struggle has developed in three distinct phases: (1) the battle for perestroika, (2) the disillusionment of the intelligentsia, and (3) the rise of the neoliberal "radicals".

The first phase was the articulation of perestroika. It lasted from Gorbachev's appointment as CPSU General Secretary in 1985 to the special 19th Party Conference in 1988.²² In this period Gorbachev and the reformers went to battle with the conservatives in the bureaucracy, i.e. defenders of the Stalinist system as it matured under Brezhnev, over his developing reform programme. Gorbachev was the leader of the "Thaw" generation of Soviet leaders who came to maturity under Khrushchev, hating the crimes and brutality of Stalinism but hoping for a progressive revitalization of a modified Soviet system. Seeking, and initially finding, support among the Soviet intelligentsia, these leaders saw perestroika as a renewal of a Soviet system cleansed of the excesses and irrationalities of Stalinism, a return to "Leninist roots", particularly the "market socialist" Lenin of the New Economic Policy. (Lenin himself considered the NEP a sort of state capitalism.²³) In 1989 Gorbachev adviser Alexander Yakolev told Cohen and vanden Heuvel that the alternative to perestroika is "the death of socialism".²⁴ Most of their other interviewees agreed.

There is little doubt that Gorbachev and (in this phase) the reformers sincerely saw themselves as defenders of something they called socialism. But so did Stalin and his epigones. We cannot take such professions at face value. If Stalinism was not socialist, how socialist was perestroika? Consider each of the main components of the programme: glasnost and "democratization", new thinking in foreign policy, and economic reform.

The glasnost component of the reform programme, while in part a step towards liberal democracy, also pointed towards socialism in allowing the relatively unfettered self-organization of popular movements and organizations and vastly increased freedom of speech and the press. These are necessary though not sufficient conditions of socialism from below. If socialism is workers' self-rule, there is no socialism without freedom of assembly and the press. Gorbachev's liberalizing steps in this direction led to an explosion of at least 30,000 "unofficial" civic organizations,²⁵ although they did not go far enough, and reluctantly abandoned the "leading role of the Party" in March 1990 only under the pressure of the collapse of East European

Communism.

The socialist character of Gorbachev's foreign policy, however, is doubtful. Gorbachev's goals of disarmament and nonintervention are commendable from a socialist perspective. Traditionally socialists oppose militarism and support self-determination. Stalinism broke sharply with these policies in all but name. But the Soviet abandonment of erratic and cynical support for national liberation in the third world, notably in Nicaragua and South Africa, indicates that the "new political thinking" is a continuation in a different key of the Stalinist doctrine of "socialism in one country", i.e. pursuit of perceived Soviet national interest, not socialist internationalist interests.³⁰ The point is reinforced by Soviet acquiescence to US pressure for withdrawal of Vietnam from Cambodia in the face of a possible Khmer Rouge return, and more recently, Soviet accommodation to the US military action against Iraq.

There should be no misplaced nostalgia for the era of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, support for murderous regimes like Mengistu's Ethiopia, and extensive participation in the international arms trade. But unprincipled and unsocialist as the old Soviet policy was, its effect was to create a space where poor nations might attempt to organize their affairs at some distance from the domination of multinational capitalism, a space which has now largely vanished. The "new thinking" cannot be regarded as socialist.

Most importantly, the economic component of perestroika was more liberal than socialist.³¹ These proposed reforms sought to break the bureaucratic logjams blocking economic growth and to motivate an apathetic workforce by the undemocratic imposition of market mechanisms from above. The main reforms advocated by economic advisers Abel Aganbegyan, Tatyana Zaslavskaya, and later, Leonard Albakin, included extensive privatization, unemployment as a means of labour discipline (that is, to make workers work harder), wider income differentials to overcome "a psychology of levelling", i.e. solidaristic egalitarianism, and reduction in social programmes.²⁸ Market mechanisms are not necessarily **unsocialist**,³¹ but the key aspects of Gorbachev's reforms involved an attack on working class benefits with only a promise that increased growth would trickle down.

This was called "social justice",³⁰ but whatever relation it has to justice, it is not socialist.³¹ A minimal requirement for a socialist programme is that it promote working class interests and working class self-organization. Desultory **introduction** of workplace elections for managers gave workers no real say over the direction and tempo of the changes and none at all over the disposition of the social product, which remained in the hands of bureaucratic managers. In Marxist

terms, the reforms would have meant increased exploitation of the working class.

The 1988 Party Conference was the high point of the first phase, when Gorbachev appeared to have won Party agreement to his programme. It is now clear that this was illusory at least in the crucial economic sphere. Gorbachev had a free hand in foreign policy and glasnost, once announced, was irreversible. But the economic changes were not systematically implemented. In part this was because the bureaucracy was able to block implementation of economic reforms by inaction and countermanding of changes, however many Brezhnevites Gorbachev removed from the Politburo.

The main obstacles seem to be at the lower levels of the bureaucracy; the two best known high-level "conservatives", former Party ideology chief and agriculture secretary Yegor Ligachev and former Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzkhov, were not advocates of the old system but of a more gradual change to a "regulated market economy", i.e., of an earlier version of perestroika, the programme, essentially, of the 27th Party Congress from 1986. Of the two, Ligachev is the more conservative, an advocate of something like Andropov's reform programme of moderate perestroika and little glasnost. And neither were more able than Gorbachev to implement the reforms they saw fit. Perestroika thus never really happened.

As the pseudonymous cold warrior "Z" summed it up, "the half-reforms introduced so far have unsettled the old economic structures without putting new ones in their place".³³ At the 28th Party Congress the head of the State Planning Commission, Yuri Maslykov, agreed: "At present centralized state planning, which was the **lynchpin** of the command system, has been [largely] destroyed. . . [and] has lost its determining role in the functioning. . . of the economy." The result was a steady deterioration of already poor economic performance in a context of rising unrest partly occasioned by glasnost. According to (inflated) official statistics, growth in the gross national product, after rising from about 3.2% in 1986 to 5.6% in 1988 dropped **below zero** by 1990; CIA figures are even more bleak, indicating a drop from 4% growth in 1986 to **-2.3%** in 1990, while the Washington consulting firm **Planecon** estimates an increase in inflation from about 4% in 1986 to 10% in 1990.³⁴ Perhaps 15% of the Soviet population, around 48 million people, lives below the absurdly low official poverty line of 75 roubles a month.³⁵

That perestroika failed does not mean that the Soviet system was unreformable. As the *Economist* observes, "paradoxically. . . the Soviet Union has not yet proved that economic reform cannot work", because it has not been tried.³⁶ While some reform programme might have worked. Gorbachev's was doomed to frustration because it

embodied contradictory goals. The basic problem is that reform in either a capitalist or a socialist direction would require dismantling the domination of the Party apparatus over Soviet society, but Gorbachev wanted to retain a cleaned-up version of bureaucratic rule. In the end he could not have it both ways.

