INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

NOTE TO USERS

The original manuscript received by UMI contains broken, slanted and or light print. All efforts were made to acquire the highest quality manuscript from the author or school. Microfilmed as received.

This reproduction is the best copy available

UMI

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Return to NEP: The Search for a Program and Ideological Rationale for Reform in the Gorbachev Years, 1985-1991

by

Oscar J. Bandelin

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

1998

Approved by ______________________
Chairperson of Supervisory Committee

____

____

____

Program Authorized to Offer Degree History

Date June 12, 1998

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

UMI Number: 9836137

Copyright 1998 by
Bandelin, Oscar John

All rights reserved.

UMI Microform 9836137
Copyright 1998, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

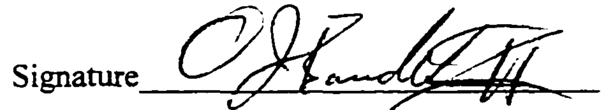
Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

© Copyright 1998

Oscar J. Bandelin

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In presenting this dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctoral degree at the University of Washington, I agree that the Library shall make its copies freely available for inspection. I further agree that extensive copying of this dissertation is allowable only for scholarly purposes, consistent with "fair use" as prescribed in the U.S. Copyright Law. Requests for copying or reproduction of this dissertation may be referred to University Microfilms, 1490 Eisenhower Place, P.O. Box 975, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, to whom the author has granted "the right to reproduce and sell (a) copies of the manuscript in microform and/or (b) printed copies of the manuscript made from microform."

Signature 

Date June 12, 1998

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

University of Washington

Abstract

Return to NEP: The Search for a Program and Ideological Rationale for Reform in the Gorbachev Years, 1985-1991

by Oscar J. Bandelin

Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee
Professor Herbert J. Ellison
Department of History

Perestroika was nicknamed the "neo-NEP" in the Gorbachev leadership. While reexamining history in the context of glasnost', Soviet historians, publicists, lawyers, sociologists, and economists were asking themselves whether the NEP represented Lenin's real expectations for Soviet development. In fact Gorbachev's ideas for perestroika had been developing since the early to mid-1970s in terms of a reexamination of Lenin's last writings. Gorbachev, and many others, were convinced that Leninism, properly applied, would result in true "social democracy." The legacy of the NEP era, particularly Bukharinism, was given serious attention, and socialist economic incentive theory was reconsidered in many ways. An important idea developed under NEP and revived under Gorbachev was the concept of khozraschet, which in fact combined principles of "cost accounting" with Leninist ideas on individual motivation. While Stalinism had been progressive, Soviet intellectuals maintained, it ignored important aspects of the legacy of Lenin that were embodied in the NEP. Gorbachev and many others who believed in the "neo-NEP" were confident that its implementation would result in a popular revitalization of socialism.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In developing perestroika Gorbachev was arguably forced to return to the 1920s in Soviet experience, because in fact reformers in Eastern Europe had long advocated similar ideas. To defend its legitimacy, Gorbachev needed to demonstrate that the "neo-NEP" was part of the Soviet intellectual heritage. But in allowing the rehabilitation of Bukharin and the criticism of Stalinism Gorbachev opened his regime up anew to criticisms that had long been voiced by socialists in other countries in the Soviet "bloc," particularly Czechoslovakia and Poland. Moreover, these same arguments were developed by thinkers in the Soviet Union. The truth was that the ideology of Soviet socialism from Lenin to Gorbachev was founded on the principle of Party rule, not true democracy. Gorbachev counted on Soviet citizens to respond favorably to perestroika and his dismantling of the old Soviet system after 1988. When they opted instead to reject socialist ideas and even to consider the dissolution of the USSR, Gorbachev was forced, like his predecessors, to resort to coercive measures. But he had already weakened the system beyond recovery.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION....................1

CHAPTER I: THE LENINIST MODEL OF NATURE: THE SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS OF SOVIET SOCIAL THEORY....................6

A. Lenin and the Crisis of Nineteenth Century Thought....................6

B. The Leninist Metaphysical Basis: A Reconsideration of Materialism and Empirio-Criticism....................9

C. Bukharin and Marxist Science....................26

D. The Institutionalization of the Leninist Model of Nature....................31

E. The Role of Marxist Science in the Crisis of Perestroika....................34

CHAPTER II: DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM OR DESPOTISM? THE IDEOLOGICAL LEGACY OF THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY....................43

A. Oriental Despotism and Russian Society....................45

B. The "War Communism" Fallacy....................51

C. The "Asiatic Restoration" and the NEP....................61

D. Lenin and the NEP: Whither Socialism?....................64

E. Lenin's NEP and the Contribution of Bukharin....................70

F. Lenin's Legacy of Despotism....................76

G. Stalinism Before Stalin: Platonov's Chevengur....................79

H. Implications of the Leninist Legacy....................90

CHAPTER III: FROM DEVELOPED SOCIALISM TO THE NEO-NEP: THE CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND OF THE SEARCH FOR A PROGRAM....................97

A. Initial Development of the Neo-NEP, 1985-1987....................98

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

B. Khozraschet and Perestroika: Concepts and Problems....................................103

C. Eastern Europe: Was Perestroika Genuinely Soviet?..116

CHAPTER IV: PERESTROIKA AND THE REEVALUATION OF THE NEP ERA, 1987-1989: LESSONS FOR SOVIET INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICE?..143

A. The Revolution Continues: Gorbachev and the Return to NEP........................144

B. Bukharin: The Prophet of Soviet Socialism?..150

C. The Place of the NEP in Soviet History: Continuity With Perestroika?............153

D. The Root of the Problem: What is Needed is a Perestroika of Perestroika........163

E. The 19th Party Conference and the Economy..171

CHAPTER V: FREE INSTITUTIONS AND THE REJECTION OF SOVIET SOCIALISM, 1989-1991...180

A. The Institution of Economic Freedom: Socialism Versus the Market.................180

B. The Emergence of Property Rights and the Rule of Law.....................................191

C. The Implications of Property Rights for Soviet Socialism: - John Locke Revisited...200

D. A Program Found and Lost: The Incompatibility of Private Property With Socialism...203

E. Gorbachev: The Savior of Soviet Socialism?..211

CONCLUSION..216

BIBLIOGRAPHY..222

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the members of my Supervisory Committee, Professors Herbert J. Ellison, James R. Felak, James D. West, and Stephen E. Hanson. All of these men have contributed directly to my intellectual growth in general. Professor Ellison encouraged me to pursue the topic of this investigation, and in the course of its completion has been a most insightful, helpful, and patient adviser. I thank him in particular for standing by me when things were difficult. Professor Felak offered much encouragement as I was completing this project and helped me to grow professionally during the two quarters I worked under him as a teaching assistant. Professor West has been an inspiration to me throughout my time at the University of Washington. He has encouraged and supported my love of learning in countless ways, and has lent me an understanding ear many times. Over the years he has helped me immensely to refine my skills as a researcher, writer, and translator. Professor Hanson taught me much about the importance of ideology to Soviet institutions, and also much about perseverance. I thank him in particular for insisting on the best from me, as well as the extraordinary amount of time that he spent with me on this project.

I would like to thank the Earhart Foundation for two grants during the course of my doctoral study, one of which allowed the completion of the writing process during the present academic year. A Rondeau-Evans fellowship from the University of Washington made possible a research trip to the Russian Federation in the summer of 1996, without which this project could not have been completed.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

With respect to this trip to Russia I owe a special debt to Matthew J. Ouimet, without whom it would not have been possible. Thanks are also due to many colleagues, librarians, and archive administrators in the Russian Federation, whose names are too numerous to mention here.

I would like to thank the following University of Washington faculty for encouraging and otherwise helpful input: George Behlmer, Bruce Hevly, Richard Johnson, William Kangas, Tracy McKenzie, Robert Stacey, and Richard White. Thanks also for the general support from other faculty and staff, especially Susanne Young.

For personal support, I would like to thank Jake Brown, Kevin Coo, T. David Curp, Kimberle Hackett, Diane Korngiebel, Tracy McKenzie, Michael Ruth, Matthew J. Ouimet, Gerald Strickland, and many, many others who made a difference. It would take many pages to list them all, but they know who they are. Last, but most of all, I would like to thank the Lord Jesus Christ for His great faithfulness to me.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Douglas and Marielos Bandelin, and to the memory of Donald Warren Treadgold, (November 24, 1922-December 13, 1994).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

INTRODUCTION

During Mikhail S. Gorbachev's tenure there was a revival of interest in the Soviet 1920s and Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP). Many believed that the 1920s were a time when Soviet socialism was on track to developing genuinely free and economically viable institutions. The opposite was the case. The legacy of the 1920s demonstrated the most fundamental problems of Soviet socialism and the underpinnings of its despotic nature. The NEP in fact represented Lenin's attempt to deal with the bureaucratic and anti-democratic system that he had built, but neither he nor N. I. Bukharin succeeded in transforming it into the truly democratic society that they desired. In fact, the problems bequeathed by Lenin remained unsolved and insoluble, so that when Gorbachev attempted his perestroika in the Soviet Union his efforts also ended in failure.

In his interpretation of historical materialism Lenin assumed that there was a deterministic relationship between natural and social development and implemented policy measures accordingly. However, he was never able to determine the laws of nature that governed social change. Thus, he and his Party could only rule in the name of the proletariat and poor peasants, confident that history would vindicate him. However, social change never proceeded as the Bolsheviks expected, so they acted on the basis of political expediency. As a result, arbitrary rule came to characterize the Party. With its insistence on such an open-ended ideological system, the only choice Lenin's regime had for maintaining power was to establish a dictatorship based on political coercion. Between 1918 and 1921, to Lenin's chagrin, that is precisely what happened in Russia. It

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

was clear that this was not at all what he wanted. But his options in dealing with this situation were limited.

As a believer in scientific socialism Lenin was faced with a dilemma. He could not repudiate the Marxist paradigm as he understood it, for that would dispose of his claim to legitimacy altogether. But even minor reforms would weaken Bolshevik authority by opening Bolshevik policies to question. Lenin was never able to get beyond the compromise, NEP, that he had worked out in 1921, because he refused to give up his insistence on the validity of his ideological constructs. In order for him to do that, however, he would have had to cease being who he was.

Stalin "resolved" this dilemma by ignoring it, and because of the open-ended character of the Leninist ideological legacy he was able to justify his position in Leninist terms. But his abuses cost the Soviet Union dearly, and by 1985 the system was in dire need of reform. Gorbachev was convinced that he could resolve Lenin's dilemma and establish real democracy and economic productivity under socialism. For Gorbachev Soviet socialism was defined more by its ideas than by its institutions. He appreciated the progress made under Stalin, despite its costs; but he valued the era of the NEP as a time when ideas were freely debated and exchanged. The Soviet 1920s were a rich source of socialist ideas for many inside and outside the Soviet Union in the 1980s. For Gorbachev, concepts of individual motivation which had their roots in the NEP were important at least as early as 1974. Because it was ideas, and not institutions, that mattered to socialism, Gorbachev felt that he could dismantle the counterproductive

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

aspects of the Soviet system and allow people to be creative and take initiative and responsibility in restructuring them. Gorbachev fully expected that Soviet citizens would do so with alacrity. When they did not, and opted instead for a full market economy, private property, national independence and many other things which worked against the integrity of the Soviet polity, Gorbachev tried to resort once again to coercive measures to hold the USSR together. But by 1988, he had dismantled Soviet institutions too thoroughly to effect political recovery. Gorbachev had lost his gamble that he could solve Lenin's dilemma through an appeal to the socialist spirit he believed to be present in Soviet people.

I treat the Leninist legacy in my first two chapters, discussing the roots of the Leninist model of nature and reasons for the inability of Leninism to exclude despotic elements from what was meant to be a truly democratic society. In my first chapter I argue that the latter arises from difficulties with the former; the Newtonian perspective on natural development that is characteristic of Leninism gives rise to ambiguities in Leninist social theory which ultimately can be resolved only through coercion if the Party is to remain in power. I explore the deeper historical roots of the Party's despotism in Chapter II, wherein I discuss the Marxist concept of the "Asiatic mode of production," or "Oriental despotism," and its significance in the context of the NEP. I also attempt to explain the inadequacy of Bukharinism, mainly because its most fundamental philosophical problems are the same as those of Leninism.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In Chapter III, I cover the development of Gorbachev's philosophy of reform Communism on the basis of his reexamination of Lenin's later writings, and the systemic and ideological problems that this presented for him and for perestroika. In particular, reformers in Eastern Europe had long been familiar with the problems of Soviet socialism outlined in Chapter II, to which Gorbachev could refer only obliquely for political reasons. But even under glasnost' he could not acknowledge fully the contributions of East European reformers. In the search for a justification for reform in the Soviet Union attention gravitated toward the NEP era after 1986.

Chapter IV deals with the consequences of this. As Soviet history was reexamined in 1987 and subsequently, reformers began to realize that the problems of the ideology of the NEP had not been solved. Not only that, these same systemic issues were at the heart of problems with perestroika. Gorbachev's solution was to proceed to dismantle the system and to replace it. By the middle of 1988, at the XIX Party Conference, however, Gorbachev had undercut the system too severely through his radical reorganization of the Party apparatus.

In Chapter V, I try to show that by 1989, and certainly by 1990, Gorbachev had revealed the shortcomings of the Soviet system to the point of effectively destroying Soviet socialism: no one cared about ideological issues anymore. Given the choice between socialism and other options for economic activity, Soviet people opted to reject perestroika for national independence and economic and social mobility. Yet Gorbachev himself remained true to his ideals to the end. He had been counting on what he believed

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to be people's natural inclination toward socialism to override greed and other human emotions, and he had been in the process of dismantling the old system to give people opportunities to express that inclination. As it turned out, however, it was nonexistent. As he realized his error Gorbachev attempted to reassert control through what was left of the once-powerful Party apparatus. Although ultimately he failed, that is not the point; he attempted to use coercion to maintain a system which he had vaunted as being fully democratic. Thus, Gorbachev was not able to resolve the dilemma of NEP ideology that had faced Lenin. He too had been forced to resort to despotism in the name of freedom.

This investigation is an intellectual rather than a social history. It makes a contribution to our knowledge through its focus on the systemic problems of the NEP legacy and how these were dealt with by Gorbachev and by Soviet politicians, historians, publicists, lawyers and other intellectuals in the context of perestroika. Through its analysis of the Marxist concept of the Asiatic mode of production in the context of the NEP, the investigation also gives new meaning to the misgivings of East European reform Communists about Soviet socialism by placing it in its larger context of historical development.

Because of the way in which I have defined the scope of this project, I leave out a whole dimension of social issues that had an important bearing on the practical problems of the "return to NEP" and are expressed in the writings of such intellectuals as Tatiana Zaslavskaia, Abel Aganbegian, Fedor Burlatskii, and many others. I do not deny the importance of these issues, but I cannot cover them in detail here without detracting from my focus.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER I

THE LENINIST MODEL OF NATURE: THE SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS OF SOVIET SOCIAL THEORY

Lenin believed that social change progressed according to scientific principles which had their most basic foundations in natural laws. However, he was never able to determine precisely what those principles were. Indeed, developments in scientific thinking beginning in the mid-nineteenth century indicated that this was not possible. Yet Lenin rejected contemporary science and insisted on the deterministic character of the relationship of nature to society. After the Revolution Lenin assumed that the Bolshevik regime was by definition "democratic," and this assertion was based on "science." However, this position was not really valid. Social change did not proceed as the Communists expected, and they had to resort to coercion in the name of freedom to maintain power. Lenin did not want this, but he was faced with a dilemma. He could not dispense with the doctrine of scientific socialism, for that was his claim to legitimacy. But to try to reform the despotic system that arose naturally from such thinking would also weaken the regime by calling its "scientific" mandate into question. It is important to understand the theoretical roots of this dilemma, in order to appreciate why neither Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) nor Gorbachev's perestroika was able to resolve it.

A. Lenin and the Crisis of Nineteenth Century Thought

A common misconception is that Lenin had the most extensive and thorough understanding of Marxism among the Bolsheviks, and that Lenin's concept of Marxism was a major unifying factor in the Party before the Revolution. In fact there was no such

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

doctrinal unity. Lenin had political rivals, of course; but there were also a great many different interpretations of historical and dialectical materialism. Indeed, each of the Russian Social Democrats seemed to have something unique to offer to an understanding of Marxism, as Robert C. Williams has argued.[1]

This was a group of thinkers with a wide variety of ideas, yet each claimed that his interpretation was the one which explained in practice the mechanism of determinism implicit in Marxism. In this sense the Marxists were like the great majority of thinkers whose ideas were rooted in intellectual climate of the early to mid-nineteenth century. Utopian socialists, positivists and liberal capitalists all shared with the various kinds of Marxists a conviction that their system of thought was the uniquely rational one. But this very mode of thinking was being challenged by the last decades of the nineteenth century, and deterministic rationalism in social thought was seriously compromised.[2] Some thinkers, of course, persisted in the old assumptions. But even in Bolshevism, Williams argues, there was considerable mixture of notions of both absolute truth (in Lenin) and relativism (in A. A. Bogdanov).[3] But ultimately, Williams asserts, Lenin "triumphed over Bolshevism"; that is, he established his doctrinaire interpretation of Marxist thought as the orthodox one for his Party to follow, eschewing the many remaining interpretations of Marx that had characterized Bolshevism prior to 1917.

---

[1] Robert C. Williams, The Other Bolsheviks: Lenin and His Critics, 1904-1914 (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986).
[2] By the 1890s this challenge of the assumptions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century social thought was clearly in full swing. See H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), pp. 33-66, passim.
[3] Williams, op. cit., p. 189.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Williams has argued that Lenin was inconsistent in his philosophy of science, siding in 1905 with the relativist yet Bolshevik Bogdanov against the determinist but Menshevik G. V. Plekhanov for the sake of promoting revolutionary activity in Russia, then "switching sides," as it were, in 1908, using Plekhanov as an ally in his effort to undermine Bogdanov's ideas and maintain control of the Bolshevik movement.[4] Lenin's position in his polemic against Bogdanov was set forth in his 1909 book, Materialism and Empirio-Criticism. Williams has called this book "a political tract disguised as a philosophical monograph,"[5] and this is understandable given Lenin's struggle with Bogdanov. But Williams's other major characterization of the work, as "a ringing defense of orthodox Marxism, as articulated by Plekhanov,"[6] against Bolshevik "collectivism" as espoused by Bogdanov, Maxim Gorky and A. V. Lunacharsky[7] is closer to a deeper truth. In Materialism and Empirio-Criticism Lenin was in fact defending the philosophical tradition on which all of the Marxist paradigms in one way or another depended:

> Speculation that there are two- and three-dimensional spaces other than the one described by Euclid and that our experience of space is subjective and a function of our unique physiology was disturbing to the popular mind. Perhaps the most famous critic of these notions was V. I. Lenin...Like a man trying to hold down a tent in a wind, Lenin [in Materialism and Empirio-Criticism] raced about defending the objective, material world in absolute space and time that he believed to be the foundation of Marxism and which, he feared, was threatened by recent developments in mathematics and physics. [The book] is an embarrassing performance by a man straining in a field beyond his expertise, but it gives

---

[4] Ibid., pp. 133-141.
[5] Ibid., p. 141.
[6] Ibid., p. 138.
[7] Ibid. The term "collectivism" here refers to the philosophical makeup of these individuals, who, in Lenin's eyes, tried to subsume notions of idealism under a materialist rubric. It is not to be confused with socialist concepts of "collective" social institutions.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> a sense of the concrete implications and political overtones of this seemingly abstract thought.[8]

Again. Lenin's interpretation of Marxism was his own; but his concern over the challenge to determinism was one which could be applied to other interpretations of Marxism. For any of them to work, there had to exist some kind of deterministic relationship of nature to society.

Yet Lenin's "triumph over Bolshevism" was ambiguous. Though he attacked relativism and ultimately excluded rival interpretations of Marxism, Lenin never did replace them with anything more definitive. He insisted that there was a relationship between natural and social determinism, but he was never able to define it.

Yet Lenin proceeded with the more practical task of achieving revolution in Russia, confident that while contemporary scientific thinking was in flux it was nevertheless in the process of validating his paradigm. It never did so. In his open-ended defense of determinism Lenin therefore unintentionally laid the foundations for arbitrary interpretations of Marxist "science" and social development which strengthened despotic tendencies in the Soviet system later on. Just how he did so can be seen through an examination of Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.

B. The Leninist Metaphysical Basis: A Reconsideration of Materialism and Empirio-Criticism

[8] Stephen Kern, The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 134.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Leninist way of thinking[9] reflects two basic assumptions. The first, that matter alone exists and is the sole basis of what is real, is the most essential materialist axiom. The second, that matter is constantly changing in a dialectical fashion which leads, predictably over time, to more advanced forms, is based firmly in Newton, Hegel, and Darwin.[10] It was Friedrich Engels who took Marx's concept of historical materialism and grafted it onto an understanding of dialectical materialism which was rooted in this perspective. He then invoked both dialectical and historical materialism in such a manner as to explain the development not only of nature but also of human history as a function of natural principles.

---

[9] I make no pretense of full acquaintance with the huge literature on this subject. The field of philosophy has produced hundreds of books on Leninism in many languages. Historians of thought and political scientists, however, have also dealt with these issues. A standard work, illustrating the wide variety of Marxist thought, is Leszek Kolakowski's three-volume Main Currents of Marxism: Its Rise, Growth and Dissolution, translated from the Polish by P. S. Falla. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978). The most thoroughgoing one-volume treatment of the philosophical problems of Marxism, despite its age, remains H. B. Acton, The Illusion of the Epoch: Marxism-Leninism as a Philosophical Creed (London: 1955; Second Impression, Cohen and West, 1962). Alfred G. Meyer's Leninism (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957) is also highly valuable. While Acton is mainly concerned with fundamental questions of metaphysics and epistemology, Meyer addresses more practical issues of Leninist politics, that is, Leninist ethics. Other works have appeared since then, of course; but in my opinion none of them explores these questions quite so well. Later works, especially those written after the fall of the USSR, tend to judge Lenin retrospectively, portraying Leninism as an ideology that is more politically pragmatic than grounded in any genuine philosophical conviction. Examples would be Neil Harding, Leninism (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996); and Folke Dovring, Leninism: Political Economy as Pseudoscience (Westport, CT; London: Praeger, 1996). Harding's approach in this respect is, however, more balanced than Dovring's.

[10] The amalgamation of these thinkers derives from the adaptation of their ideas by Marx and Engels rather than from the compatibility of their outlooks. The relationship of Hegel to Marxism is more easily understandable than that of the other two thinkers. Though Newton was an important figure in both the scientific revolution and the beginnings of Enlightenment rationalism, he was in many ways a product of earlier thinking, as evidenced, for example, by his continued preoccupation with alchemy. Yet rationalism, which had its most important basis in Newton's physical and mathematical observations, was central to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophical paradigms, including scientific socialism, the most important proponents of which were Marx and Engels. Darwin did not subscribe to dialectics, but Engels found Darwin's ideas useful in clarifying dialectical materialism, so he adapted Darwinism to dialectical materialism. See Frederick Engels, Anti-Dühring: Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science, Third Edition (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), pp. 95-107.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This, in simplest terms, is the metaphysics of Leninism. Lenin developed Marxist ethics in the Russian context on the basis of the philosophical implications of Marxist metaphysics and epistemology. Lenin considered it his mission to aid the cause of history and help to bring about social transformations which he understood to be inevitable.

Lenin's metaphysical position is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.[11] In this work, which was based to a large degree on thoughts expounded by Engels in Anti-Dühring thirty-two years before, Lenin tried to come to grips with philosophical issues raised by discoveries in the sciences over the previous half century. Most contemporaries did not concern themselves with such things because of their complexity, and even today their implications are not completely grasped. But while Lenin did not fully understand them either, he could plainly see the challenge that they offered to his most important postulates about nature and society.[12]

Revolutionary scientific concepts forwarded by theorists during the period from 1850 to 1930 suggested that Newton's principles did not always apply after all. Lenin

---

[11] V. I. Lenin, Materializm i empiriokrititsizm, in V. I. Lenin, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii (PSS), fifth ed., vol. 18 (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1961). Henceforth, unless noted otherwise, citations from PSS will be from the fifth edition (Moskva: 1958-1965). Actually, the bulk of this work was written by the fall of 1908. This is important for understanding both the context in which it was written and its importance (see below, note 7). The editor's notes in the PSS (vol. 18, p. 7) indicate that it was written between February and October 1908, with additions to Chapter 4 being made in March 1909. The first edition was published in May 1909 by the Zveno Press, Moscow; the second (1920) by the Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo. The rendition in the PSS is based on both editions. The English translation, Materialism and Empirio-Criticism: Critical Comments on a Reactionary Philosophy (New York: Progress Publishers, 1927), is on the whole satisfactory.

[12] I will confine myself as much as possible to the philosophical implications of these changes in scientific thinking generally. The present analysis is intended neither as an overview of developments in the sciences during the period in question nor as an exercise in elucidating technical jargon or theory. I will adumbrate only the key threads of argument which illustrate both a very real challenge to Lenin's deepest convictions and how he reacted to it. The secondary literature is lacking a more technical treatment of Lenin's Materializm i empiriokrititsizm and his related writings; this is sorely needed and would be a worthwhile endeavor for an interested historian of science.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

recognized the potential that such ideas had for undermining the position of a dialectical materialist. Physicists were taking physics beyond Newton, making feasible a reconsideration of non-material reality. Such a position could not be reconciled with dialectical and historical materialism. As long as the world was not ordered according to definite natural principles, a true materialist could not be a determinist. In other words, while one could still be a materialist, the notion of determinism in the structure of nature and the processes by which it changed, which was so characteristic of the Newtonian perspective and essential to Marxism, was no longer valid.

Lenin was deeply concerned. The cornerstone of his political position, the primacy of the Party, assumed that history and politics were governed by deterministic principles which could only be understood by a properly-trained Communist. Only such a person, therefore, could formulate and implement scientifically "correct" social policy. Developments in science certainly did not dispense with sociological reality. Social stratification based on class and conflict arising from it remained very real. But if there were no universal principles of material and hence social change, any path of historical development would be equally possible. Lenin remained concerned with these issues for the rest of his life. He published a second edition of Materialism and Empirio-Criticism in 1920, suggesting both his insistence on the validity of his position and his continued preoccupation with the problems he wrestled with therein.[13] Ultimately, the book

[13] In addition, Lenin's article dated March 3, 1922, "O znachenii voinstvuiushchego materializma," published in the March 1922 number of Pod znamenem marksizma, PSS, vol. 45, pp. 23-33, shows his deep preoccupation with these issues even in the midst of his final illness. We will confine ourselves to Materializm i empiriokrititsizm in the present analysis, however.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

exposed something else as well. Lenin's spirited yet inconclusive and somewhat desperate defense of dialectical and historical materialism revealed his own "fideism" (fideizm), or understanding of the world from a particular position of faith, a quality which he so ruthlessly attacked and exclusively attributed to those whose work he sought to marginalize.[14]

Lenin's strategy in Materialism and Empirio-Criticism was first to remind his readers of the logical absurdity of idealism and second to call into question the general perceptions of the implications of recent scientific discoveries, in order to discredit the philosophical challenge to dialectical and historical materialism.

The first half of Materialism and Empirio-Criticism was comprised of three chapters collectively titled "The Theory of Knowledge." Here Lenin tried to confront and to discredit every possible argument that there may be non-material aspects of reality. Lenin's attack was directed mainly against Ernst Mach (the discoverer of the sound barrier), and Richard Avenarius.[15] Those who cling to idealism, Lenin asserted,

---

[14] In the preface to the first edition of Materializm i empiriokrititsizm (September 1908) Lenin plainly identified those whom the work was directed against. He cited four books which had appeared that year and were "devoted mainly and almost exclusively to attacks on dialectical materialism": V. Bazarov, A. Bogdanov, A. Lunacharskii, Ia. Berman, O. Helfond, P. Iushkevich and S. Suvorov, Ocherki po filosofii marksizma (Sankt Peterburg, 1908); P. Iushkevich, Materializm i kriticheskii realizm (Sankt Peterburg, 1908); Ia. Berman, Dialektika v svete sovremennoi teorii poznaniia (Moskva, 1908); and V. Valentinov, Filosofskie postroeniia marksizma (Moskva, 1908). In a broader sense, however, Lenin was really reacting against a philosophical tide which had its genesis in Germany and Austria and was only partially represented in these works. That Lenin's preface was dated September 1908 might not at first be cause for surprise. Lenin's amazing productivity as a writer is one of the well-known facts of Russian and early Soviet intellectual history. But the appearance of Materializm i empiriokrititsizm so soon after the books Lenin attacked also suggests the urgency of his polemic. Materializm i empiriokrititsizm revealed the metaphysics of Leninism in a unique and instructive way, and so it bears the treatment that it is given here.

[15] The complexity of this book must be borne in mind. Lenin cites and argues against a great many intellectuals in Materializm i empiriokrititsizm. Although Lenin's arguments here are extremely important to a proper understanding of the significance of dialectical and historical materialism to both Lenin and his heirs, that is not the main focus of this study. Consequently I can cover only the major issues here. My aim

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

invariably revert to a basic admission of material reality. Put another way, those who maintain that things are comprised only of our sensations must perforce acknowledge that something must exist in order to cause the sensations, or complexes of sensations, that we associate with "things" in our minds. Idealists, Lenin claimed, do not recognize this but instead try to have it both ways. Their epistemological arguments lead to a position of solipsism; yet they acknowledge the material world as a matter of course in their everyday living, in effect confirming the veracity of the materialist position. Even worse, said Lenin, were those who claimed to be materialists but in fact advocated a disguised variant of idealism. One such materialist/idealist, in Lenin's eyes, was Alexander Bogdanov. Lenin criticized Bogdanov harshly, charging him with serious philosophical duplicity. Lenin's polemic focused on a key assertion in Bogdanov's Empirio-Monism:

> Bogdanov, raising an objection to Plekhanov, wrote in 1906: "I cannot consider myself a Machian in philosophy. I have borrowed only one thing from Mach's philosophical belief system--the idea of the neutrality of the elements of experience in relation to the 'physical' and 'psychical,' and the dependence of these characteristics solely on the connection of experience." This is as though a religious person were to say, "I cannot consider myself a believer in religion, for there is "only one thing" I have borrowed from the believers--the belief in God." The "only one thing" that Bogdanov borrowed from Mach is also the fundamental error of Machism, the basic falsity of that entire philosophy.[16]

In other words, argues the materialist, sensation could arise only as a consequence of the reality of material objects; there can be no "neutrality" or detachment of experience from

is conciseness, and I make no pretense of being other than highly selective in terms of what I cite from Materializm i empiriokrititsizm; but through the evidence that I have adduced I have made every effort to render Lenin's position faithfully.