In a capitalist trajectory, Gorbachev might have retreated from the Party to the state, pursuing a more radical version of Andropov's programme of imposing market reforms by force. Here he might have adopted the role of a Soviet Pinochet, advocated (as I discuss below) by some of the radical intelligentsia. This would have required strict limits on democratization, particularly in rights of popular organization and independent unions, while permitting the intelligentsia the freedom to discredit Stalinism. But his commitment to glasnost prevented this; and he counted on popular support to overcome bureaucratic resistance.

In a socialist trajectory, Gorbachev might have redeemed the promise of the October Revolution, handing over the farms and factories to the workers' and peasants' soviets while dismantling the apparatus of Party-state control. But he apparently believes that the CPSU really is the repository of the socialist project. His late and reluctant abandonment of "the leading role of the Party" (in March 1990) shows that he suffers under the limits of his background as an apparatchik. He is a reforming, even a visionary bureaucrat, but a bureaucrat nonetheless and not, despite his self-image, a socialist. Doubtless this is not just a psychological limitation but an expression of the stratum he represents. The upshot was deadlock, immobility, and failure.

The Disaffection of the Intelligentsia

The failure of economic perestroika led to the second phase: increasing disaffection with socialist goals and ideals among the intelligentsia. The extent of disaffection is indicated by Yuri Bandara's *Moscow News* article mocking the hopes (shared by that journal) of the 1986 27th Party Congress on the eve of the 28th Congress in 1990. "Four years later", *Moscow News* asked the Soviet reader, "how much of your former self remains?" (It is not impossible that this is a conscious echo of Reagan's 1980 election slogan, "Are you better off today than you were four years ago?")

A younger generation of managers and intellectuals became increasingly vocal in their admiration for capitalism as a model of a working economy and "normal, -civilized society", as the popular catch-phrase goes. Writers like Alexander Tsytko, until recently with the ideological department of the CPSU Central Committee, asked openly, "Is it worth risking the fate of the country. . . of perestroika,

for a couple of words ['communism' and 'socialism'] which have long since become absurd?" At a December 1989 conference on socialism he criticized Marx for "wanting to subject the logic of the economy to morality", as nice a statement of the basic impulse behind socialism as there is.³³

Tsytko may be extreme in his overtly Thatcherite advocacy of "the older, time-tested values" of "neoconservatism, neoliberalism, bypassing social democracy" but he is not alone in rejecting socialism, even if others prefer Western European social democracy. (Among the Soviet intelligentsia, however, as among those of Poland and Hungary, Thatcherism and Reaganism are probably more popular than these ideologies are in their home countries.) The chief Soviet philosophical journal, *Voprosy Filosofii*, has begun a serialized translation of the Austrian economist Friedrich A. von Hayek's 1944 *The Road to Serfdom*, a text which defends the idea that any government intervention in the economy leads to Nazism or Stalinism.³⁴ The economist Nikolai Shmelev became famous for "Shmelev's law", which states that "Everything which is economically efficient is moral."³⁵

Together with liberal journals like *Ogonyok*, the weekly Moscow News, formerly the flagship of perestroika, became a leading voice in the disillusionment with socialism and the romance with 19th century liberalism, regularly publishing articles which would do justice to Milton Friedman. The emigre Valery Chalidze, who lives in Vermont, but evidently not in the United States, writes on the issue of "socio-economic rights", to, e.g., a job, a place to live, or medical care:

In free enterprise societies, the individual is free to take care of himself. . . Unfortunately many people would impose the socio-economic rights doctrine on the free enterprise society, thus violating other fundamental civil rights. . . ; compell[ing]. . . those who provide for themselves, to deny themselves certain things in order to provide for the poor. . . To a certain extent this exists, but it is public philanthropy. One should not regard this philanthropy as a socio-economic right."

The disaffected initially found political representation in the Congress of People's Deputies in Andrei Sakharov's Inter-Regional Group, comprised largely of reforming bureaucrats like Yeltsin, liberals and radicals. A social democrat rather than a neoliberal, Sakharov had given up on socialism in any sense in the mid-1970s.

It's clear that the Soviet intelligentsia and the younger managerial elite have come to identify socialism with the historical aberration of an anti-society that was inefficient at everything but repression. Conversely they identify democracy with liberal capitalism. The image of capitalism they have is rosy, to be sure. Russians "have not gone through a phase of rationalizing" and "freed themselves. . . from a mythological perception of reality", journalist

Heksei Kiva writes, and so "give preference to rather unrealistic but grandiose plans over undertakings which are modest but actually feasible".⁴² She is speaking of the October Revolution, but the point applies to the magical picture of capitalism favoured by many Soviet intellectuals. The Yugoslav philosopher Mihailo Markovic suggests that they have accepted the simplified picture of 19th century *laissez faire* capitalism presented in (old) Soviet propaganda and merely reversed the value signs: they had said it was bad, now they say it is good.⁴³

But it's not at all clear why this should be. After all, they did not accept the propagandistic picture of the Soviet system as democratic. Why would they accept that it was socialist? A different conception of socialism, together with a sharp critique of authoritarian bureaucracy could be found in the writings of Marx, which were widely available to Soviet citizens. (One might wonder why Marx's writings were not suppressed as "anti-state propaganda", which indeed they are.)

This question has not been posed either by those who celebrate the phenomenon or those who mourn it. By contrast, the "apostasy" of ex-leftist anti-Communist Western intellectuals has received considerable attention.⁴⁴ Yet such an attitudinal shift surely calls for explanation. If we reject that proposed by the intelligentsia themselves, that they have simply recognized the truth of the Western anti-communists' critique of socialism, six factors seem relevant in the intelligentsia's disillusionment.

1. The success of the bureaucracy in appropriating an appallingly distorted version of the vocabulary of Marxism (official Marxism-Leninism) as a justification for the system. The failure of the system then worked, by *modus tollens*, to discredit Marxism and its socialist goals. The successful appropriation may be attributed partly to a stultifying system of indoctrination at every level of education, in which people were forced to regurgitate obviously dishonest material from textbooks of catatonic dullness and to confine their intellectual work to the limits set by official ideology.⁴⁵ (The masochistic might try to read some official Marxism-Leninism just to see why the intelligentsia might find it useless.)

Creative, original texts of Marxist theory were not used in this education, and the best Marxist work from the West was banned because of its critical attitude towards the USSR. Nor was creative Marxism permitted within the USSR. It is significant that from the 1920s until recently Soviet Marxism made no contribution whatsoever to the flourishing of Marxist theory in the 20th century. Boris Kagarlitsky is one of the few significant Soviet Marxist theorists since Trotsky. The writings of Marx were indeed available, but the citizenry was inoculated against their effect. Thus when Gorbachev spokesman

Gedenny Gerasimov told editors of the conservative *National Review* in 1990 that resistance to perestroika was due to the fact that "Some people read too much Marx", he was in error: Marx is little read in the USSR.