[16] Lenin, PSS, vol. 18, p. 53. The quote of Bogdanov is from his Empiriomonism, kniga III, (Sankt Peterburg, 1906), p. xli. Here and elsewhere, all emphasis is as published.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

concrete material entities. In fact, says the materialist, our brains generate in us a reflection based upon our sensory perceptions of our environment:

> ...[E]xperience creates our conviction that things, the world, the environment, exist independently of us. Our sensations, our consciousness are only an image of the external world, and it is self-evident that a reflection cannot exist without the thing being reflected, and that the latter exists independently of that which reflects it.[17]

Materialism, therefore, presupposes the existence of objects whether or not we perceive them. Lenin was trying here to refute the position of subjective idealism, held by Avenarius and by Johann G. Fichte and George Berkeley before him. For such thinkers, all that can be guaranteed is that the self exists; but the things we perceive are ipso facto indissolubly linked to the self we know to exist, so they must also be present. This subjective idealism, Lenin argued, cannot be squared with "naive realism," or a simple practical awareness of the existence of objects, because it proceeds from the assumption that existence can only be defined in terms of the consciousness of the individual. Lenin made this point because Avenarius considered himself a materialist. But Avenarius's position did not satisfy Lenin's concept of proper materialism. Lenin was a dialectical materialist, something which he did not expect "bourgeois" scientists to understand; but he did insist that by definition a materialist of any stripe must be a determinist. He held

[17] Ibid., p. 66. The requirement for material agents of experience, in the materialist's logic, would entail that hallucinations or nightmares be attributed to some chemical or physiological imbalance. The taking of drugs or alcohol could also be cited as a material cause of mental derangement. It should be noted, however, that this argument breaks down when we recall the work of the neurophysiologist Scott Sherrington in the early part of the twentieth century. Electrical stimulation of the brain can produce false sensations, even inappropriate psychological and physical reactions. But even though Lenin would have recognized electricity as a form of matter/energy (electrons), and he would have argued that this matter/energy produced these sensations, he could not have maintained under such circumstances that perception bore a direct relation to what was perceived. This is especially true given that when human subjects are so stimulated, they are able to recognize the falsity of their perceptions.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that nature was not only infinitely knowable but also governed by universal principles. For the subjective idealist, on the other hand, experience was rendered indeterminate by its very subjectivity. Indeed, in such a belief system there could be no clear distinction between experience as such and what was experienced. Avenarius, then, could not really reconcile the idealist and materialist viewpoints, because they proceeded from different basic premises which were entirely incompatible.[18]

Lenin's most powerful argument against such notions was his assertion that nature did in fact exist before man, indeed before life itself. Given that, he continued, it would be absurd to suggest that reality consists only in the connection of our perceptions with ourselves. For the materialist, consciousness is a condition of matter itself. Our brains produce consciousness, but they are nevertheless material. To say otherwise, Lenin maintained, one would have to revert to solipsism, a position which is a philosophical dead end.

Lenin argued further that there was such a thing as objective truth; that is, human ideas can have a content that does not depend on a subject of any sort. This assertion is consistent with the notion that things could exist independently of our perception of them, and it is also in accordance with the tenets of Newtonian science.[19] It is for this reason that Lenin was so concerned with Bogdanov's position in Empirio-Monism. For Bogdanov, there could be no such thing as absolute truth because it would be impossible

[18] Ibid., pp. 63-71, passim. Here Lenin was assailing Avenarius' central position in Der menschliche Weltbegriff (Leipzig: Reisland, 1891). Lenin derived his argument from Norman Smith, "Avenarius' Philosophy of Pure Existence," Mind 1906 (XV).
[19] Ibid., pp. 123-125.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to conceptualize. If an event or fact were outside the experience of an individual it could not be a part of his particular reality, so as one grows in experience, "truth" constantly changes. Moreover, "truth" is different for each individual. Even scientific "truths" are only valid given certain conditions; the "natural laws" that we can derive are necessarily incomplete explanations of reality.

Using Engels's approach to this problem in Anti-Dühring,[20] Lenin countered that although the thought of an individual is limited, human thought as such is a universal phenomenon. Thus, the concepts of absolute truth and the limited truth of individual experience are compatible since they are reconcilable in the infinite progression of events. In other words, a given proposition may be demonstrably true only in a limited context, but the aggregation of these relative truths over time constitutes absolute truth. As Lenin put it, "From the standpoint of modern materialism, i.e., Marxism, the limits of approximation of our knowledge to objective, absolute truth are historically conditioned, but the existence of such truth is unconditional, and we are for a certainty approaching nearer to it."[21] Failure to accept this idea is the crime with which Lenin charged Mach

[20] Engels, Anti-Dühring, pp. 118-132, passim.
[21] Lenin, PSS, vol. 18, p. 138. This is classic dialectical thinking. The proletarian dictatorship and the end of history will come, regardless of the means used to achieve it. From this notion comes the temptation to dismiss Marxism as a pseudo-science, an ideology which can explain everything but solve nothing. Lenin would charge that those who make such a criticism do not understand the dialectical nature of Marxism, and in this he would be correct. In 1923 Gyorgy Lukacs wrote a very important book on the relationship between dialectical materialism, historical materialism and material culture, History and Class Consciousness. His first chapter, "What is Orthodox Marxism?", agrees with Lenin's approach here. In general Lukacs's argument may be thought of as subsuming both the dialectic and what was actually Marx's fundamental postulate in The German Ideology (1845-1846; first published in Moscow in 1932), namely, that the material culture of a society is what chiefly gives form and expression to its artistic and ideal culture. Lukacs argues, therefore, that the specific characteristics of society at a given moment are not so important as general trends of social change, since in more specific contexts such change occurs dialectically and is therefore unpredictable. It is on the basis of such logic that Marxists generally defended

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and Avenarius, as well as Russians whose positions approximated theirs, such as Bogdanov and Victor Chernov (the leading theorist of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party).

Thus, Lenin insisted that Marxism had at its core a very well defined concept of the nature of reality, which had its clearest origins in Engels's Anti-Dühring and which he fiercely defended in Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.[22] Lenin argued that a systematic materialist approach to philosophy and knowledge is not compromised by a criticism based on idealistic notions of non-material reality, since to accept the premises of such a rejoinder would lead to practical absurdity. Put another way, practical experience proves the veracity of materialist ways of thinking. In his introductory essay, "In Lieu of an Introduction," Lenin cited a philosophical discussion between Jean d'Alembert and Denis Diderot on the relationship between science and philosophy. Diderot tried to dissuade d'Alembert from an idealist position on the nature of reality. One statement made by Diderot, whom Lenin regarded highly, illustrated rather nicely Lenin's position as well:

> Metaphysico-theological nonsense!...Be a physicist and agree to recognize the derivative character of a given effect when you see how it is derived,

---

their creed before the debacle of 1989-1991. See Lukacs, History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics, translated by Rodney Livingstone. Translation copyright The Merlin Press, Ltd., 1971. Tenth printing. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), pp. 1-26, passim.

[22] Materializm i empiriokrititsizm demonstrates a certain balance in Lenin's thinking about Marxism. There is in Lenin's argument both the notion of naive realism, founded in basic materialism, and the idea of absolute truth, grounded in the dialectic. I therefore cannot agree with Paul Josephson's assertion that Materializm i empiriokrititsizm belonged exclusively to the "vulgar materialist" tendency of Marxist philosophy of science. Josephson notes the conflict between the "Mechanists," or those Soviet physicists in the 1920s who proceeded from naive realism in their approach to nature, and the "Dialecticians," who, after the teaching of A. M. Deborin, emphasized the dialectic in order to account for natural diversity and eschewed determinism. Paul R. Josephson, Physics and Politics in Revolutionary Russia (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), p. 226. It seems that Lenin in Materializm i empiriokrititsizm insisted on a confluence of both views. His successors were the ones who drew the distinction.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> though you may be unable to explain the relationship between the cause and the effect. Be logical and do not replace a cause that exists and explains everything by some cause which it is impossible to grasp, whose connection with the effect is even less comprehensible, and which engenders an infinite number of difficulties without solving a single one of them.[23]

As emphatic and self-assured as Diderot's demand may seem, Lenin's invocation of this passage seems to suggest in Lenin a certain urgency, a hope that his reasoning will ultimately be accepted by the reader for its practical simplicity.

Throughout Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, Lenin continually reminds his readers of the diametrically opposite poles of idealism and materialism, emphasizing the uncertainty of knowledge in the former and the logical soundness of the latter. Even what we cannot perceive, argued Lenin, must have properties which are consistent with nature in general, since the a priori existence of matter must be true. In the midst of his polemic Lenin made a declaration upon which his entire system of thought depended:

> [A]re space and time real or ideal? Are our relative conceptions of space and time approximations of objectively real forms of being? Or are they only products of developing, organizing and harmonizing human thought? This and this alone is the basic epistemological problem which divides the truly fundamental philosophical trends [idealism and materialism].[24]

Here Lenin indeed struck at the heart of the matter, and he did so in a way that he would not live to become aware of. Even though it has not repudiated Newton's ideas altogether, physics has made a radical departure from the Newtonian perspective. From the standpoint of Newtonian science Lenin's assertion that time and space were "real"

[23] Denis Diderot, quoted in Lenin, PSS, vol. 18, p. 30.
[24] Ibid., p. 182.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

(i.e., possessing universal, uniform attributes) rather than "ideal," (i.e., subjectively defined), was defensible. And defend it he did, for it was necessary to his world view that this be so.

Lenin attacked Mach, Avenarius, and the numerous adherents to their perspective not so much because they were idealists as because of a more fundamental epistemological position which led to their idealism, their rejection of the universal validity of Newtonian mechanics. Lenin could always scoff at idealistic foolishness, but he could not suffer attacks on the fundamental axioms of his scientific persuasion. Although Lenin regarded Mach[25] and Avenarius[26] as the most significant figures in the challenge to his epistemology, those who shared their ideas were also important. Among others were Pierre Duhem,[27] Ernst Haeckel,[28] and J. B. Stallo.[29] What bothered Lenin the most was that men like Bogdanov, Chernov and Anatolii Lunacharskii, among others, were giving credence to these ideas, which to his mind were threatening the Russian revolutionary movement. Whereas the work of Western scientists at this time attached the most significance to what they viewed as the relativity of knowledge,[30] Lenin staked his career on a conviction that knowledge was concrete.

> All the old truths of physics, including those which were regarded as incontestable and unshakable, have proven to be relative truths--hence, there can be no objective truth independent of mankind. So goes the

[25] Ernst Mach, Die Mechanik in ihrer Entwicklung historisch-kritisch dargestellt, 3rd. ed. (Leipzig, 1897).
[26] Richard Avenarius, Kritik der reinen Erfahrung Vols. I and II, (Leipzig: Reisland, 1888-1890); Der menschliche Weltbegriff (Leipzig: Reisland, 1891).
[27] Pierre Duhem, La théorie physique, son objet et sa structure (Paris, 1906).
[28] Ernst Haeckel, Die Welträtsel (Bonn, 1899). Lenin also treats an article by Franz Mehring of the same name, which appeared in Neue Zeit, 1899-1900, Vol. I.
[29] J. B. Stallo, The Concepts and Theories of Modern Physics (London, 1882).
[30] Lenin, PSS, vol. 18, p. 328.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> reasoning of not only all of Machism, but also all "physical" idealism in general. The fact that absolute truth takes shape from the sum-total of relative truths in the course of their development; that relative truths represent relatively faithful reflections of an object existing independently of man; that these reflections become more and more faithful; that every scientific truth, notwithstanding its relative nature, contains an element of absolute truth--all these propositions, which are self-evident to anyone who has thought over Engels's Anti-Dühring, presents a book with seven seals to the "modern" theory of knowledge.[31]

The ideas which Lenin was attacking so vehemently had their genesis in changing concepts of nature in scientific circles in the West, particularly in Germany and Austria. He was not cognizant of all the threads of these developments; but he was keenly aware of the philosophical implications of the "new physics," as it is still called today. Lenin, however, preferred to associate the quotation marks with the modifier rather than with both words. As far as he was concerned, the scientists were misinterpreting their own work, giving philosophical idealism a chance to reassert itself in a different guise, through artful semantics, as a part of the new European cosmology. Even in this, said Lenin, dialectical processes were in operation which would result ultimately in proper understanding.

> In a word, the "physical" idealism of today, just as the "physiological" idealism of yesterday, merely means that one school of natural scientists in one branch of natural science has slid into a reactionary philosophy, being unable to rise directly and at once from metaphysical materialism to dialectical materialism. Modern physics is taking and will take this step; but it is moving toward the only true method and the only true philosophy of natural science not directly, but by zigzags, not consciously, but instinctively, not clearly perceiving its "final goal," but drawing closer to it gropingly, unsteadily, and sometimes even with its

[31] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> back turned to it. Modern physics is in labor; it is giving birth to dialectical materialism.[32]

Modern physics was in fact "giving birth" to something very different, something which, while it did not do away with materialism, did indeed dispel any notion that one could impose an order on the universe in accordance with any concept of determinism, be it dialectical materialism or anything else. Over the next two decades the new epistemology prevailed and seriously undermined the metaphysical basis of nineteenth century thought. Scientists discredited the notion of the universal applicability of Newtonian science, hence destroying its philosophical omnipotence. As physicists realized that developments in the sciences in the last three decades of the nineteenth century might be valid, they began to reinvestigate the nature of space, time, and matter. The two most important results of this investigation were Albert Einstein's theory of relativity, published in 1905,[33] and Niels Bohr's theory of quantum mechanics, developed in the 1920s. I will not, of course, attempt to describe these here in any detail. But a few examples of their impact are warranted, in order to illustrate the issues at hand.[34]

---

[32] Ibid., pp. 331-332.

[33] Lenin does not seem to have been aware of Einstein's work in 1908-1909. Einstein is not mentioned in Materializm i empiriokrititsizm. Lenin does discuss what he views as the philosophical dangers of Einstein's theory of relativity in his March 1923 essay, "O znachenii voinstvuiushchego materializma," PSS, vol. 45, pp. 23-33; see pp. 25, 29. (See note 13, above.) But inasmuch as Einstein's breakthrough proceeded from the assumptions of those Lenin attacked in Materializm i empiriokrititsizm, Lenin very likely would have numbered Einstein among the Machians in 1908-1909. As for Einstein, in an obituary for Mach in 1916 he stated, "I believe even that those who consider themselves as opponents of Mach are hardly aware of how much of Mach's way of thinking they imbibed, so to speak, with their mother's milk." The obituary appears in Albert Einstein, "Ernst Mach," Physikalische Zeitschrift, 1916 (17):101-104; p. 102. I have taken the quote from p. 27 of Gerald Holton, "Ernst Mach and the Fortunes of Positivism in America," ISIS, 1992 (83):27-60.

[34] In recent years there has been an increased popular interest in the scientific discoveries of the first part of the twentieth century and their meaning, resulting in many publications dealing with one aspect or another of the impact of the "new physics." Stephen Hawking's A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes (New York: Bantam Books, 1988) is a more famous example of such a work by a highly

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Einstein's theory of relativity distorted forever Newtonian concepts of time, space and motion. Einstein showed that the passage of time had everything to do with relative motion. The faster one moves, the slower the passage of time relative to a slower-moving observer. A traveler moving near the speed of light would age very little relative to time on Earth. At such speeds, the passage of a few months would correspond to several decades having elapsed on Earth, hence the term "time warp." Moreover, as time "expands," space "shrinks"; distances appear shorter, indeed are shorter, as one approaches the speed of light. Einstein also connected time passage to gravity: the stronger a gravitational field, the slower time moves. These findings not only work out mathematically, but they also have been demonstrated using ultra-sensitive instruments. One example is that scientists have found stars where, because of the strength of their gravitational fields, time passage is slower than on Earth by several percent.[35]

Though Einstein did not accept quantum mechanics, Bohr's conclusions were also vitally important in terms of the challenge that they presented to Newtonian science. Quite literally, material objects are what we perceive them to be only in the crudest sense. Although there is certainly an order to nature, matter at the sub-atomic level behaves most chaotically. The basic, atomic structure of an object is in constant, unpredictable flux. So far, this can be considered to be consistent with dialectical materialism: this chaotic

---

respected scientist and popular author who has tried to make these very complex ideas more accessible to the general reader. For our purposes, however, a more effective treatment in my opinion is Paul Davies, God and the New Physics, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983). I have adapted my very brief discussion of these topics from Davies's book, which is highly readable and provocative in terms of its challenge to commonly held physical and philosophical notions and is quite useful whether or not one agrees with it fully.