2. The adoption of consumerist values in the place of democratic ones, as mentioned before, which highlights Western capitalism's strength. By consumerism I mean measuring the quality of life merely in terms of material wealth and security, by the quantity of goods one has. Material well-being *is* important, but socialism emphasizes the democratic value of collective self-determination *as well*. (Liberal capitalism confines this value to politics and delegates it to professionals.) Rather than offering Marx's "free association of producers" with the spiritual and (perhaps) material benefits of self-organization in economic as well as political matters, the Soviet system's ideologues offered increased material wealth in exchange for autonomy, a similar tradeoff to that presented to the majority in advanced capitalist societies, although with far less autonomy and a lower although more secure level of material well-being.

Clearly the Stalinists were operating at an ideological disadvantage, and the extensive censorship which prevailed under the old system about conditions in the West suggests that they knew it. The offer nonetheless worked to some extent as long as the low standard of living rose through the early-mid 1970s. But with the onset of economic stagnation in the late 1970s, when growth rates fell from 8.9% (inflated official figures) in 1966-70 to 4% in 1981-83,⁴³ to below zero today, the USSR began to lose the ideological cold war. The failure of Khrushchev's promise to "bury" the West under an avalanche of toothbrushes, razors, nylon stockings, and tinned foodstuffs was traced correctly to bureaucratic centralization, the "command-administrative system". The intelligentsia identified the command economy as the differentia of a system which is neither democratic nor capitalist, hence, by elimination, socialist. (This is a false dichotomy.)

3. Another source of disillusionment was the repeated failures of attempts to reform the economic system from Khrushchev to Kosygin to Gorbachev *himself*.⁴⁷ This raises doubts about the viability of a system that they identified as socialist, and thus of the socialist ideal itself. Tsytko himself says that communism died ideologically under *Brezhnev* — not under *Stalin*.⁴⁸ Sociologically this is inaccurate, as demonstrated by the intelligentsia's enthusiasm for perestroika in the first phase of the struggle. But the retrospective revision of the ideological shift supports the idea that it was the system's resistance to change that helped to subvert the appeal of socialist ideals.

Despite all the cynicism about official Marxism-Leninism and the

bureaucratic dictatorship, however, commitments that were broadly socialist retained their hold on both reformers and some dissidents until quite recently. Even the young Solzhenitsyn (of *Caner Ward* and *The First Circle*) and the Sakharov of *Progress*, *Coexistence*, and *Intellectual Freedom* framed their critiques in what were in some sense socialist terms, as Roy and Zhores Medvedev always have. The non-dissident intelligentsia, like Yegor Yakolev, editor of *Moscow News*, or Fyodor Burlatsky, ideologist of Khrushchev's *Thaw*, are very recent converts to liberalism.⁴¹ Even Tsytko, while insisting on the continuity between Marx's socialism and Stalin, argued in late 1988 that Marxism and "our socialist practice" could be freed from Stalinist "deformations", which he attributed in part to a "Rousseauist and not the Marxist view of man".⁴² What explains the timing of the current, drastic abandonment of aspirations on the part of the intelligentsia to restore (as the perestroichiki saw it) or to create "socialism with a human face"?

4. The "ideology of perestroika", in particular Gorbachev's abandonment of class analysis for what he calls "universal human values", had the unintended effect of paving the way for the adoption of self-described bourgeois values. Class analysis was not helped by the official representation of Soviet state policy as identical to the interests of the working class. Interviewing Yuri Prokofyev, a Moscow city Party official, Yegor Yakolev remarked, "I can't see how to link. . . a teaching of class struggle with the priority of human values." "It is not correct to give preference to any class or stratum of society," replied Prokofyev, "Human values come first."⁴³ Gorbachev's intent was doubtless to affirm humanism and human rights in the face of official lawlessness carried out in the name of "class values" — in reality, the values of the bureaucracy — but the shift provided an Archimedean point for the ideological abandonment of working class interests.⁴⁴

5. More deeply, there is the social position of the intelligentsia as a new middle class whose interests are distinct from those of the working class.⁴⁵ Whatever its defects, the system created a large, educated middle class. In 1987, 21 million Soviets had a higher education, up from 1 million in 1939.⁴⁶ These people are not bourgeois, but they might hope to become bourgeois, and they certainly wish to enjoy the material and other benefits and opportunities which their counterparts do in the West. It is not surprising if, losing hope that the system will enable them to do this, they adopt an ideology that they expect will further their interests, as well as happily coinciding, as they see it, with "universal human values".

I do not mean to suggest that this is a cynical choice: people cannot choose their beliefs and values in such a calculated way. But

people who are not fanatics will revise their ideas if their aspirations are not met, and the new middle class aspires to a way of life available to people like them in Western capitalist countries. Little if anything in the Soviet system works to promote a solidaristic identification of the intelligentsia with the working class that would lead to a belief that only socialist democracy can offer a decent life for *all* citizens, workers and intellectuals alike. Official propaganda which decreed such solidarity has the opposite effect, if anything.

6. Most immediately, the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, and Eastern Europeans' rejection of a third way, i.e., socialism rather than Communism or capitalism, spurred the disaffection considerably, leaving Soviet intelligentsia feeling that they were saddled with an unworkable, outmoded system. (In Eastern Europe, Communism suffered under the additional ideological burden of being an unpopular imposition by a hated foreign power; this may contribute to the pro-capitalist turn in that region.²²) Gorbachev's foreign policy of reversing the Brezhnev doctrine, and maintaining nonintervention in the affairs of former Soviet satellites, a policy which was a major factor in the Eastern European revolutions, thus undermined his own hopes for what he took to be socialist renewal there and at home.

Radical Accession and the End of Perestroika

These factors contributed to the third phase, the accession to power of the Soviet "left". In a politically astute move, the disaffected intelligentsia have appropriated the designation "left", excluding socialism in the classical sense from a political spectrum where the "right" defends some version of the existing command-administrative system. The "left", who are pro-market right-wingers in Western terms, are more accurately called the "radicals".²³

In the March 1990 municipal elections, radical coalitions swept city council elections in Moscow and Leningrad, free marketeers Gavril Popov and Antoly Sobchack respectively taking the mayoralties of these cities. A new Leningrad council member spoke publicly of proceeding "from communism, through socialism, to Reaganism".²⁴ As statues of Lenin were taken down in cities across the USSR,²⁵ there was talk of restoring Leningrad's prerevolutionary name of Petrograd. In Moscow, Popov pointedly hired a private cooperative to repave city roads.²⁶ More importantly, the immensely popular Boris Yeltsin, then recently elected president of the Russian Republic, led an exodus from the Party at the 28th Party Congress, taking Popov, Sobchack and other leading members of the radical Democratic Platform faction with him. (Yeltsin seems not to be principled radical but a populist politician; his autobiography is

remarkably devoid of political thought.⁶⁰)

The significance of the radicals' accession to political power is brought out by Yeltsin's endorsement of Stanislav Shatalin's 500-day plan to take the Soviet economy on the Polish route to free market capitalism. Speaking to a Plenary session of the CPSU Central Committee in February 1990, Shatalin, a long-time Party member, said that "The concept of a 'democratic humane socialism'[the catch phrase of the Party programme for the 28th Congress] is an absurdity."⁶¹ Writing that "humanity has not developed anything more efficient than a market economy [which requires] private property and profit", Shatalin proposed to sell off 80% of state-owned industry, privatize land, decontrol prices, and drastically reduce foreign aid and social welfare benefits. The plan was unworkable, requiring the sale of 46,000 industrial enterprises and 76,000 commercial ones, worth almost three trillion roubles (two trillion after depreciation), in less than two years.⁶² The timetable was fantasy. Margaret Thatcher, with far more support than the Soviet regime, was able to privatize only 5% of Britain's much smaller nationalized sector in ten years. And the money — 1,400 roubles per capita — wasn't there if the assets were not given away at fire-sale prices.