[35] Ibid., p. 122.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

behavior at the atomic level resulting in order at the perceptible level is in perfect harmony with the idea of the dialectic. But as a result of pondering the nature of life from the perspective of quantum mechanics, scientists began to realize the holistic nature of mind. Our minds must depend on more than just the electronic activity of the brain. Reductionist arguments based on materialism explain very little about the concept of the self. Very crudely speaking, recent science asserts that what makes us individuals is not so much the material of which we are made as the way in which each of us thinks, or the patterns of thought that are unique in each of our brains, coupled with our experiences through sensory perception.[36] Though it is still consistent with materialism, this line of thinking is devoid of determinism. What this amounts to saying is that, in effect, Bogdanov's approach in Empirio-Monism was more intellectually honest than Lenin's position.

Whereas relativity demonstrated that time and space are not absolute, quantum mechanics showed that Newtonian mechanics had only a limited range of applicability beyond which physical phenomena were indeterminate. Thus the deterministic core of nineteenth century scientific and social thought could not be defended.

In Western Europe these realizations, along with similar ones in fields outside the physical sciences, turned perspectives inside out in all areas of culture and political theory in the first decades of this century.[37] This intellectual development has generally endured

[36] Davies, op. cit., chapters 5-9, when read together, give a good understanding of the issues at stake here in much greater and informative detail.
[37] By far the best survey of these developments is Kern, op. cit. A noted personality among those outside of the field of physics whose careers were influenced by Mach was the psychologist B. F. Skinner (1904-1990), who is discussed in Holton, op. cit. But Lenin's attack on one Machian scientist, the physicist and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in Western Europe and the United States to this day, where its various manifestations have come to be known collectively as postmodern thought. Indeed, "postmodernism" implies a rejection of the dominance of the ideology of the age of rationalism, with its notions of universal empirical truth. While it has done much to unsettle the culture that previous generations were used to, postmodernism has also made clear the necessity of avoiding deterministic thinking as much as possible in considerations of policy formulation. History has enough examples of the brutality that would result, whether the basis of the regime is religious or secular.[38] Niels Bohr himself, who was as much of a political activist as a physical theorist, recognized this.[39] Lenin, however, refused to do so. So did his successors.

---

philosopher Philipp Frank (1884-1966), had an interesting outcome. Frank's article, "Kausalgesetz und Erfahrung," was savaged by Lenin in Materializm i empiriokrititsizm (PSS, vol. 18, pp. 170-171) but praised by Albert Einstein, who became a lifelong friend of Frank's. Frank was even made a target by the FBI in the midst of early Cold War anti-Communist hysteria, possibly because of his having done consulting work for the U.S. Navy or because of Lenin's citation, and when two FBI agents visited his home to question him he placated them fully by showing them the passage where Lenin had attacked him. See Holton, op. cit., p. 43; and Holton, op. cit., footnote 48.

[38] Perhaps the clearest explanation of how deterministic ideologies lead invariably to despotic forms of government is in a work first published in 1944 by two members of the "Frankfurt School" of Marxist thought, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, Dialektik der Aufklärung. Their thesis is that "the core of truth is historical, rather than an unchanging constant to be set against the movement of history." Philosophy of Enlightenment, John Cumming, trans. (New York: Continuum, 1990), p. ix. Thus, governments based on deterministic philosophical paradigms can only be maintained through political coercion, since they insist on the validity of certain "unchanging constants" which have nothing to do with reality. Though this book was originally written to explain this phenomenon in the context of Nazism, it was reprinted in 1969 and subsequently, in part because its argument also applied very well to the politics of the Cold War.

[39] In May 1950 Bohr submitted an open letter to UN General Secretary Trygve Lie in which he advocated ideas very similar to the pacifism in Soviet "new thinking" under Gorbachev. Bohr's object was to lessen the danger of nuclear holocaust. The letter, however, did not have much impact at the time; but Bohr was remembered for this in the Soviet Union in October 1985, the centenary of his birth. Abraham Pais, a physicist and one of Bohr's students, has called him a "pioneer of glasnost." Pais, however, did not seem to understand the connection of Gorbachev's "New Thinking" to a defense of Leninist determinism, or the problems inherent in this. See Pais, Niels Bohr's Times: In Physics, Philosophy and Polity (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 518. Pais cites here a television conference in October 1985 between Copenhagen, Moscow, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, in which Bohr's appeal for an open world was

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

C. Bukharin and Marxist Science

The Soviet Union retained its Newtonian-Leninist model of nature. That this was important to the ideology of the NEP has been demonstrated by Stephen F. Cohen in his analysis of Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin's concepts of physical science. Bukharin's ideas for Soviet economics, of course, informed as they were by a considerable understanding of the work of Russian and foreign "bourgeois" economists and sociologists to whom the other Bolsheviks paid little attention, set him apart as a theorist. But what is ironic is that Bukharin's most fundamental views were in conformity to Lenin's, despite Cohen's insistence Bukharinism at its core represented something different.[40] Cohen has set the standard for thinking in both the West and Russia about Bukharin, who was after Lenin himself the staunchest supporter and advocate of the NEP. As is the case with Williams, a major point of departure in Cohen's work on Bukharin[41] is the assertion that there was no universal Bolshevik system of thought, and that Bukharin's own views underwent considerable development over the course of his career. Thus, attempts to fit Bukharin into a specific epistemology, such as those made by his enemies after his fall from power, are inaccurate, unfair, and distort our understanding of the contributions of Bukharin, actual or potential, to Soviet socialism.

---

discussed. The conference was published in A. Boserup, L. Christensen, and O. Natan, eds., The Challenge of Nuclear Armaments (Copenhagen: Rodos, 1986). A follow up appeared in N. Barford et. al., eds., The Challenge of an Open World (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1989). For a detailed discussion of Bohr's politics, see Pais, op. cit., pp. 473-518, passim.

[40] It is this philosophical aspect of Bukharinism to which we will devote our attention. Any attempt to analyze Bukharin's social and economic theories in any detail would not be justified in the context of the present work.

[41] Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution, A Political Biography, 1888-1938 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973; revised ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Cohen's emphasis on the varied factors influencing the evolution of Bukharin's thought is logical enough. But Cohen has mistakenly attributed to Bukharin insights in Marxist natural and social theory that had already been developed by Lenin, notwithstanding Bukharin's unique policy formulations.

Despite his insistence on the eclectic and dynamic character of Bukharin's philosophy, Cohen was convinced that there was a core set of ideas in Bukharinism, and he felt that it would be the basis of Soviet reform efforts in the future.[42] Bukharin's major contribution to Marxist science, Cohen asserted, was in his theory of scientific socialism as expounded in his 1921 work, The Theory of Historical Materialism: A Popular Textbook of Marxist Sociology.[43]

The bases of Bukharin's concept of historical materialism, however, had actually been developed by Lenin in Materialism and Empirio-Criticism in 1909 through Lenin's defense of rationalism in natural and social development. That Cohen misunderstood the importance of Lenin's work is apparent by the way in which he treated it as nothing more than a diatribe against Bogdanov, "a relentless assault on Bogdanov's 'reactionary philosophy.'"[44] Cohen further stated,

> ...Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, its vaunted status in Soviet philosophy notwithstanding, was one of Lenin's least impressive efforts, while Bogdanov's writings, however questionable in their fidelity to Marx,

[42] Cohen, of course, figured prominently in promoting Gorbachev's efforts under perestroika, and as such he was important in the intellectual history of Gorbachev's USSR. But his analysis is also vitally important when one considers Bukharin in the era of the NEP. It is therefore against the backdrop of Cohen's work that we will treat Bukharin.
[43] Teoriia istoricheskogo materializma: populiarnyi uchebnik marksistskoi sotsiologii (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo Ukrainy, 1923). Henceforth I will use Cohen's simpler rendition of the title into English, Historical Materialism.
[44] Cohen, op. cit., p. 15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> constituted an exciting reinvestigation of and adaptation of Marxist theory. Bukharin's later work, particularly Historical Materialism (1921), showed Bogdanov's enduring influence on his intellectual development. Bukharin was not, however, Bogdanov's disciple, as his party enemies were later to argue. He did not accept the older theorist's philosophical arguments, but rather admired and was influenced by his capacity for creative innovation within the framework of Marxist ideas. Theirs was a similarity of intellectual temperament. Like the mature Bukharin, Bogdanov was a "seeking Marxist," refusing to regard Marxism as a closed, immutable system and regularly alert both to its inadequacies and to the accomplishments of rival doctrines. Lenin, suspicious of Bogdanov's theoretical innovations and enraged by his political opposition, insisted that the two were somehow related and condemned him as unworthy in every respect.[45]

It is true that Lenin devoted a large part of Materialism and Empirio-Criticism to attacking Bogdanov. But Lenin's polemic cut much deeper than that. He was defending dialectical materialism itself against a philosophical onslaught of which Bogdanov was only a peripheral representative. More to the point, Lenin stood for the very epistemology that lay at the heart of Bukharin's Historical Materialism; and the fundamental ideological agreement of the two men was ultimately based on their shared understanding of the notion of determinism in dialectical and historical materialism.

Bukharin was faithful to what he believed to be sound principles of scientific Marxism. As Cohen observed,

> Bukharin's quest for a scientific ("radically materialist") sociology, his desire to counter the charge that Marxism embodied an ultimate idealism, led him instead to mechanism. Previously, he explained, Marxists had opposed mechanistic explanations in the social sciences; [q.v.] but this had derived from the old and discredited conception of the atom as "a detached isolated particle." The electron theory, with its new findings on the structure and movement of matter, disproved this and validated the language of mechanics as a means of expressing organic connections

---

[45] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> [q.v.]. Whether or not Bukharin fully understood modern physics is less important [q.v.] than his belief that "the most advanced tendencies of scientific thought in all fields accept this point of view."
>
> [Newtonian] Mechanics, it seemed to him [and Lenin], demonstrated the scientific basis of Marxist materialism, and mechanistic materialism refuted those thinkers who persisted in "spiritualizing" and "psychologizing" social concepts.[46]

There was thus nothing at all in Bukharin's position in Historical Materialism which was inconsistent with Marxist science as Lenin interpreted it, and it is clear from Cohen's analysis here that Bukharin shared the same convictions as Lenin regarding natural science and determinism. To be sure, Historical Materialism was about social science. But its basic assumptions had to do with determinism in natural phenomena. Put another way, Bukharinism, like other variants of Marxist thought, was also based on the deterministic assumptions of nineteenth century thought. Cohen pointed out that radical Marxists, including Stalinists later on, eschewed Historical Materialism because of its theories of gradualism, which were based on the ideas of "bourgeois" sociologists.[47] However, in Bukharin's defense one could recall an obvious fact: revolutions were never a constant feature of social development; they were few and far between. Bukharin could not deny the observations made by "bourgeois" sociologists about this. But something

---

[46] Cohen, op. cit., pp. 115-116. Cohen's quote of Bukharin is from Historical Materialism, p. 75. Bukharin restated his position concisely in the essay, "K postanovke problem teorii istoricheskogo materializma," Ataka: sbornik teoreticheskikh statei (Moskva: 1924), pp. 115-127, passim. (Henceforth Ataka.) This essay was first published in Vestnik sotsialisticheskikh akademii, 1923 (3).

[47] Cohen, op. cit., p. 119. Cohen's position was that innovations in sociology were what presented the greatest challenge to Marxist thought in the first part of the twentieth century, and that Historical Materialism constituted Bukharin's rebuttal of this challenge. Cohen's assertion on p. 118 that by the early 1900s "mechanical equilibrium models (especially dynamic ones) had spread from physics and biology to the social sciences...and then, as today [1973], equilibrium theory was an important part of Western sociological and economic thought" was true enough. However, there is no indication that Cohen was aware of the fact that physicists were abandoning these principles, or the philosophical significance of the transformations in physics.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

had to explain these long periods of relative (though not complete) social equilibrium in Marxist terms. Bukharin's argument in Historical Materialism did so to his satisfaction, and it did so by incorporating Lenin's most fundamental position in Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, the insistence on the existence of a deterministic relationship between natural and social phenomena.

Clearly, Lenin understood and confronted the same problems in interpreting Marxism that Bukharin did in Historical Materialism. Moreover, he did so long before Bukharin did and at a more fundamental level. What mattered to Lenin in Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, however, was not the challenge raised by "bourgeois" sociologists, but that posed by recent science to the most fundamental assumptions of dialectical materialism with respect to nature itself.

Viewed in this light, Historical Materialism was not a major innovation. It was a significant refinement and extension of Bukharin's position, to be sure; but it was an adaptation based upon the school of early Soviet experience, not a fundamental departure from the basic ideas about nature (dialectical materialism) that Bukharin had held all along. As Bukharin himself put it,

> In my book The Theory of Historical Materialism I tried not only to repeat what had been said before, but, on the one hand, to give certain other formulations of the same idea, and, on the other, to refine and to develop the thesis of the theory of historical materialism, to carry further the resolution of its problems. As is known, Engels held shortly before his death that only the first steps had been taken in the field of historical materialism...[48]

[48] N. I. Bukharin, "K postanovke problem teorii istoricheskogo materializma," Ataka, p. 115. Emphasis as published.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This was precisely the problem that Marxism as a whole bequeathed to the Russian revolutionists. Marx and Engels never did determine the laws of nature that governed social development, so they never could set forth a sociology of the socialist mode of production. They did insist, however, that the class struggle would end someday, somehow, with Communism, the final stage of socialism. Lenin's and Bukharin's expectation that the class struggle should diminish in the early stages of socialism with the proletariat (and peasantry) in power was therefore perfectly logical. But the idea that enemies of socialism could still exist under these conditions was also logical, and it was one that Bukharin never really could come to terms with, especially after the transition from War Communism to the NEP. On the other hand Stalin, to the horror of the world, applied this logic ruthlessly.

The conflicts that Lenin and Bukharin had were grounded in their differing approaches to the pragmatic issues of social development in Russia, but their shared concerns about the condition of Soviet socialism in the early years of the NEP was a major impetus behind the rapprochement between the two men toward the end of Lenin's life.[49] We will take up those concerns and their significance in the next chapter.