Moreover, as Gorbachev correctly complained, such a plan would risk even greater social upheaval, leaving perhaps 30-35 million jobless, according to V. Shcherbakov, Chair of the State Labour Committee.⁶³ "Those who declare we can have a new economy in 1991 or 1992 are simply adventurists. . . with suicidal inclinations", Shatalin himself said in April 1990 — shortly before proposing the plan — warning that without creating a market infrastructure and a social protection mechanism, hasty privatization would lead to a disaster "more terrible than the great crisis of the late 1920s and early 1930s".⁶⁴ Given the scale of the catastrophe of forced collectivization, these are very strong words.

The evidence of the Polish drive towards capitalism bears him out.⁶⁵ The appalling pain consequent on Poland's IMF programme lost Tadeuz Mazowiecki's Solidarnosc government the election in November 1990, and Lech Walesa may find the Solidarnosc name a wasting asset if, as promised, he accelerates that programme. The Soviet regime, though, has no legitimacy to forfeit. The import of the Shatalin plan appears to have been ideological rather than practical, indicating the antisocialist commitments of the now ascendent group in the Soviet elite and not offering a serious programme for change.

Economic reform is at a standstill. The Shatalin plan was approved by the Russian Republican parliament, but by the early November

date when it was supposed to go into effect, Shatalin himself declared the plan "a failure", saying that it "cannot now be put into effect".⁴⁴ After suffering in one year legislative defeat of three successive proposals for economic reorganization, drafted under the then Prime Minister Ryzhkov, Gorbachev waffled, first indicating approval of the Shatalin Plan and then withdrawing it. (A rare democratic proposal to subject its provision for the privatization of land to a referendum was an attempt to defeat this key and unpopular measure.) In October 1990, Gorbachev won approval in the Union parliament for a broadly similar plan, which Shatalin and Yeltsin vigorously attacked as inflationary and overly centralized, but there is no more reason to think that it will be implemented than were either its predecessors or rivals.

Given the absence of any serious idea of a way forward in economics, Gorbachev's real response to the impasse was a governmental reshuffle in November (incidentally abolishing Ryzhkov's position of Prime Minister), replacing the Union Council of Ministers as the chief executive agency with a Federation Council, comprised of the presidents of the several Republics and headed by himself. He also requested and won approval for extensive presidential powers for enforcement of his decrees over Republican recalcitrance like that manifested in Russia's support of the Shatalin plan, but in a situation of declining central authority these theoretically sweeping powers are more formal than real.

The View from Below

But the struggle in the elite is only half the story. From below, we may consider the perspective from the Soviet working class. This is a group of considerable social weight. The Soviet system has created a large, educated working class as well as a large middle class. Manual workers are **62.7%** of the Soviet population, up from 37% in 1940; **86%** of these workers have more than primary education, as opposed to less than 10% in 1939.⁴⁷ As Moscow News acknowledges with some frustration, "What do the workers want? First, they want socialism. Second, they want the dismantling of the command system." (Moscow News denies these goals are *compatible*.)⁴⁸ Three kinds of evidence support these claims.

First, insofar as surveys are indicative, there is widespread scepticism about unregulated markets in capital and labour. An all-Union poll in late 1989 found that three quarters of the respondents favoured private ownership of small business; only one quarter supported it and 57% strongly opposed it for large industry. Half of the respondents thought private wage labour was permissible, but three fifths of these thought it should be strongly regulated. The

analyst concludes that a Western-style market economy (capitalism) has "only 25-30% support. The majority, while not opposed to private property, want to keep it on a strictly limited scale."⁶⁹

In January 1990 an all-Union poll on attitudes towards key terms found a 61% "pro" (17% "con") response to the term "socialism" as opposed to a 34% "pro" (38% "con") response to "capitalism"; "competition" got a 74% "pro" (10% "con") response.⁷⁰ This result is consistent with the first. Pro-socialist attitudes, though, may be declining. According to Tatyana Zaslavskaya, a Fall 1990 poll indicated only 10-20% support for "the socialist choice", and that mainly from the older generation.⁷¹ In the latter two polls it is unclear, however, what respondents intended by the terms (whether, for example, they thought that "the socialist choice" meant the existing regime, or whether their image of capitalism is as romantic as that of some intellectuals), so answers to specific questions about property rights and wage labour are probably more revealing. Despite the volatility of attitudes, I suspect these replies are not much changed among the Soviet workers.

Why should this be the case? The success of indoctrination is relevant here: Soviet workers have been taught to associate the idea of socialism with the notion of a good society. In particular the idea that the working class is the hope of the future offers a dignity to labour that may to some degree offset the miserable condition of Soviet workers. But interests matter too, which is why the Soviet workers, unlike the intelligentsia, do not allow the failure of the system to destroy their socialist commitments. While their material situation is far worse than that of much of the intelligentsia, they are unlikely to find attractive free market solutions designed to coerce them to work harder and deprive them of social benefits and jobs. An easy pace of work, guaranteed jobs, and a low but strong social safety net are among the few benefits of the Soviet system. By themselves those benefits might promote conservatism (and to some extent do), but in general, as *Moscow News* admits, Soviet workers appear to share the general disgust and disillusionment with Stalinism and the "command-administrative system". They are, however, not unreasonably concerned that reforms preserve what they have or offer them something as good, and here socialist democracy is more attractive than free market capitalism.

A more dynamic sign of worker support for socialism (as opposed to the existing system) is the miners' strike of summer 1989 and the rise of independent trade union activism. 300,000-500,000 miners walked out in July 1989 in the first large-scale labour action of perestroika.⁷² In addition to economic demands about wages and

working conditions, they demanded industrial democracy, workers' self-management, a ban on private cooperatives (which are regarded as predatory), repeal of the USSR constitution's Article Six (stating the "leading role" of the CPSU), and direct elections for the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet chairmanship — one of Gorbachev's jobs.⁷³ In the Fall of 1989, Kuzbas miners established a Union of Workers which publishes its own paper (Nasha Gazeta). Miners in the Donetsk basin, Vorkuta, and other strike centres set up ongoing political organizations to defend workers' interests.

Worker activism continued into 1990. In May, a Congress of Workers' Organizations, with representatives of 58 organizations from 46 cities decided to form an independent workers' movement for united action. "The workers' movement is not only broadening but becoming highly politicized," Sovetskaya Rossiia reported.⁷⁴ In June, the miners' strike committees voted to form an independent miners' union, and a 24-hour warning strike was held on the anniversary of the 1989 strike, to demand the resignation of the Union government and the removal of Party control from the state and the economy.⁷⁵ The independent trade union Sotsprof, the Confederation of Socialist Trade Unions, claims a membership of 250,000 workers Union-wide.⁷⁶ Oleg Veronin, a leader of Sotsprof, says, "Among workers the idea that socialism is dead is not popular. It is popular among the middle class and intellectuals."⁷⁷ (Veronin means by "socialism" roughly classical socialism.)

In terms of political organization, the independent trade union movement has strong links to a new Socialist Party, formed June 1990 and led by the young political theorist Boris Kagarlitsky. Sergei Tomkin, an SP leader, says that the party aims to become a mass labour party "serving the interests of the working class". Socialism, he thinks, is not a system but "a set of political principles — democracy, collective organization of production, workers' self-management, and the right of nations to self determination."⁷⁸ The SP claimed 1,000 members at its formation (this may be an exaggeration).

Some observers have compared the SP to analogous tiny and marginal groups in the West which share its classical socialist politics; but while this is correct in terms of size and influence on the larger polity, it is misleading. First, *all* the new political formations in the USSR are tiny and marginal. Second, while socialist groups in most Western societies are marginalized because liberal capitalism enjoys hegemonic legitimacy, no social force, particularly not the CPSU, has such legitimacy in the USSR. In this context, the group (and more importantly the socialist tendency it represents) has more weight than its Western counterparts. This is reflected in the judgment of two journals hostile to its perspective. It was given a four out of ten rating

in terms of political importance by *The Economist* in May 1990, equal to that given the neoStalinist Communist Party of Russia; *Moscow News* listed it as one of the three formations to watch as the CPSU disintegrates or splits.¹¹

The conventional wisdom (here and among the perestroichiki) that the workers are largely a "conservative" force who support the Stalinist system is false. But there are strong conservative elements among the workers. This means that the working class is far from united. Setting aside the tiny, fascistic Pamyat group, Veronin worries about the appeal of groups like the United Front of Workers, founded October 1989, whose leader, Veniamin Yarin, *The Economist* describes as a populist in the Peronist mould. The UFW may have more than 5,000 members, mostly unskilled workers fearful for their jobs. This provides a basis for alliance with moderate and conservative elements in the apparat. The neoStalinist heroine Nina Andreyeva, author of a notorious anti-perestroika letter published before the 19th Party Conference,¹² attended a meeting founding a Russian-wide UFW.

Unlike other workers' organizations, the UFW does not criticize bureaucratic privilege.¹³ Its positions are indicated by the placards at a small demonstration in Moscow during the 28th Congress, which included demands to "Reject the conversion to a market economy", "Condemn groundless attacks on the Armed Forces and the KGB", and "Retain CPSU organizations at enterprises". Its support, however, may be indicated by the size of the demonstration: at a time when rallies can bring tens or hundreds of thousands into the streets, the action drew around 200 people.¹⁴ Whether this specific group has any prospects, it represents a potentially strong current in the working class. The UFW has links to the conservative (as distinct from the more radical and democratic) elements in the Marxist Platform of the CPSU, headed by Yegor Ligachev. *The Economist*, however, gives both a seven out of ten weight in political importance.

The Spectre of Pinochet

The conflict between the workers and the intelligentsia bodes ill for either a democratic socialist or a liberal capitalist resolution to the Soviet crisis. Perestroika, the reform programme for modernizing the old system, appears to have failed for lack of trying. But the possibility of a deadlock, in which the workers use their newly-won political organization and democratic rights to block the radical plans for a transition to capitalism, and the intelligentsia use their newly-won offices to block worker demands for self-management and industrial democracy, raises new threats. The situation is reminiscent

of Marx's account of "Bonapartism", in which, he says, a deadlock in the class struggle creates a space for a military or other dictatorship, with the state asserting its own corporate interests over that of the major contending social groups.⁸³

Writing about the changes in Eastern Europe and the USSR, the economist Gavril Popov, radical mayor of Moscow and a self-styled "democrat", says that "the forms of democracy being established [here] are exceptionally contradictory and in a very short time will lead to serious internal conflict". More honest than many radicals, Popov admits that "We could not have overthrown the powerful totalitarian system without the active participation of millions of ordinary people." But while "the masses long for fairness and economic equality", they will not get these from Popov. "Now we must create a society with. . . private property. . . denationalization, privatization, and inequality. . . This will be a society of economic inequality." Since "if we cannot denationalize and privatize property we will be attacked by waves of workers fighting for their interests. . ." he says, "we must seek new mechanisms and institutions of political power that will depend less on populism".⁸⁴

These mechanisms are specified more boldly by some radicals, like Igor Klymakin and Andranak Migranyan, who talk of "an authoritarian transition to democracy", invoking Jeane Kirkpatrick's authoritarian-totalitarian distinction. "While the highly complex process of forming. . . a civil society is in process," Migranyan writes, "it is important that a firm authoritarian regime be maintained in the political sphere."⁸⁵ (In the context, "civil society" means "the capitalist market".⁸⁶) More baldly, he says, "At the moment [February 1991 I'm for a dictatorship." Klymakin explains:

Democratization doesn't necessarily encourage reform. For instance, a leader decides to introduce a market economy. Will his idea get support from the people? Of course not! 80% will oppose him.⁸⁷

Today one can read in the pages of *Moscow News* uncritical praise for the Pinochet regime. Yuri Korolov, a former adviser to the Allende government of Chile, writes in "Pinochet and Us" that "overdue reforms in Chile were carried out by an authoritarian regime".⁸⁸

No wonder Boris Kagarlitsky worries about "market Stalinism", the undemocratic, forcible imposition of market relations on unwilling Soviet workers.⁸⁹ The deadlock threatens newly-won democracy as well as a resolution of the economic crisis. Polls suggest that a significant minority of Soviets might support repression under some circumstances: 25% of respondents to an all-Union poll in December 1989 agreed that "our people are in constant need of a strong hand".⁹⁰ That hand might emerge if the deadlock continues.

Gorbachev, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, was disinclined to use force to promote economic reform, but has resorted to it reluctantly (although often unwisely) in dealing with nationalist separatism. Although secession would be economically irrational for small republics, failing a new Union treaty centrifugal nationalism threatens to take the Soviet empire the way of the Austro-Hungarian or Ottoman empires.

Under popular pressure, every republic has declared some sort of autonomy. The Russian Republic itself, under Yeltsin, asserts that Republican law takes precedence over central policy and has torpedoed central government policy with regard to Russian resources and banking. In many **non-Russian** Republics, separatist and ethnic strife flickers at the edge of civil war, the worst case being the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict over the Armenian **Nagorno-Karabakh** district in Azerbaijan, raging since early 1988. After months of anti-Armenian pogroms and armed defiance of requests for a peaceful resolution of difficulties, Gorbachev sent in troops.⁹¹

Less understandably, Gorbachev imposed an armed blockade against Lithuania during the first half of 1990 when argument failed to persuade that republic to revoke its declaration of independence. In mid-January 1991, Gorbachev sent the tanks into Lithuania and Latvia, and a dozen or more demonstrators were killed in scenes reminiscent of Hungary 1956 or Prague 1968. Gorbachev responded to severe press criticism of the crackdown by unsuccessfully seeking a parliamentary suspension of the new law on press freedom, a cornerstone of glasnost.