D. The Institutionalization of the Leninist Model of Nature

---

[49] By late 1922 Bukharin and Lenin had arrived at agreement on the significance of the NEP, per Cohen, op. cit., p. 153. Lenin and Bukharin continued to disagree on other matters, but the evidence that they drew closer due to their shared concern about growing despotism in the Soviet system is significant. After Lenin's death Bukharin repeatedly referred to the reservations Lenin expressed in his last works as a sort of political testament, and given his closeness to Lenin in his last days he was confident that he spoke for him. Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It was under Stalin that the philosophy of dialectical materialism and the deterministic Leninist model of nature was accorded official recognition.[50] Though natural determinism had always been a core Leninist doctrine, the institutionalization of the concept helped Stalin politically. To be sure, Soviet physicists dealt with the effects of ideology on science, though not very effectively. They had to use Aesopian language and ideologically-framed analogies for transmitting their ideas.[51] It was a lot easier for Stalin's institutionalization of dialectical materialism to take hold in other sciences, such as biology. Stalin's drive to "master nature" in 1948 and the Lysenko affair are just two of the more famous examples of the continued influence of determinism on Soviet science long after Lenin's death.[52] As Cohen has reminded us in our discussion of Bukharin and Marxist science, Materialism and Empirio-Criticism remained an influential book in Soviet philosophy well into the Brezhnev years.[53] In fact, there is no question that the Soviet leadership perpetuated Lenin's model of nature until the final years of the Soviet polity. Publications on dialectical and historical materialism abounded under glasnost', and they defended the doctrine as strongly as ever, updating the context of its application:

> The rapid development of science and technology and mass information and communications media has led to a rise in the volume and

[50] Josephson, op. cit., p. 249.
[51] Boris Gessen was one physicist who was able to keep alive his work on relativity and quantum mechanics through the use of such devices, even to the point of recognizing the deficiencies of the Newtonian model and expressing these in ideological terms. Ibid., pp. 240-246, passim.
[52] For a discussion see Kendall Bailes, "Soviet Science in the Stalin Period," Slavic Review 1986 (45):20-37. Also useful is his "Science, Philosophy and Politics in Soviet History," Russian Review 1981 (40):278-299. For more thoroughgoing treatments of the development of science in the first half decade of the Stalin era, see Loren R. Graham, The Soviet Academy of Sciences and the Communist Party, 1917-1932 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), as well as David Joravsky, Soviet Marxism and Natural Science, 1917-1932 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961).
[53] Recall that in Cohen, op. cit., p. 15, Cohen stated that Materialism and Empirio-Criticism had a "vaunted status" in Soviet philosophy.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> quality of scientific knowledge, its social status and, as a result, to a renewal of discussion of the role of philosophy, its purpose and mission, the nature of philosophical knowledge, etc. The role of scientific theory and methodology is growing immeasurably in terms of the theoretical comprehension and generalization of new processes in modern scientific knowledge and social practice, which require in-depth analysis under these conditions. The paramount role in establishing these processes and in working out the problems of our day belongs to dialectical and historical materialism, together with the teachings of political economy and scientific communism. As one of the principal theoretical foundations for action in the international Communist movement, in the course of its development Marxist philosophy is not only being conditioned and shaped by urgent problems of social progress and scientific knowledge, but it also creates one of the most important conditions for the successful solution of these problems.[54]

This insistence that there existed immutable natural principles that affected social development, and that therefore anything could be scientifically analyzed and controlled, was at the very heart of the Soviet system and all of its problems. When one rethinks the Soviet experience with this understanding in mind, the results are sad indeed. This is not at all to say that the new physics has solved the metaphysical riddle and has replaced Soviet science with something definitive. Indeed, it has raised more questions than it has clarified, and its ramifications are still widening. If anything, it has done a great deal of damage to metaphysics in general. It remains true, however, that the Communists' refusal or inability to recognize the problems of dialectical and historical materialism in the light of the new physics meant much more than the ultimate dissolution of the USSR. Over the decades the policies issuing from this world view devastated the peoples of the USSR and Eastern Europe and cost the lives of millions.

---

[54] A. G. Myslivchenko and A. P. Sheptulina, eds., Dialekticheskii i istoricheskii materializm, Izdanie vtoroe, pererabotannoe i dopolnennoe. (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1988), p. 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This helps to explain a great deal about the history of the Soviet Union after the passing of Lenin, in terms of both social changes and the political makeup of its leaders. Stalin regarded himself as the legitimate continuer of the policies of Lenin, and, despite the positions of Bukharin and others, this assertion was firmly defensible. Toward the end of his life Khrushchev reaffirmed his belief in the principles of socialism and hoped that his successors would carry on the fight. Despite what many regarded as the stagnation of the Brezhnev era, Brezhnev was also committed to Marxism-Leninism. But so too was "the last true Leninist believer," Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev.[55]

E. The Role of Marxist Science in the Crisis of Perestroika

It is important to keep these things in mind if one is to understand the position of the Soviet leadership in the 1980s. The repression of intellectual development in the USSR with respect to challenges to dialectical and historical materialism led to serious problems for the Soviet Union which Gorbachev not only inherited but also intensified. By the time of the advent of Gorbachev the Leninist defense of determinism in nature, set forth in Materialism and Empirio-Criticism and institutionalized by Stalin, had made a deep impact on both Soviet society and the ideas of the Soviet leadership about how to approach the solution of its problems. The effect of Marxist science was so pervasive, in fact, that even with the advantage of glasnost' the regime was not able to overcome its ideological blinders.

---

[55] This appellation of Gorbachev was made by Stephen E. Hanson. He used it for his article, "Gorbachev: The Last True Leninist Believer?" in Daniel Chirot, ed., The Crisis of Leninism and the Decline of the Left: The Revolutions of 1989 (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1991).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It has been difficult even for scholars in the field to appreciate this. The most recent treatment of Marxism as a science dismissed Materialism and Empirocriticism as a political diatribe, and failed to grasp the significance of Lenin's apprehension over Einstein's theory of relativity in "The Meaning of Militant Materialism."[56] An article by Lewis S. Feuer published over a quarter of a century ago came much closer to appreciating the impact of Lenin's retardation of Einstein's ideas, but ascribed Lenin's adherence to his form of materialism to psychological insecurity rather than to his insistence on the validity of Newtonian principles, thus charging him with depriving Soviet socialism of the dynamism offered by new ideas.[57] Feuer even mentioned Lenin's defense of mechanism against the arguments of such scientists as J. J. Thomson and Ernest Rutherford with respect to atomic structure, and mentioned Bohr in passing as a product of these and other intellectual currents.[58] However, he did not see, as Lenin did, the threat that such thinking posed to Lenin's primary assumptions. Isaiah Berlin, in 1953, also recognized the importance of the Newtonian perspective to Marxist determinism and historical materialism. However, his critique of Marxism was based not on the challenges to Newton that appeared at the turn of the century but on a detailed refutation of the ethical assumptions of the Marxist creed.[59]

---

[56] Dovring, op. cit., pp. 60-62.
[57] Lewis S. Feuer, "Between Fantasy and Reality: Lenin as a Philosopher and a Social Scientist," Bernard W. Eissenstat, ed., Lenin and Leninism: State, Law, and Society (Lexington, MA, Toronto, and London: Lexington Books, 1971), pp. 59-79; on relativity, see p. 67.
[58] Ibid., p. 67.
[59] Isaiah Berlin, "Historical Inevitability," August Comte Memorial Trust Lecture No. 1 (Oxford University Press, 1954). This lecture was delivered at the London School of Economics and Political Science on May 12, 1953.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Although countless books have been written on the uses of ideology in the Soviet system and Marxism in general, most scholars deny that the Soviet leadership under Gorbachev took its ideological formulations seriously.[60] More important for our purposes is that the fact that even fewer believe that ideological problems played a key role in the demise of the Soviet Union. The tendency of most scholarship on the Gorbachev era and the collapse of the USSR has generally been to marginalize ideology in favor of attention to social, economic and political factors. Soviet people, the argument goes, learned how to function in a system whose features and rules had long since been laid down by the Bolshevik founders and consolidated by Stalin. There is a lot of truth to this. It is well known, to use a Communist phrase, that after Khrushchev's zenith Soviet young people seldom took their classes in Marxism-Leninism more seriously than was necessary to advance in their chosen fields of study, unless they had political aspirations. If one tried to strike up a conversation about the deep meaning of historical materialism in a social setting, he would find himself alone rather quickly.

Consequently, the emphasis in the search for the reasons for the Soviet demise has focused on what might be regarded as more proximate factors. Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, true to the theme of her life's work, sees the Soviet collapse as deriving

---

[60] As with any rule, there are exceptions to this one. Terry L. Thompson, Ideology and Policy: the Political Uses of Doctrine in the Soviet Union, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), is a solid analysis of the impact of ideology on Soviet institutions and behavior. Sylvia Woodby and Alfred B. Evans, Jr., eds., Restructuring Soviet Ideology: Gorbachev's New Thinking (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), is a collection of articles which focus more on the process of the transformation of ideological thinking in the late Gorbachev period arguing that ideology had progressively less of an impact on society and culture. While this was certainly true, however, even the staunchest advocates for change in the Soviet system could not but be affected by its constraints. Decades of indoctrination had their impact, and the legacy of Soviet institutions continues to influence policy decisions in the former Soviet republics.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

primarily from the destabilizing consequences of glasnost' in Soviet nationalities policy, although she had for many years predicted the fall of the USSR as a result of ethnic friction in some way or other.[61] A great many monographs analyzing the failure of Gorbachev's reforms discuss them in terms of missed opportunities for the establishment of true democracy and effective economic reforms which would lead to the resuscitation of Soviet socialism. A classic defender of this point of view is Michel Tatu; another is John Miller.[62]

Most writers who have treated ideological factors have approached them either in an effort to rescue Marxism from the Soviet debacle or in terms of their more practical consequences for Soviet politics. Irwin Silber is one of the few post-Soviet defenders of what he regards as orthodox Marxism, which he sees as having been betrayed by Leninism. He argues that one should not dismiss Marx on the basis of the Soviet demise, but, rather, view the collapse of the USSR as an opportunity to give Marx's ideas a fresh appraisal as an alternative to capitalism. As he declares, the "socialist epoch, which many of us thought had dawned in 1917, has not yet arrived."[63] Valery Boldin, on the other hand, feels that Gorbachev had a proper understanding of Marxism but that his dogged adherence to the ideology is what doomed his empire. "As Boldin's book unwittingly demonstrates," says Adam B. Ulam, "Gorbachev was too much of a Communist to

[61] Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, The End of the Soviet Empire: The Triumph of the Nations, Franklin Philip, trans. (New York: Basic Books, 1993).
[62] Michel Tatu, Mikhail Gorbachev: The Origins of Perestroika, A. P. M. Bradley, trans. (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1991). John Miller, Mikhail Gorbachev and the End of Soviet Power (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).
[63] Irwin Silber, Socialism: What Went Wrong? An Inquiry into the Theoretical and Historical Sources of the Socialist Crisis (London; Boulder, CO: Pluto Press, 1994), p. 268.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

distance himself from the dreadful legacy of the Soviet past."[64] Archie Brown has attempted to reconcile these views and snatch victory for Gorbachev from the jaws of defeat by portraying him as a great statesman. Gorbachev, argues Brown, tried to bring freedom to the peoples of the USSR and Eastern Europe in two stages, first as a good Communist who strove to correct misunderstandings of Marxism and then as a rescuer who, after recognizing the bankruptcy of the Soviet philosophy and social system, abandoned the ideology and dismantled the Soviet polity for the sake of both its own citizens and those of the countries that were in bondage to it.[65] Martin Malia has dismissed all attempts to apologize for Gorbachev, his reforms, or the system that he headed. His tendency is to regard Gorbachev as a despot and Marxist ideology and institutions as politically pragmatic and not conducive to effective reforms. The main thrust of his analysis is that economic decline delegitimized perestroika, and this fact, proclaimed thanks to glasnost', deprived the system of the will to resort to the coercion that sustained it.[66]

Nevertheless, a few analyses in recent years have argued that a closer examination of the intellectual roots of Marxism-Leninism is necessary for a proper understanding of the collapse of Soviet socialism.[67] Two works in particular, by Neil Robinson[68] and

---

[64] Adam B. Ulam, in the introduction to Valery Boldin, Ten Years that Shook the World: The Gorbachev Era as Witnessed by His Chief of Staff, translated by Evelyn Rossiter. (New York: Basic Books, 1994), p. 10.
[65] Archie Brown, The Gorbachev Factor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
[66] Martin Malia, The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991 (New York: The Free Press, 1994), pp. 492-493.
[67] Though his focus is Poland and not the USSR the work of Bartlomiej Kaminski deserves a place here. Through his analysis of the collapse of socialism in Poland Kaminski argues that state socialism was intrinsically unworkable. He offers a generalized model of the deficiencies of such political systems, which

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Stephen E. Hanson,[69] have endeavored to demonstrate that Soviet institutions were intrinsically unworkable due to their roots in Marxist-Leninist ideology. Robinson, however, qualifies this somewhat. He seems convinced that there might have been a solution to the dilemma of Soviet socialism:

> The failure of perestroika, the collapse of the party and the fall of the Soviet model of politics were shaped by ideology. This does not mean that the failure of the Soviet system or of the party was predetermined by some genetic code in ideology that gave the Soviet system a fixed life-span. The Soviet system was ailing when Gorbachev came to power in 1985, but it was not necessarily destined to collapse. Crises had been survived in the past.[70]

In a sense, then, while Robinson essays to examine systematically the connection between ideology, Party and institutions, his conclusion is similar to Boldin's.

Hanson, however, makes a radical departure from this position and strikes closer to the heart of Marxist philosophy in his assertion that Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, by destroying the temporal basis of capitalist society in the Soviet context, made capitalist norms irrelevant as a standard of judgment for either Soviet performance or Soviet reform. In the Soviet context time, and therefore progress, is radically altered from the way in which we understand it. The rigid production schedule characteristic of steady growth under capitalism was modified through institutional flexibility which would allow managers to accelerate or retard production as warranted under the circumstances. The

---

can be applied to any of them. Bartlomiej Kaminski, The Collapse of State Socialism: The Case of Poland (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[68] Neil Robinson, Ideology and the Collapse of the Soviet System: A Critical History of Soviet Ideological Discourse (Brookfield, VT: Edward Elgar Publishing Company, 1995).

[69] Stephen E. Hanson, Time and Revolution: Marxism and the Design of Soviet Institutions (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

[70] Robinson, op. cit., p. 189.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Soviet system redefined time usage to mandate a worker's continuous devotion to the cause of socialism; every minute was part of the work day in some way or other, subject to the fiat of the central directors of the economy. This notion of the nature of time, Hanson argues, is at the heart of Marxist thought. Its impact on Soviet society was so profound as to make perestroika virtually impossible, because for Gorbachev's reforms to work, workers would have to be internally motivated to accept this redefinition of time and transcend time constraints without central direction. Gorbachev, in other words, was counting on the presence of a transformed spirit in Soviet men and women which would function at its best once the Stalinist inhibition of it it was eradicated. To his chagrin, there had transpired no such change.[71] Where Hanson's analysis differs most from all of the others so far mentioned is in its illustration of Gorbachev's conviction of the power of socialism to transform human nature. That is, Gorbachev was certain that historical materialism was a real force to be reckoned with, and that it could produce the dynamic, progressive society that Marx had predicted would be characteristic of Communism.

As valuable as all of these assessments are, the institutionalization of the Leninist model of nature is also an important key to understanding the problems that endured to the end of the Soviet polity, particularly in the context of the "return to NEP" under Gorbachev. A blind faith in some kind of deterministic relationship between laws of

---

[71] Hanson, op. cit., p. 210.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

nature and laws of social development was the cornerstone of the positions of both Lenin and Gorbachev.[72]

But the new physics showed that the "laws" upon which Lenin had staked so much did not exist. One could still be a materialist, but determinism made absolutely no sense. Thus, Lenin's expectations were based on faulty premises, but both he and his successors continued to insist on them. Moreover, Lenin's assumptions were open-ended and subject to arbitrary interpretation. Under such circumstances Stalin's understanding of the principles of "socialism" could be defended as easily as Gorbachev's.

As a result of protracted debate with other Russian Social Democrats from 1898 to 1906,[73] Lenin developed a scheme of revolution and social development in Russia which was grounded firmly in his assumptions about natural and social science. Russian society did not develop as he had expected it to, however; and by 1921 he became convinced that he had established a despotism rather than a democracy. For the rest of his life he struggled with the question of how to transform the Leviathan that he had built. However, Lenin's adoption of the NEP did not resolve that issue. It merely delayed the response while Lenin, and later Bukharin, sought in vain for an answer. But Lenin's

---

[72] One may ask whether this issue ultimately was socially important. In order to understand its impact it is necessary to remove oneself from the philosophical questions. It did not matter whether Gorbachev understood the philosophical problems that Lenin confronted in Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, only that he proceeded on the same assumptions as Lenin did about the inevitability of socialism, which was a truly democratic and free social system. For that matter, very few American citizens are aware of the complex of ideas behind the American Founding; but Americans often take the veracity or nobility of the Founders' ideals for granted despite potential problems with this. Thus, closer analysis of the philosophical problems behind perestroika would yield a deeper understanding of the difficulties that Gorbachev's practical measures faced.