Even before things turned ugly in the Baltics, Gorbachev's turn to the "forces of order" — the Army and the KGB — at the end of 1990, caused concern among his inner circle. Worry about the danger of "dictatorship" prompted the spectacular resignation of Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in December 1990, although whether this worry was then directed at Gorbachev is still unclear. It is also unclear whether the "forces of order" ultimately have the resources to enforce either an unwilling Union or an unpopular economic programme. The Soviet Union, in desperate need of foreign aid, might not be able to risk the Western reaction to such a move without international distraction. The crackdown in the Baltics could not have occurred without the war in the Gulf.⁹²

The preference of some radicals for an "authoritarian" imposition of a market system, though, could meet with a better Western response than an attempt to maintain the Union by force. The *Economist* editorialized approvingly that Gorbachev might yet become a Soviet **Pinochet**.⁹³ It is not impossible that he, or some radical successor, might take advantage of a forcible maintenance of

the Union to impose market-oriented reforms at bayonet-point.

The militarized suppression of Baltic independence is widely regarded as Gorbachev's throwing in his hand with the "forces of order", the Army, the KGB, and the remaining conservatives. If this is correct, it is unlikely that a turn to the "right" can succeed. Gorbachev has accomplished the destruction of the old system if not the creation of a new one. He will be unable to pronounce that "Order reigns in Vilnius, Riga, Moscow". There is in a deep sense no order to maintain. In such conditions of instability, the prospects are more like Timisoara than Tienanmen Square. Either Brezhnevite repression or a more radical "Andropovite" programme of enforced marketization will find active, angry resistance from both workers and separatists.

And beyond Gorbachev and the radicals are the archaic, primitive nationalist forces of **Pamyat** in Russia and the pogromchiki in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and elsewhere, which threaten a dozen or more "strong hands" if the Union fragments. The rising strength of right-wing authoritarian nationalism in Eastern Europe suggests that this threat is not idle. Still, no outcome is determined and the only outcome almost certainly foreclosed appears to be a restoration or reform of the old system. The "strong hand" cannot maintain what has been destroyed. Perestroika has run its course. The "authoritarian road" to some sort of capitalism is open. Is there a future for socialism in the USSR? Perhaps the only response is that attributed to Zhou Enlai when asked if he thought the French Revolution had succeeded. He replied, "It's too soon to tell."¹

NOTES

1. A new proposed name is the Union of Sovereign Soviet Republics, allowing the country to retain the initials "USSR". Gorbachev suggested this in this new draft Union treaty in December 1990; the name change was voted down, but it can only be a matter of time.
2. There is no good term for Soviet-style systems. This reflects our poor understanding of their dynamics. "Actually existing socialism" suffers under the double disadvantage that the noun never applied and the adjectives are rapidly ceasing to apply. "State capitalism", or "social-imperialism" rely on dubious theories that capitalism had been restored in the USSR. The "command-administrative system", the term favoured in the USSR, is accurate but awkward; the "bureaucratic system", the nearest natural English translation, properly places bureaucracy in the centre but perhaps fails to differentiate the system from bureaucratized modern capitalism. The "statist system" ignores the role of the Party shadow-state. The "Stalinist system", my choice, risks the misunderstanding that the terror of high Stalinism characterized a system which was in most of its career merely repressive. With the caveat that it did not, I somewhat reluctantly use this expression.
3. Stephen Cohen and Katrina vanden Heuvel, *Voices of Glasnost* (New York: Norton, 1989), p. 69.

As expressed, for example in Isaac Deutscher's epigram, "Socialism in a backward country is backward socialism", cited in Carl Marzani, "On Interring Communism and Exalting Capitalism", *Monthly Review*, January 1990 (Special Supplement), p. 24.

5. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* [MECW] (New York: International Publishers, 1975-), vol. 3, pp. 294-95.

6. Elements of the Stalinist system were put in place earlier, notably the single-Party dictatorship, established by the Bolsheviks in 1919 during the Civil War. Moreover the economic policy of "War Communism" (1918-21) bears certain affinities to the Stalinist command-administrative system. Despite Bolshevik high-handedness and repressiveness, which excited the concern, e.g., of Rosa Luxemburg as well as less sympathetic observers, it is widely recognized that the Stalinist system was qualitatively different from various emergency measures, conceived as temporary and not called socialist, that the Bolsheviks (often unwisely and unjustly) took during a period of revolution, civil war, and their aftermath.

I don't want to enter into a fruitless dispute about whether "the germ of all Stalinism was in Bolshevism at its beginning". As the antiStalinist revolutionary Victor Serge wrote on this question, "I have no objection [to this]. Only, Bolshevism also contained many other germs. . . To judge the living man by the death germs which the autopsy reveals in his corpse — and which he may have carried in him since his birth — is this very sensible?" (*Memoirs of a Revolutionary*, trans. Peter Sedgwick [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963], pp. xv-xvi).

Nikolai Shmelev and Vladimir Popov, *The Turning Point* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), pp. 69, 74-75. Their analysis of the roots and defects of the Stalinist system is among the clearest and best available; it is curiously reminiscent of Trotsky's in *The Revolution Betrayed*.

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels says, "The Communists *do not form a separate party* opposed to other working class parties. . . [they are], practically the most advanced and resolute section of the working class parties of every nation" (MECW, vol. 6, p. 496, emphasis added).

9. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, MECW, vol. 24, p. 94.

10. Marx, *The Civil War in France*, MECW, vol. 22, pp. 332-33.

11. Marx and Engels, *Manifesto*, MECW, vol. 6, pp. 332-33. Note also the relative gradualism of the "by degrees"; Marx does not appear to have supposed that the "expropriators would be expropriated" in a stroke.

12. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, MECW, vol. 24, p. 87.

13. Marx, *Capital*, vol. III, trans. David Fernbach (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), p. 959.

14. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, MECW, vol. 24, pp. 84-85.

15. Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 171.

16. For some attempts at articulating models, see the works cited in note 29 below.

17. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, MECW, vol. 5, p. 49.

18. Marx, *The Class Struggles in France*, MECW, vol. 10, p. 56.

19. Serge, *Memoirs*, p. 375.

20. William Morris, *A Dream of John Ball*, in *Three Works by William Morris*, ed. A. L. Morton (New York: International Publishers, 1968), p. 53.

See for example, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Democracy and Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1987) and (from a "postmodern" perspective) Ernest Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, trans. Winston Moore and Paul Cammack (New York: Verso, 1985); Milton

- Fisk, in a forthcoming paper, "A New Face for Socialism in the 1990s", offers some effective criticisms of this move.
22. A special Party Conference was called midway between the regular Party Congresses in 1986 and 1990 because of the widespread sense that a major policy reorientation could not wait.
23. "The alternative [to War Communism] (and this is the only sensible and the last possible policy) is not to. . . put the lock on the development of capitalism, but to channel it into *state capitalism*", wrote Lenin in *The Tax in Kind: The Significance of the New Policy and Its Conditions* (1921), in *Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), p. 539.
24. Cohen and vanden Heuvel, *Voices of Glasnost*, p. 69.
25. David Lane, *Soviet Society Under Perestroika* (Boston: Unwin & Hyman, 1990), p. 96. This figure is from a *Pravda* report in November 1987; it is almost certainly larger today.
26. See Justin Schwartz, "Common Interests or Class Politics? The Ideology of Gorbachev's New Foreign Policy", *Against the Current* 24, January-February 1990, pp. 32-35 and Michael Fischer and James Petras, "From Malta to Panama: The Third World's Uncertain Future", *Against the Current* 27, July-August 1990, pp. 42-45. My previous analysis was more sympathetic than what I say here.
27. David Mandel, "Economic Reform and Democracy in the Soviet Union", in *Socialist Register 1988: Problems of Socialist Renewal, East and West*, ed. Ralph Miliband, Leo Panitch, and John Saville (London: Merlin Press, 1988), pp. 132-53; "Perestroika and the Working Class", *Against the Current* 20, May-June 1989, pp. 22-31 and "Why Soviet Workers Resist", *Against the Current* 28, September-October 1990, pp. 24-28.
28. A good survey is Anders Aslund, *Gorbachev's Struggle for Economic Reform* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989). Aslund (a Swede!) criticizes Gorbachev for not being liberal enough.
29. See my "Socialism, Markets, Democracy", unpublished manuscript. A fuller presentation of the sort of market socialist model I favour is David Schweikart, *Capitalism or Workers' Control?* (New York: Praeger, 1980).
30. Cohen and vanden Heuvel, *Voices of Glasnost*, pp. 126-28. See also James Scanlan, "Known Direction, Unknown Goals: Social Justice vs. Equality in Soviet 'New Thinking'," paper presented at Harrogate Conference on the USSR, May 1990.
31. Justice is a value decried by Marx. See *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. This has produced a great deal of discussion recently in the West. See, e.g., Alan Buchanan, *Marx and Justice* (Totowa, NJ: Rowen and Allenheld, 1982); Norman Geras, "The Controversy About Marx and Justice", *New Left Review* 150 (1985), pp. 211-67, and Richard Peffer's magisterial, *Marxism, Morality, and Social Justice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). This is not the place to argue the point, but I think Marx was wrong to denigrate the importance of justice and that perestroika cannot be considered a restoration of justice for the working class and other subordinate groups in Soviet society.
32. "Z", "To the Stalin Mausoleum", *Daedalus*, Winter 1990, p. 331. After about 25 pages of anticommunist theology in the grand style, "Z" changes key and gives as crisp and accurate an account of the weaknesses of perestroika as one might wish to have; given subsequent events his analysis has proved more prescient than the optimistic assessments shared until recently by many liberals and socialists (myself included).
33. *Pravda*, July 5, 1990, reprinted in *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* [CDSP] XLII. 29, August 22, 1990.
34. *New York Times*, September 16, 1990.

35. Lane, *Soviet Society Under Perestroika*, p. 148.
36. *The Economist*, October 20, 1990.
37. Yuri Bandura, "Discoveries Made in Retrospect", *Moscow News*, July 8, 1990.
38. Alexander Tsytko, "The Fate of the Socialist Idea", *Moscow News*, July 1, 1990; "Was Marx a Socialist?" in *The Phenomenon of Socialism* (Moscow: Global Research Institute, 1990), pp. 44, 46. Tsytko, who knows his Marx, here recalls Marx's censure of the amorality of "political economy" in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*: "Do I obey economic laws if I extract money by offering my body for sale. . . or if I sell my friend to the Moroccans?. . . Then the political economist replies to me: You do not transgress my laws, but see what Cousin Ethics and Cousin Religion have to say about it. My *political economic* ethics have nothing to reproach you with". (MECW, vol. 3, p. 310).
39. *Voprosy Filosofii* 1990 (10).
40. Cohen and vanden Heuvel, *Voices of Glasnost*, pp. 151-52. Shmelev's own position, as expounded in Shmelev and Popov, *The Turning Point*, is actually closer to the sort of market socialism advocated by Schweikart or Alec Nove. But that is not the way the "law" is taken, nor is his market socialism (if he still holds it) the basis of his popularity among the intelligentsia.
- Valery Chalidze, "Socioeconomic Rights, East and West", *Moscow News*, January 29, 1990. In "On the Reason of the People's Wealth" (April 15, 1990) he attributes this to entrepreneurial brilliance and nothing else — particularly not to the efforts of workers.
42. Heksei Kiva, "October in the Mirror of Utopias and Anti-Utopias", *Izvestia*, November 5, 1990, reprinted in CDSP XLII. 44, December 5, 1990.
43. Mihailo Markovic, "The Meaning of the Changes in Eastern Europe and the USSR", *Against the Current*, forthcoming.
44. Not least from the anti-Communists themselves; the classic of the genre is *The God That Failed*, ed. Richard Crossman (New York: Bantam, 1950); for an account from the left, see Isaac Deutscher's review of this volume, "The Ex-Communist's Conscience", in *Russia in Transition*, rev. ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1960), pp. 223-36. The best book-length study (also from the left) is Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).
45. See Stephen White, "The Effectiveness of Political Propaganda in the USSR", in *The Soviet Polity in the Modern Era*, ed. Erik Hoffman and Robin Laird (New York: Aldine, 1984), pp. 663-90. James Scanlan, *Marxism in the USSR* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), gives a sense of the oppressiveness of official Marxism-Leninism.
46. Lane, *Soviet Society Under Perestroika*, p. 9.
47. For a history, see Ed Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet Economy* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1988).
48. *Moscow News*, July 1, 1990.
49. Unless they were being disingenuous, these individuals and others interviewed by Cohen and vanden Heuvel retained socialist ideals, as they understood them in perestroikan terms, as late as early 1989.
50. Alexander Tsytko, "On Zones Closed to Thought" and "The Roots of Stalinism", *Nauka i zhizn*, 11 and 12 (November and December, 1988), reprinted in CDSP XLI. 10, April 5, 1989 and XLI. 11, April 12, 1989. He holds, implausibly, that "Stalin never overstepped the bounds of Marxism. . . in his speeches and writings" (if not his actions); a fairly startling claim, in view of Stalin's main theoretical theses, e.g., the possibility of socialism in one country and of a revolution from above, which contradict Marx's conviction that socialism can only be international and the product of working class self-activity from below.

51. *Moscow News*, February 25, 1990.