[73] This was the year of the IV "Unity" Congress of the Party at Stockholm. A key event at that Congress was a debate between Lenin and Plekhanov over the significance of the so-called "Asiatic mode of production" for Russia. We will address that topic in the next chapter.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

successors were not successful. either. The irresolvable ambiguity inherent in the ideology of the NEP was central to the dilemma of Soviet socialism both in the 1920s and in the context of perestroika.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER II

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM OR DESPOTISM? THE IDEOLOGICAL LEGACY OF THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

Until late 1988 Gorbachev defended Stalinism as having been the correct path to socialism in its time, despite its excesses. By 1989 Gorbachev was willing to countenance the idea that Bukharin's legacy might have been more correct. To do so, however, he would have to relinquish the notion of the historical continuity of his regime with past Soviet practice dating to Lenin. This ideological difficulty was compounded by the erroneous idea that it was Bukharin who had first recognized the tendency toward despotism, or "bureaucratism," in Soviet socialism, which gained acceptance with the rehabilitation of Bukharin. A fundamental legacy of Leninism was Lenin's concern in 1921 and later over this very tendency in the system that he himself had constructed, and his awareness of it had roots that went back over two decades. Moreover, at the time of his death Lenin did not feel that this basic problem with Soviet socialism had been solved. Yet although Gorbachev apparently was cognizant of this he could never admit it, for then he would have to concede that he was seeking to establish truly democratic socialism on the basis of a system of thought that was inherently despotic. It was actually the legacy of Lenin himself that ultimately forced the Soviet regime under Gorbachev to face the inconsistency of its claim to legitimacy. The legacy of the NEP, as it turned out, was not one of democratic socialism which was later undermined by Stalin but of despotism which, ironically, arose precisely from the Communists' insistence on the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

nexus between natural and social law that was supposed to result in freedom for all oppressed peoples.

The nature of NEP society as such is irrelevant to the present investigation. People in the 1980s recognized that it would be impossible to re-create NEP society, and the Stalinist error would have to be rectified by moving forward.[1] Certain NEP institutions were later adapted to perestroika using the NEP era as a guide, but not a very strict one. The present chapter, therefore, will focus on NEP ideology in order to clarify the issues in Lenin's legacy that confronted reformers in the era of perestroika. The main sources of that ideology, of course, were Lenin's writings. However, other contemporary authors also understood the problems of Soviet socialism very well. Of these, perhaps the most significant was Andrei Platonov. We will examine his Chevengur in detail.

Lenin was quite prolific from the Revolution until he was incapacitated in 1923. The number of his works on the NEP alone, as published in the fifth edition of his Complete Collected Works, exceeds 120.[2] Of Lenin's post-revolutionary works, however, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" and his reports to the X and XI Congresses of the Bolshevik Party, were probably the most significant. These works, taken together, illustrate that Lenin's position on the essentials for the construction of socialism remained surprisingly constant from 1918 to 1921. It is apparent from them

---

[1] One who felt this way but nevertheless valued the legacy of the NEP was V. V. Kudriavtsev, whose compilation Nep: vzgliad so storony (Moskva: Moskovskii rabochii, 1991), is a useful collection of essays by major economists of the 1920s presented in the expectation that they would still be useful in the context of the latter years of perestroika.
[2] V. E. Iustuzov, "V. I. Lenin o perekhode k novoi ekonomicheskoi politike." Candidate dissertation, history (Leningrad: 1972), p. 9.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that War Communism and the NEP shared the same fundamental goals and methods, despite the relative relaxation of Bolshevik control under the NEP. The roots of Lenin's thoughts on the meaning of the NEP, however, go back to the earliest beginnings of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party.

A. Oriental Despotism and Russian Society

One of the greatest distortions of Marxism perpetrated by the Soviet establishment was the notion that Marxist sociology recognized only the primitive communist, slave-holding, feudal, capitalist and socialist modes of production. In fact, Marx held that an entirely different "mode of production," the "Asiatic mode of production," which he also termed "Oriental despotism,"[3] prevailed in such places as China, India, and, in a modified, "semi-Asiatic" form, in Russia. This issue was central to Lenin's consideration of theoretical questions related to revolution in Russia, the establishment of socialism, and, ultimately, the adoption of the NEP. Major Russian Social Democrats, led by Plekhanov, had condemned the October Revolution as premature and as having led not to socialism but to a restoration of the old despotic order headed by the Communist Party, and particularly the General Secretary, instead of the tsar and his bureaucracy. Their criticisms were based on Marx's analysis of Russian society. In March 1921 Lenin came very close to admitting outright that his critics had been correct, and in some of his final

---

[3] For a discussion of the origin of these terms, see Karl A. Wittfogel, Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 372-376; also Joseph Schiebel, "Aziatchina: The Controversy Concerning the Nature of Russian Society and the Organization of the Bolshevik Party," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington (Seattle, 1972), pp. 64-66. A condensation of Schiebel's dissertation appears in Charles E. Timberlake, ed., Religious and Secular Forces in Late Tsarist Russia: Essays in Honor of Donald W. Treadgold (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

writings he expressed strong reservations about the socio-political nature of what he and his party had built. No discussion of the ideology of the NEP, therefore, is complete without attention to Marx's concept of Russia's "semi-Asiatic" heritage.

Marx held that the Asiatic mode of production prevailed in hydraulic societies, that is, political entities based primarily on an agricultural economy with a limited water supply which had to be harnessed and exploited through an elaborate irrigation system. The government of such societies was characterized by a strong, despotic ruler who had at his disposal an elaborate bureaucracy and an army, and these gave the despot his unlimited power. There was no system of legal rights and protections for the individual; this was evinced most clearly by the fact that the institution of private property was markedly weakened when compared to that in non-hydraulic societies. The vast majority of the population was organized into separate communal systems, in which they could till the land and work in specialized crafts. The communes were typically isolated from one another socially and politically. Because of the absence of a strong rule of law with its attendant rights, political organization of the population against the ruling bureaucracy and the despot was all but impossible. The adjective "Oriental," having nothing at all to do with race, referred instead to the geographic location of most of these societies: India and China were Marx's primary examples. Russia was called "semi-Asiatic" by Marx because it did not possess all of the features of hydraulic society.[4] However Marx believed that enough of these characteristics were present in Russia for him to call it an

[4] See Wittfogel, op. cit., pp. 161, 375.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Oriental despotism. It is chiefly for this reason that he labeled the country as the most reactionary in Europe, expressing hope for revolution there only toward the end of his life, when it seemed that anti-despotic elements might gain ascendancy and be able to co-opt the peasantry into the revolutionary movement.[5]

In his 1957 book, Oriental Despotism, Karl August Wittfogel (1896-1987) developed and defended Marx's concept of the Asiatic mode of production. He noted its principal manifestations in the ancient hydraulic civilizations of the Old World, but he also extended and applied it to societies in the ancient Americas, ancient Hawaii, and other places, praising Marx for having developed a social theory which accounted quite well for the contrast in social development between European and Oriental societies. Wittfogel, a former Communist, had as one of his chief aims to explain the roots and consequences of Stalinism.[6] He came under sharp fire for his position in Oriental Despotism; the book has been attacked by Sinologists and Europeanists alike and condemned essentially as a careless diatribe, although it has also had defenders.[7] However, the question of whether the concept of the Asiatic mode of production is actually valid or applicable to Russia does not concern us here. What does matter is that the Russian Social Democrats, led by Plekhanov and Lenin, not only believed that it was,

---

[5] Schiebel, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

[6] Those interested in Wittfogel's fascinating odyssey are referred to G. L. Ulmen, The Science of Society: Toward an Understanding of the Life and Work of Karl August Wittfogel (The Hague: Mouton, 1978).

[7] Discussion of the various critiques of Wittfogel is beyond the scope of the present work, but the remarks of one early detractor are noteworthy. Arnold Toynbee's review, in the American Political Science Review, 1958 (52):195-198, characterized Oriental Despotism as a perpetuation of the myth of "good Europe, bad Asia." Cited in Treadgold, "Soviet Historians' Views," p. 1, note 5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

but were overwhelmingly concerned with Russia's "semi-Asiatic" heritage in their theoretical formulations.

At issue was whether Russia was indeed ready for revolutionary transformation. The social immutability of Oriental despotisms which Marx hypothesized meant that there was no way that the relatively small proletariat and the numerous but dispersed peasants and artisans could organize themselves politically to foment revolution. The minimal influence and disorganization of these groups, in addition to the total, oppressive power of the despot and his bureaucracy, made revolutionary transformation possible only as a result of change originating from without, through military conquest.[8]

Such was the view, in general, maintained not only by Plekhanov but also by the Menshevik wing of the Russian Social Democrats. Any attempt to bring about a revolution in Russia, they argued, would only lead to a restoration of the Oriental despotism that had prevailed in Russia for so many centuries; its institutions would have changed in name only. It would be far better to wait, to allow a genuine bourgeois stage to develop in Russia's history, before attempting the revolutionary overthrow of tsarism.[9]

---

[8] See Karl Marx, "The Future Results of British Rule in India," Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Selected Works in Two Volumes, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1958), Vol. I, pp. 352-355. Here Marx discusses Britain's historical role of breaking up Oriental despotism in India by conquering the country and supplanting Oriental despotism there with a new social structure more conducive to internal change by virtue of its relative freedom.

[9] Samuel H. Baron's biography, Plekhanov: The Father of Russian Marxism (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1963), gives a solid account of Plekhanov's contributions to the development of Russian Social Democratic revolutionary ideology. In his 1995 book, Plekhanov in Russian History and Soviet Historiography (Pittsburgh and London: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995), Baron took into account some aspects of Plekhanov's thought that he had not considered in 1963, particularly the deeper implications of Plekhanov's and Wittfogel's thinking on the Asiatic mode of production and what that meant for Russian social democracy.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

But Lenin could not hold back. He had waited years for a chance to bring about revolutionary change in Russia, and, to his mind, conditions were ripe. This was the whole point of his major work of 1899, The Development of Capitalism in Russia. In it, Lenin tried to demonstrate how Russia had already developed a bourgeoisie and a capitalist economy, leading to class conflict with a clear potential for socialist revolution according to the Marxist paradigm.[10] Lenin insisted that this was the case, and he called for a strictly disciplined cadre of professional revolutionaries to aid the revolutionary process against the characteristic stagnation of Russia's social structure arising from its "semi-Asiatic" roots. This was the basis of Bolshevism.[11] Lenin's firm stand on this position led to a decisive break with Plekhanov. At the IV Congress of the Party held at Stockholm in 1906, billed the "Unity Congress," there was some expectation that the Bolshevik and Menshevik factions might reconcile their views. The chief feature of the Congress was debate over the concept of the Asiatic mode of production and its relevance to contemporary Russia. Plekhanov and his followers reiterated Russia's "semi-Asiatic" character and promised an "Asiatic restoration" should Lenin's plans for premature revolution be realized. Lenin and the Bolsheviks left the Congress having reinforced their conviction about the need to press forward with revolutionary change. They were motivated principally by the failure of the 1905 Revolution, and, soon thereafter, by P. A.

---

[10] The development of the Russian economy from 1890 certainly included a high degree of industrialization with the concomitant social and political changes; but Lenin's argument did not convince the majority of Social Democrats, who ironically came to be known as "Mensheviks," or "members of the minority."

[11] Lenin's Chto delat' (1902) is the clearest manifesto of this doctrine. Revolutionary discipline was needed in the Russian context precisely because the oppressed classes were powerless against tsarist despotism.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Stolypin's reactionary crackdown on Russian revolutionaries.[12] They were convinced that if revolution did not come soon, tsarist despotism would regain sufficient strength to stifle revolutionary efforts completely.

Lenin's principal opportunity, so he felt, came with the advent of World War I, the "Imperialist War," in 1914. Given that he viewed that conflict against the backdrop of the Marxist prescription for revolutionary change in Oriental despotisms, it is natural that Lenin would see the war as a boon to revolutionary aspirations within Russia and work consistently for Russia's defeat. Such logic was also in keeping with Lenin's translation of the class struggle to the international plane in his theory of imperialism. Lenin's Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism (1915) was based on the 1902 work of J. A. Hobson, Imperialism.[13] Each author, however, had quite different aims. Whereas Hobson had been trying to come to grips with the social and cultural consequences of colonialism, Lenin's purpose was to maintain the validity of the Marxist paradigm under conditions that Marx had not foreseen. Lenin was confident that World War I was indeed the war to end all wars. The "Imperialist War" would lead to destruction of the big capitalist powers and open the way for worldwide socialist revolution. Indeed, such a

---

[12] The failure of 1905, of course, also provided support for the Menshevik position in theoretical terms.
[13] Imperialism: A Study (New York: J. Pott and Co., 1902). John Atkinson Hobson (1858-1940) was one of many intellectuals who was concerned with the social and political consequences to colonial peoples of the race for colonial possessions in Africa and Asia around the turn of the century. He was by no means a historical materialist, but Lenin nevertheless found his perspective useful. The concern of European intellectuals over imperialism reflected, in many respects, the crisis of European thought that began to emerge after 1850. By the turn of the century Europeans were fast discarding notions of an over-arching, unifying metaphysics. A central current of thought at the time was that, despite the trappings of "culture," man was a selfish and vicious animal, inclined to prey on his weaker fellow men and destined to be destroyed through his own violent nature. A more famous work that dealt with this issue, also in the context of colonialism, was Joseph Conrad's novel, Heart of Darkness (1902).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

hope was maintained through the Russian Civil War, and was only finally discarded after 1923.[14]

B. The "War Communism" Fallacy

After the Bolshevik revolution succeeded, Lenin set out immediately to build socialism in Russia. At the same time, however, the Bolsheviks were faced with a civil war which was to last for more than three years. The total casualty figures for the Russian Civil War were enormous. Whereas Russia lost some 4 million lives during World War I, the number killed in the Civil War was up to five times that many.[15] A large portion of the casualties in fact resulted from starvation imposed by Communist "grain patrols," armed bands of thugs who would venture into the Communist-controlled countryside and requisition grain from any peasant who had it, branding him a kulak, or "tight fist," (i.e., bourgeois) in order to justify the appropriation of the grain. Even so, the Communists blamed their failure to achieve socialism from 1918 to 1921 on the adverse conditions of the war. It was only retrospectively that the label "War Communism"[16] was applied as an apology for the failure of a genuine effort to build socialism.

---

[14] Germany was regarded by the Bolsheviks as the most advanced Western country, and if a general revolutionary upheaval in the West were to be successful, it would have to start there. The murders of Karl Liebneckt and Rosa Luxemberg in January 1919 dealt the first blow to hopes for revolution in Germany; but it was the failure of the German Communists under Heinrich Brandler during the Ruhr Crisis of 1923 that convinced Moscow that revolution was not forthcoming in the West for the time being. The result was tighter control of international Communism by the V Congress of the Comintern in June 1924, with concomitant development by Stalin of the theory of "Socialism in One Country."

[15] Russian casualties during World War I were 1.7 million military dead, 4.95 million military wounded and 2 million civilian dead. Estimates of loss of life during the Russian Civil War are much less certain, ranging from Shubkin's figure of 10-13 million to the 25 million cited by Iu. A. Poliakova (Poliakova includes losses for reduced birth rate and emigration). Figures on Civil War taken from Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, Lenin v sudbakh Rossii: Razmyshleniia istorika (Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Federal Republic of Germany: Prometheus-Verlag, 1990), p. 415.

[16] See Evan Mawdsley, The Russian Civil War (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), pp. 73-75.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Although they faced formidable enemies in the aftermath of the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks' immediate agenda after their assumption of power concerned not preparation for civil war but establishment of the basis of socialist society. Lenin's major work of April 1918, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government," contained his guidelines for the transition and made it a top priority. As he stated in the preamble:

> Thanks to the peace which has been secured...the Russian Soviet Republic has gained an opportunity to concentrate its efforts for a time on the most important and difficult aspect of the socialist revolution, namely, the task of organization.[17]

While Lenin definitely considered socialism to be attainable in the aftermath of the Revolution, he regarded this as a highly complex endeavor which required a sophisticated and realistic appraisal of resources and liabilities, coupled with insight and effective action. One could say that "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" foreshadowed Gorbachev's style in confronting Soviet problems in the 1980s. Lenin's major concerns were that there be proper assessment of the Bolsheviks' position in the international scene; effective response to their enemies within Russia; improvement in the productivity of labor through effective accounting and control and organization of socialist competition, gradually excluding the bourgeoisie; development of Soviet democracy for effective administration; and centralization of governmental authority in such a way as to minimize bureaucracy and maximize economic growth.