52. Milton Fisk, "Marxism in the USSR Today", forthcoming in *Studies in Soviet Thought*, explores this "new humanism" and its effects from a Marxist point of view. Fisk is the most articulate writer today defending a sophisticated account of class-based values. See his *Ethics and Society* (New York: Humanities Press, 1980) and *The State and Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

53. This is explored in two studies of the Gorbachev period from the perspective of modernization theory: Moshe Lewin's *The Gorbachev Phenomenon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) and Geoffrey Hosking, *The Awakening of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

54. David Lane, *Soviet Society Under Perestroika*, p. 139.

55. Especially in Hungary, Poland, and increasingly in Czechoslovakia. Eastern Germany is a special case because of the desire for reunification. Romania and Bulgaria are less far advanced on this road.

56. If one wants to preserve the etymological sense of "radical" as "going to the root" this term is also unhappy. Unfortunately "neoconservative" or "neoliberal" are terms which have specific connotations in Western politics that would be extremely misleading in a Soviet context. Boris Kagarlitsky calls them "liberals", and while this may be correct in the 19th century economic sense of "liberal", it overstates their commitment to democracy and liberal rights. So "radical", in the sense of "extremist", will have to do.

57. Quoted in Manning Marable, "Rethinking American Marxism", *Monthly Review*, January 1991, 40.

58. Yuri Solmonov, "Lenin's Monuments: A Tug-of-war", *Moscow News*, September 9, 1990.

59. "Co-Op Wizard Rings Moscow", *Moscow News*, October 14, 1990.

60. Boris Yeltsin, *Against the Grain* (New York: Summit, 1990). Even *The Economist* says that "Presumably Yeltsin [acted] in the name of some ideas or policies, but he barely mentions them" in the book (March 24, 1990). A practical politician utterly lacking in theory, Yeltsin appears to have a genuine populist revulsion against privilege — the source of his popular appeal — but also a good eye for the main chance.

61. *Pravda*, February 8, 1980.

62. *The Economist*, September 15, 1990.

63. *Izvestia*, August 7, 1990, reprinted in CDSP XLII. 32, September 12, 1990. Shcherbakov, it should be noted, was speaking as a proponent of the Union government's more moderate version of a plan for marketization, which he claimed would leave 8 million unemployed but provide an adequate safety net.

64. *Izvestia*, April 12, 1990, reprinted in CDSP XLII. 17, May 30, 1990. See also Patrick Flaherty, "Behind 'Shatalinomics'," *The Guardian* (U.S.), October 10, 1990.

65. See Jon Weiner, "Capitalist Shock Therapy", *The Nation*, June 25, 1990.

66. Stanislav Shatalin, et. al., "Why the 500 Days Program is Unfeasible Today", *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, November 4, 1990, reprinted in CDSP XLII. 45, December 12, 1990.

67. Lane, *Soviet Society Under Perestroika*, pp. 135-36.

68. *Moscow News*, September 30, 1990.

69. Cited in David Mandel, "Worker Consciousness and the Socialist Alternative: The Ideological Struggle for the Soviet Working Class", unpublished manuscript.

70. *Moscow News*, January 21, 1990.

71. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, October 30, 1990, reprinted in CDSP XLII. 44, December 5, 1990.

The best account of the strike is Theodore Friedgut and Lewis Sieglebaum,

- "Perestroika From Below: The Soviet Miner's Strike and Its Aftermath", *New Left Review* 181 (May-June 1990), pp. 1-32.
73. *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, June 30, 1990.
74. *Sovetskaya Rossiia*, May 17, 1990, reprinted in CDSP XLII. 23, July 11, 1990.
75. *Izvestia*, June 11, 15, 1990, reprinted in CDSP XLII. 24, July 18, 1990; July 11, 1990, reprinted in CDSP XLII. 28, August 15, 1990.
76. "Workers Begin to Organize", *Moscow News*, September 16, 1990.
77. *Socialist Worker* (U.S.), April 1990.
78. "The USSR's New Opposition", *Socialist Worker* (U.S.), September 1990.
79. "Guide to Soviet Democracy", *The Economist*, May 26, 1990; "Public Movements in the USSR", *Moscow News*, February 25, 1990.
80. Nina Andreyeva, "I Cannot Forego Principles", *Sovetskaya Rossiia*, March 13, 1988, reprinted in Lane, *Soviet Society Under Perestroika*, pp. 108-17.
81. See Mandel, "Worker Consciousness", for discussion.
82. *Izvestia*, July 4, 1990, reprinted in CDSP XLII. 25, August 8, 1990.
83. Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, MECW, vol. II, pp. 99-197, especially pp. 141-43; 184-97.
84. Gavril Popov, "Dangers of Democracy", *New York Review of Books*, August 16, 1990.
85. Andranak Migranyan, "The Long Road to the European Home", *Novy Mir*, July, 1989, reprinted in CDSP, XLI. 42, 1989. Migranyan does not seem to have reflected that Kirkpatrick's theory was that "totalitarian" regimes are supposedly frozen and incapable of change, an idea seriously compromised by both perestroika itself, despite its deadlock, and by the Eastern European revolutions of 1989.
86. Migranyan's use of "civil society", incidentally, corresponds more closely to Marx's sense of the term than to the sense of the term used today in Eastern Europe. Following Hegel, Marx used the expression "*buergerliche Gesellschaft*" [bourgeois society], usually translated "civil society"; implicitly contraposing *Gesellschaft*, a merely instrumental association for the advancement of individual ends, to *Gemeinschaft*, which has a connotation of community and mutuality. Something like this latter, more Gramscian, sense indicating popular organization independent of the state, is what Vaclav Havel and other Eastern European advocates of "civil society" favour. Like many Soviet intellectuals today, Migranyan prefers the former.
87. *Literary Gazette International*, February and March, 1990. Unlike Migranyan, Klymakin denies that he advocates authoritarianism; he simply regards it as probable.
88. *Moscow News*, April 1, 1990.
89. Boris Kagarlitsky, "The Importance of Being Marxist", *New Left Review* 178 (November-December 1989), p. 33. Kagarlitsky declines to call market Stalinism a form of capitalism.
90. *Moscow News*, March 25, 1990.
91. For an overview and background to this crisis, see Ronald Suny, "The Revenge of the Past: Socialism and Ethnic Conflict in Transcaucasia", *New Left Review* 184 (November-December 1990), pp. 5-34.
92. Here Shevardnadze must bear some responsibility for enabling the conditions under which the Baltic crackdown could occur. He was an architect of the Soviet rapprochement with the West and as responsible as anyone for the policy of Soviet accommodation to the US buildup for war against Iraq.
93. *The Economist*, December 22, 1990. Rumours of a military coup abound. See Andrei Nuikin, "Military Coup in the USSR?" (*Moscow News*, September 30, 1990). I regard this worry as unfounded. The military, always strictly subordinate to civilian authority, has never been an effective player in Soviet

high politics. Nor is there a Russian tradition of military rule. But one might imagine a situation in which radical civilian authorities, frustrated with democratic deadlock, order in the troops.

94. Thanks for constructive suggestions are due to Ron Aronson, Matthew Evangelista, David Finkel, Milton Fisk, Phil Gasper, Andrew Oldenquist, Leo Panitch, Mihalio Markovic, Kurt Mosser, Bernard Rosen, Bruce Rosenstock and Yana Yakhina.