The term "War Communism" (voennyi kommunism) was first used by Lenin in 1921.

[17] V. I. Lenin, "Ocherednye zadachi sovetskoi vlasti," PSS, vol. 36, p. 167. This particular pamphlet was written between April 13 and 26, 1918, and published on April 28.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Although Lenin regarded the peace of Brest-Litovsk as unstable, he was confident that he could proceed nevertheless with social transformation, reminding his readers that this was the principal task of the new state, which was ruled by the proletariat and the poor peasantry. Lenin maintained that the bourgeoisie had been conquered, but that it had "not yet been uprooted, not yet destroyed, and not even completely broken."[18] He was aware of the presence of his enemies and the need to defeat them. Still, he maintained, much more was required to achieve socialism:

> It must be fully understood that in order to administer successfully the ability to do practical organizational work, besides being able to convince people, and besides being able to win a civil war, is indispensable. This is the most difficult problem, because it is a matter of organizing in a new way the most deep-rooted, the economic, foundations of life of scores of millions of people. And it is the most gratifying task, because only after it has been fulfilled (in its main and fundamental respects) will it be possible to say that Russia has become not only a Soviet, but also a socialist, republic.[19]

Of course, Lenin fully realized the urgency of both the international situation and the emerging White threat, but it is clear that the importance of these things in his mind was secondary to securing the economic and social strength of the neophyte Soviet polity. This, he felt, would not only assure the survival of the Soviet government but also safeguard the gains of the international proletariat. Given the indefinite nature of the Brest-Litovsk peace, Lenin reasoned,

> We must without fail exert ourselves to the utmost to make use of the respite given us by the combination of circumstances so that we can heal the very severe wounds inflicted by the war upon the entire social organism of Russia and bring about an economic revival, without which

[18] Ibid., p. 175.
[19] Ibid., p. 173.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> there cannot even be any discussion of a significant increase in our country's defense potential....we shall be able to have a significant impact on the socialist revolution in the West...only to the extent that we are able to fulfill the task of organization confronting us.[20]

Lenin's reference to "defense potential," in this context, concerned defense against Russia's external enemies. At this point he was still convinced that the "imperialist" powers, particularly Germany,[21] posed the greatest threat to the success of the Revolution, which he regarded as still in progress and representing far more than the coup d'etat of 1917. To Lenin the completion of the Revolution really meant the full transformation of Russia from capitalism to socialism, not only politically but also socially and economically. As long as the Western powers were preoccupied in a war with each other, they would not be able to destroy Communism in Russia; hence, this was a "window of opportunity" to complete the revolutionary task, in Lenin's eyes. Clearly Lenin never intended that War Communism should be primarily a military effort. One could argue, in fact, that the Bolsheviks' policies were not conducive to the war effort. What Lenin put forward in "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" was first and foremost a policy designed to effect social and economic transformation in order to implement socialist production relations. It is not evident that Lenin ever meant to put socialist construction "on hold" during the course of the Civil War.

---

[20] Ibid., p. 168.

[21] Evidence that the Soviet government secretly approved of the Allied intervention in order to secure some protection from Germany is in a message from Lenin and Stalin by direct wire to A. M. Iuriev of March 26, 1918 and in a wire exchange between Iuriev and Stalin and Lenin on April 9-10, 1918. Iuriev, a Bolshevik who had joined the Party in 1917, was in charge of Murmansk during the Allied occupation in early 1918. See Documents 19 and 20 of Richard Pipes, ed., The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive. With the assistance of David Brandenberger. Basic translation of Russian documents by Catherine A. Fitzpatrick. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 43-45.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In order to assure the development of effective and efficient socialist institutions Lenin regarded as "decisive" the "organization of the strictest accounting and control of production and distribution of goods nationwide";[22] a continued offensive against capital was not sufficient in and of itself. Ironically, the guidance of bourgeois experts in technology and management experience was absolutely vital to socialism, because advancement to socialism required greater labor productivity. Without the technological base provided by what the capitalists had achieved, labor productivity would actually shrink.

But whereas "bourgeois" specialists in technology and management had gained their position through "exploitation of the working class," socialism would eventually be able to achieve similar advances in these areas through "Soviet," i.e., social-democratic, methods.[23] It would do so by equalizing the distribution of profits through the seizure of ownership of the economic infrastructure and natural resources from the bourgeoisie and reforming key institutions and industries to serve the needs of the proletariat and poor peasantry. Lenin emphasized the nationalization and "proletarianization" of banks in particular, for this would transfer decisively the accounting and control of the country's assets from the bourgeoisie to the exploited classes. In addition, Lenin stressed the importance of safeguarding Soviet internal economic independence through the maintenance of state monopolies over certain areas of production.[24] This was, of course,

[22] Lenin, "Ocherednye zadachi sovetskoi vlasti," PSS, vol. 36, p. 175.
[23] Ibid., p. 178.
[24] Ibid., pp. 182-183, 188.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the principle upon which Stalin would ultimately base the economic aspects of his theory of "Socialism in one Country." But it would also be a major feature of the NEP.[25]

"Soviet" organization, as Lenin envisioned it, had two principal advantages. The first was that it allowed the level of workers' education and skill to increase by eliminating bourgeois oppression and providing comradely incentive to greater cooperation and productivity in the workplace.[26] Lenin also held that a very significant role of "Soviet" organization under Russian "objective conditions" was to function as a safeguard against state oppression and bureaucratism:

> The state, which for centuries has been an organ for oppression and robbery of the people, has bequeathed to us the people's deepest hatred and suspicion of every aspect of government. This is a very difficult problem to overcome and only the Soviet government is strong enough to do it; but even the Soviet government will require plenty of time and enormous perseverance.[27]

This assertion illustrates two key ideas in Lenin's thought. In its emphasis on the transformational power of social democracy in Russia as represented by Soviet organization, it is reminiscent of Lenin's rationale behind his change of thinking during the period from 1898 to 1903 about social conditions in Russia, when he had become convinced that Russia was ready for revolution in the first place. The statement also hints at the problem posed by Russia's "semi-Asiatic" heritage and the need to overcome it in

---

[25] Lenin, "Doklad o zamene razverstki natural'nym nalogom 15 marta," PSS, vol. 43, pp. 62-63.
[26] Lenin, "Ocherednye zadachi sovetskoi vlasti," PSS, vol. 36, p. 188.
[27] Ibid., p. 184.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

order to guarantee the success of the Revolution. The question of how to secure genuine democracy under socialism was always at the forefront of Lenin's thought.

In 1918, however, Lenin was not so concerned about the possibility of bureaucratic strangulation of revolutionary development as he was about economic efficiency under proletarian control. The development of the potential of Soviet organization to raise productivity received his primary attention, because this was so essential to achieving socialism's most important goal:

> Among the senseless notions which the bourgeoisie are fond of spreading about socialism is the idea that socialists deny the importance of competition. In fact, it is only socialism which, by doing away with classes, and, consequently, the enslavement of the people, for the first time has opened the way for competition on a truly massive scale. And it is precisely the Soviet form of organization, by transitioning from the formal democracy of the bourgeois republic to the active participation of the mass of working people in administration, that for the first time has established competition on a broad basis. This is much easier to organize in the political field than in the economic, but for the success of socialism, it is the latter that is important.[28]

It is necessary to bear in mind that Lenin really believed this. Lenin had great hopes for economic benefit resulting from socialist organization of communes and socialist cost accounting in the production of everyday commodities. He literally saw socialism as the fulfillment of men's natural desire for virtuous institutions. In a sense, Lenin's understanding was highly reminiscent of the general concept of virtue that prevailed during the Enlightenment. Workers would finally be allowed to become the exemplary people who they were naturally inclined to be, now that the fetters of

---

[28] Ibid., p. 190.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

oppression had been removed from them.[29] According to Marxist social science, this change in the spirit of the workers was a result to be expected. Ultimately, these fundamental notions of effective accounting as the key to labor productivity and soviet organization as the prerequisite of the liberation of the human spirit, basic to War Communism, would also become central ideas in both the NEP and perestroika.

Even so, said Lenin, the actual establishment of "harmonious organization" required the political coercion characteristic of dictatorship.

> The resolution adopted by the recent (Moscow) Congress of Soviets [IV Congress of Soviets, March 1918] has advanced as the foremost task of the moment the establishment of "harmonious organization" and the tightening of discipline. Everyone now readily "votes for" and "subscribes to" resolutions of this kind. However, people usually do not think over the fact that the implementation of such resolutions in real life requires coercion--coercion precisely in the form of dictatorship. And yet it would be the greatest folly and the most stupid utopianism to suppose that the transition from capitalism to socialism is possible without coercion and without dictatorship....Russia of 1917-18 confirms the correctness of Marx's theory in this respect with such clarity, feeling and inspiration that only those who are hopelessly dull or who have obstinately decided to turn their backs on the truth can be under any misapprehension about it.[30]

What is strikingly apparent in Lenin's reasoning here is that, as far as he was concerned, violence was only to be used to effect social change. At no point did Lenin say that coercion would necessarily be characteristic of society under socialism. The intensity of class struggle during the transformation of the social order would determine whether violent methods would be required to bring it about. Once the class struggle was

---

[29] Ibid., pp. 191-192. Lenin's position here does not come as a surprise, given the intellectual roots of Marxism in both the Enlightenment and Romanticism; but it is instructive to recall that heritage if one desires to understand Lenin and Leninism more fully.
[30] Ibid., p. 194.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

eradicated under socialism, violence would no longer be necessary at all. The means would have served its end. However, it was a necessary feature of socialist construction wherever societies were resistant to social change, as in Russia during 1917-1921; and it would also be necessary to protect socialist gains.

It was based on this rationale that the policies of the period 1917-1921 took shape, particularly in the countryside. The following letter by Lenin[31] to the Penza Communists in general and to V. V. Kuraev, E. B. Bosh, and A. E. Minkin in particular, is perhaps the most blunt expression written by Lenin of what this meant in practice:

> Our policy in the countryside--[32]
>
> 11 August 1918
>
> To Penza
>
> To Comrades Kuraev, Bosh, Minkin and other Penza Communists
>
> Comrades! The uprising of the five kulak districts [oblastei] should be mercilessly suppressed. The interests of the entire revolution require this, because now "the last decisive battle" with the kulaks is under way everywhere. One must give an example.
>
> 1. Hang (hang without fail, so the people see) no fewer than one hundred known kulaks, rich men, bloodsuckers.
>
> 2. Publish their names.
>
> 3. Take from them all the grain.

---

[31] Pipes, op. cit., p. 50. Pipes's translation used, with emphasis as published. Pipes reproduced a facsimile of the original document following his English rendition; some of the items in the original do not appear in his translation. I have used Library of Congress transliteration instead of Pipes's.

[32] This phrase does not appear in Pipes's rendition. The handwriting was probably not Lenin's; it did not seem to match. Even if the notation was not Lenin's, it is very likely that it was written by someone who was close to Lenin and was well acquainted with his political measures, and so it makes the present document all the more interesting and useful.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

4. Designate hostages--as per yesterday's telegram.[33]

Do it in such a way that for hundreds of versts around, the people will see, tremble, know, shout: they are strangling and will strangle to death the bloodsucker kulaks.

Telegraph receipt and implementation.

Yours, Lenin

P. S.[34] Find some truly hard people.

However, the brutal measures Lenin demanded under War Communism pointed up his most important philosophical difficulty. Violence was deemed necessary to achieve and maintain revolutionary change, but how does one keep violent repression from becoming the main feature of a state system so firmly centralized as the Bolshevik Party? The answer to this question was complicated by the Civil War, but it was never ignored. That conflict does not directly concern us; but what is indeed relevant is the fact that Lenin's goals for social change and development under the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry were not fundamentally altered once the war was won.

The brutal methods which had been characteristic of War Communism, however, deeply concèrned Lenin. By 1921 violence had become not a means to the end of revolutionary social change but the Bolshevik way of life. Lenin felt that the Party was no longer the vanguard of the masses and had become just another powerful bureaucracy, with the Politburo at its head. Moreover, the country was much worse off than it had

[33] According to Pipes, op. cit., p. 50, footnote 4, this telegram was published in Proletarskaia revoliutsiia 1924 (3):168-169.
[34] The "P. S." does not appear in Pipes's rendition.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

been at the end of the "Imperialist War," with no improvement in sight. The tactics of socialist construction needed some adjustment.

C. The "Asiatic Restoration" and the NEP

Although the NEP was indeed inaugurated to conciliate the peasantry, it was much more. It also represented a theoretical concession by Lenin to Plekhanov. When Lenin introduced the NEP he declared,

> Socialism is better than capitalism, but capitalism is better than medievalism, small production, and a bureaucracy connected with the dispersed character of the small producers.[35]

Lenin was making a comparison here of the new regime with the old, illustrating his belief that what had transpired in Russia as a result of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Civil War was a restoration of the old order, i.e., an Asiatic restoration, with the Bolshevik Party at the helm. A very important question, however, is how it can be certain that Lenin really believed this. It is indeed possible that he did, and that this utterance is an example of Aesopian ideological language whereby Lenin hoped to conceal the gravity of his concern, which was fully comprehensible only to those who were cognizant of the issues raised by the Marxist notion of Russia's "semi-Asiatic" heritage.[36] On the other hand, this declaration could be construed as an ideologically-based justification for a change in economic policy to address the needs of the moment.

That the former was the case is borne out by the fact that in the last years of his life Lenin regularly applied the labels "bureaucratic" and "Asiatic" to Russia's political

---

[35] Lenin, PSS, fourth ed. (Moskva: 1941-1950), vol. 32, p. 329, quoted in Wittfogel, op. cit., p. 399.
[36] Wittfogel, op. cit., p. 400.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

heritage. Moreover, he claimed repeatedly until shortly before being incapacitated in his final illness that the Soviet state apparatus was just a survival of the old one from the preceding epoch, repainted on the surface, as it were.[37] That is, Lenin maintained this conviction from March 1921 until he was no longer able to function because of poor health, and he died shortly afterward.

In light of this evidence it seems most improbable that Lenin's position on the eve of the inauguration of the NEP was taken simply to justify a practical change in policy. Clearly, Lenin was deeply troubled about the nature of the regime he had founded.

Perhaps Lenin's most significant reiteration of his concern was in his article, "On Our Revolution" (1923), wherein he tried to defend the Russian Revolution against those of its critics who maintained that it had been premature:

> "The development of the productive forces of Russia has not attained a level high enough to make socialism possible." All the heroes of the Second International, including, of course, [N. N.] Sukhanov [born Himmler, a prominent Menshevik], make a big song and dance about this. They keep harping on this incontrovertible proposition in a thousand different keys, and think that it is the decisive principle by which our revolution is to be judged.[38]

However, Lenin did not really have Sukhanov to blame. He made this statement in January 1923, after the Bolsheviks had been in power for just over five years. With Lenin's Bolsheviks in power, Russia was still in dire shape economically, and it would not recover significantly until 1926. All Lenin could do was to defend the Bolshevik

---

[37] Ibid., footnote "p.".

[38] Lenin, "O nashei revoliutsii (Po povodu zapisok N. Sukhanova)," Part I, January 16, 1923, PSS, vol. 45, p. 380.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

modification of the classical Marxist paradigm, the seizure of power before "objective conditions" were ripe:

> You say that civilization is necessary for the building of socialism. Very good. But why could we not first create such prerequisites for civilization in our country as the expulsion of the landowners and the Russian capitalists, and then start moving towards socialism? In what books have you read that such modifications of the usual historical sequence of events are impermissible or impossible?[39]

Yet not even this logic fully vindicated Lenin's position. From 1899 to 1917 he had fought hard to convince his fellow Marxists that Russia was sufficiently advanced for a transition to socialism in accordance with classical Marxism. Here he stood that paradigm on its head. He claimed that the revolution had to come before the economic development necessary to establish socialism was even possible; and even with the Bolsheviks in power, a lot of work was needed in terms of the construction of civilization in the aftermath of the expulsion of the exploiters before that economic development could commence. Hence he was not able to rule out violence in order to maintain the power of the "proletarian vanguard," the Party. Meanwhile, that "vanguard" was entrenching itself ever more firmly and developing the very bureaucratic stagnation that Lenin hated and feared and that his critics so rightly recognized as a characteristic of the Soviet system. Death took him within a year of his having made these remarks, but it is unlikely that he would have made much headway in resolving these issues had he lived. Soviet society had not turned out as it was supposed to at all. Lenin's faithful application of Marxist principles to his policy measures had failed to result in the social development

[39] Ibid., Part II, January 17, 1923, p. 381.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for which he had hoped. The dilemma of War Communism remained. Although the NEP represented his best effort at a beginning, Lenin was never able to resolve this quandary.

D. Lenin and the NEP: Whither Socialism?

It is only through an understanding of Lenin's thinking about the relevance of the Asiatic mode of production to Russia that the inauguration of the NEP is fully comprehensible. From 1903 until 1921 Lenin was confident that an "Asiatic restoration" would not occur; but his thinking from 1921 to 1923 demonstrates convincingly that he felt his confidence to have been in error. This, in turn, clarifies the sources of the foreboding that Lenin felt over what he had built in his last days.

Among the contributors to the ideological development of the NEP we will confine our consideration to Lenin and Bukharin. Indeed there were other prominent supporters of concepts incorporated during the early phases of the NEP, including Trotsky;[40] but since the formulations of Lenin and Bukharin occupied center stage, so to speak, their perspectives will be given the main attention here.

Lenin's address to the X Party Congress in March 1921 has been grossly misinterpreted over the years precisely because of a general refusal to accept that Lenin meant what he wrote. Lenin's introduction of the New Economic Policy in no way

---

[40] In addition to his well-known call for the application of terror under War Communism, Trotsky offered incentives to the population to cooperate with the Bolsheviks. Indeed it was Trotsky who, recognizing the hardship prevalent in Russia during the Civil War, initially proposed an end to requisitions and their replacement by a gradual tax in February 1920. Since the fall of the Soviet polity Trotsky has made a comeback in Russia, and a conference held in Moscow in November 1994 resulted in the publication of an interesting collection, Ideinoe nasledie L. D. Trotskogo: Istoriia i sovremennost' (Moskva: Ekonomicheskaia demokratiia, 1994). Several of the contributors believed that Trotsky's ideas for Soviet socialist construction still had an appositeness to our own time.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

represented a departure from what he had thought about Russian state and society, and what means were necessary to transform it, since 1898. Although Lenin admitted that key features of the NEP were capitalist, the policy was primarily concerned with adaptation of socialist development.

> Comrades, the question of substituting a tax for grain requisitioning is primarily and mainly a political question for the essence of this question lies in the relationship of the working class to the peasantry. The posing of this question means that we must subject the relations of these two main classes, whose struggle or agreement determines the fate of our revolution as a whole, to a new, or I should perhaps say, a more careful and correct re-examination and some revision.[41]

This was not just a hackneyed statement about class relations during the transition to socialism. What Lenin meant was that while a major characteristic of War Communism, grain requisitioning, was to be abandoned and economic effectiveness was to be sought, this goal was not to be attained at all costs. Class relations in social transformation were still of central importance, and Lenin claimed that the New Economic Policy was justified only because class relations warranted it. In inaugurating the policy Lenin proceeded from the assumption that by the spring of 1921 the kulak had been on the whole eliminated except in Ukraine and Siberia; that is, the bourgeoisie was subdued to the point where socialist transformation was possible. Reconciliation was to be effected between the leadership and the peasantry as a whole, which, thanks to the changes

---

[41] Lenin, "Doklad o zamene razverstki natural'nym nalogom 15 marta," PSS, vol. 43, p. 57. The X Congress took place from March 8 to March 16, 1921.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

brought about as a result of War Communism, had generally acquired the status of "middle peasants":

> No matter how difficult our situation is in regard to resources, the problem of satisfying the middle peasantry must be solved. The middle peasantry has grown much larger, the antagonisms have been smoothed out, the land has been distributed for far more equitable use, the kulak has been undermined and he has been expropriated in significant measure--in Russia more than in Ukraine, and less in Siberia. On the whole, however, statistics show quite unequivocally that the village has leveled out, has equalized, that is, the old sharp division into kulak and cropless peasant has smoothed out. Everything has become more equable, the peasantry in general has acquired the status of the middle peasant.[42]

Two things are noteworthy here: although the "middle peasant" now represented the peasantry "in general" (that is, the overwhelming majority of the Russian population), Lenin did not say that the kulak class had disappeared, merely that it was significantly subdued. Furthermore, he did not guarantee that the kulak class could not somehow be restored. In fact, Lenin asserted that the New Economic Policy offered fertile ground for the reappearance of the kulak, something which would be especially dangerous to the survival of the Revolution under current geopolitical conditions:

> When we speak of free exchange, we mean individual exchange of commodities, which in turn means encouraging the kulaks. What are we to do? We must not close our eyes to the fact that the switch from grain requisitioning to the tax will mean more kulaks under the new system. They will appear where they could not appear before. This must not be combated by prohibitive measures but by state unanimity and by government measures from above. If you can give the peasant machines you will help him prosper, and when you provide machines or electric power, tens or hundreds of thousands of petty kulaks will be wiped out....Basically the situation is this: we must satisfy the middle peasantry economically and go over to free exchange; otherwise it will be

[42] Ibid., pp. 59-60.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> impossible--economically impossible--because of the delay in the world revolution, to preserve the rule of the proletariat in Russia. We must be clearly conscious of this and not be afraid in the least to say it.[43]

Lenin minced no words, however, when he described his convictions about what this transition would mean:

> What does free exchange mean? Free exchange means free trade, and free trade means a regression to capitalism. Free exchange and free trade mean the exchange of commodities between dispersed small producers. All of us who have studied even the basics of Marxism know that such exchange and free trade will lead to a division of commodity producers into owners of capital and owners of working hands, a division into capitalist and hired laborer, i.e. a restoration anew of capitalist wage slavery. This does not fall out of the sky. All over the world, it grows out of agricultural commodity production. We know this quite well theoretically, and anyone in Russia who pays attention to the life and the conditions of the economy of the small agricultural producer cannot help but observe this.[44]

Yet Lenin's emphasis on fostering productivity through incentive to the peasantry continued until his death. At the XI Congress of the Communist Party Lenin noted with displeasure the relative effectiveness of the "old capitalist" in generating economic productivity, and he stressed the need of the proletariat and poor peasantry to compete with him.[45] Clearly, Lenin saw that economic revitalization could only be effected through entrepreneurial initiative; political tactics were useless:

> The problem is that a responsible Communist, even the best, who is known for honesty and dedication, having suffered penal servitude and who did not fear death, does not know how to trade, because he is not a businessman. He has not learned to trade, does not want to learn and does

---

[43] Ibid., pp. 69-70. It might be added that by this reasoning the kulak was a direct product of what Stalin would later call "capitalist encirclement," a major pillar of his theory of "Socialism in One Country."
[44] Ibid., pp. 61-62.
[45] Lenin, "Politicheskii otchet tsentral'nogo komiteta RKP (b) 27 marta," PSS, vol. 45, pp. 79-80.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> not understand that he must start learning from the beginning....[He] does not know business, and does not even know that he does not know it.[46]

However, Lenin did not by any means suggest that what had been constructed under the NEP, or what was intended in terms of future development, was a reversion to capitalism. This was made most plain when he noted the "usefulness" of N. V. Ustrialov, a former Kadet, member of the Smena Vekh group, and sympathizer with the Soviet regime, who maintained that the Soviet economy was merely evolving into a different form of capitalist economic structure.

> The enemy [Ustrialov] is speaking the class truth and is pointing to the danger that stands before us. The enemy is striving to make this inevitable [the restoration of a capitalist system]. Smena Vekh adherents express the sentiments of thousands and tens of thousands of the bourgeoisie, or of Soviet employees who function in our New Economic Policy. This is a fundamental and real danger. And that is why attention must be concentrated mainly on the question: "Who will win [ch'ia voz'met]?" I have spoken about competition. No direct onslaught is being made on us, nobody is clutching us by the throat. True, we have yet to see what will happen tomorrow. But today we are not being subjected to armed attack. Nevertheless, the fight against capitalist society has become a hundred times more fierce and perilous, because we are not always able to see clearly where our enemy lies and who our friend is.[47]

The main enemy in the spring of 1922, then, was not readily visible but definitely within Soviet borders, in Soviet factories, and among Soviet managers. It was therefore appropriate, just as it had been in the spring of 1918, to respond with repression and violence in the name of defending revolutionary gains. What was more, because it was so

[46] Ibid., p. 82. The dates of the XI Congress were March 27 to April 2, 1922; it was the last one attended by Lenin.
[47] Ibid., pp. 94-95.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

difficult for the regime to spot its enemies, extreme measures could well be justified in order to root them out.

Despite qualified characterizations of the NEP as a reversion to capitalism, Lenin made it clear beyond question that the policy was anything but capitalist in its essence. While it may have had certain features of capitalist production, it was in fact an adaptation on the road to the construction of socialism. Lenin's response to Ustrialov was very much in keeping with the position he had held in March 1921. It was at once indicative of precisely what he intended the NEP to accomplish and perhaps the most clearly stated example of the Leninist rationale behind Stalin's brutal measures in economic and social policy. Viewed in that light, it explains Stalin's assertion that the NEP, as such, obtained until "socialism" was achieved in 1936. But it also poses the most puzzling question of all. What was the "New Economic Policy?" Why did the Communists devise such an indeterminate name for it? This is a very good question, and its answer may perhaps be found in the simple realization that the NEP was neither the "New Political Policy" nor the "New Social Policy." Its goal, the construction of socialism, was not any different from that of War Communism. If one considers honestly Lenin's positions in early 1918 and under the NEP, his paradigm was surprisingly consistent. The NEP was introduced with the purpose of furthering the achievements of the period 1918-1921. If the NEP, like War Communism, had as its goal the establishment of socialism, then it would make sense that it should come to an end once that goal was attained. The problem was that under socialism there was supposed to be

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

genuine democracy, made possible by the participation of workers and peasants in administration. This was the essence of the theory of Soviet government. Although we have seen that Lenin wrestled with this question in the context of notions of Russia's "semi-Asiatic" heritage and its meaning, he died before he had an opportunity to give it a definitive answer, if indeed he had one. What Lenin did succeed in doing before his death was to lay out the alternatives on the road to the construction of socialism, violent coercion _versus_ peaceful evolution, and to demonstrate that both were consistent with Marxism. Stalin, of course, ultimately represented the former option. But most advocates of the "return to NEP" would stake everything on the correctness of the latter. Of all Lenin's immediate heirs, its most capable proponent was Bukharin.

E. Lenin's NEP and the Contribution of Bukharin

Three major developments in Bukharin's thought were central to Stephen F. Cohen's concept of Bukharinism. The first, which we covered in the last chapter, was Bukharin's theory of scientific socialism as expounded in his 1921 work, _Historical Materialism_. The second was his recognition of bureaucratism and the harm that it caused to the Party and to the Soviet economy and people. The last was his theory of "growing into socialism," which developed in the course of the debates of the 1920s and had at its core a conviction that violence against the peasantry was counterproductive to the construction of socialism not only in the USSR but in all countries.

We have already seen that the first two of these "tenets" of "Bukharinism," had already been pondered and developed extensively by Lenin. Lenin was clearly wrestling

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

with the third as he lay convalescing, but he did not have as much time as Bukharin did to deal with the difficulties inherent in it, so it is impossible to tell whether he would have approved of Bukharin's ultimate formulations, although both men held that violence was only a tool for the transition to socialism. Even so, while it is clear that Lenin was concerned with the same issues as Bukharin, there is no real evidence that he "changed his mind" about "reformism" with the inauguration of the NEP, as Cohen maintained. Lenin was still willing to employ coercion: he did away with the Workers' Opposition at the same time that he introduced the NEP, and after 1922 all organized political resistance had been overcome. Despite Lenin's firmness in this respect, however, it is clear that he too hoped that socialist construction would proceed peacefully under the NEP. There can be only one explanation for this. Lenin's essential position on the NEP, which Bukharin shared, was based on an assumption which Bukharin also shared, namely, that because the proletariat was firmly in power (the Civil War had been won and the danger of foreign intervention was past) the use of violence in socialist construction was no longer absolutely necessary. There would be social change, to be sure, since socialism still had to be constructed and the Bolsheviks were certainly a long way from Communism. However, as we have seen, Lenin never opted unequivocally for peaceful development, for there was still the potential for opposition as long as socialism was not secured. This was the basis of the reasoning later employed--with every foundation in Leninist teaching--by Stalin.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Neither Lenin nor Bukharin lost sight of the fact that Marx had said little to guide the proletariat in its transformation of post-revolutionary society. While Lenin emphatically asserted the existence of "objective truth," he also believed in the infinite adaptability of Marxism as relative truths approximated objective truth more closely through the operation of the dialectic. In this sense Lenin's position very closely paralleled that of Bukharin. Bukharin maintained, as had Lenin and Marx and Engels before him, that while the economic base of a society defined its superstructure, the form that the superstructure took was infinitely variable. In this way Bukharin accounted for the many social changes that had taken place in Russia since 1917.[48] The point, however, was that Bukharin maintained a scientific notion of the relationship of the base to the superstructure. As he put it, historical materialism "is not political economy, nor is it history; it is the general theory of society and the laws of its evolution, i.e., sociology."[49] For Bukharin, then, historical materialism was a social science, by definition a paradigm of social development devoid of idealism. It had a system of "laws," which, once discovered and properly applied, presumably would allow one to predict social development given a specific set of "objective conditions."

In addition to portraying Bukharin as the pioneer in the defense of Marxist science, Cohen has credited him with the earliest and most insightful understanding of the

---

[48] Ibid., pp. 110-111. Cohen does not give Lenin due credit here. Lenin made precisely the same argument in Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.
[49] N. I. Bukharin, Historical Materialism: A System of Marxist Sociology (English translation) (New York: Progress Publishers, 1925), p. xv, quoted in Cohen, op. cit., p. 113.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

development of "bureaucratism" in the Party by 1921. Cohen's error, unfortunately, has been perpetuated and further exacerbated. Donny Gluckstein, for example, has written:

> Bukharin's analysis...went far beyond Lenin's. The latter saw bureaucratisation arising from the influence of remnants of the old regime. Lenin did not stress the tendencies within the new regime towards bureaucracy. Cohen rightly points out that Bukharin was among the first (if not the first) Bolshevik leaders to raise the question.[50]

From our analysis of Marx, Plekhanov and Lenin on Oriental despotism it is plain that Gluckstein's assertion is false. Marx himself had been the first to postulate these problems with respect to Russian society, and the Marxist paradigm of Russia as "semi-Asiatic" was at the heart of Plekhanov's theories about obstacles to social change in Russia. Lenin had been debating heatedly with Plekhanov precisely over these issues, arguing that Russia was indeed ready for revolution, for years before Bukharin even joined the Party in 1905. Finally, Lenin's notions of the inherently socially stagnant and bureaucratic, i.e., "semi-Asiatic," nature of the Russian state and society under tsarism was at the core of his ideas behind the organization of the Bolshevik Party. But perhaps Gluckstein's (and Cohen's) error may be ascribed to the Soviet repression of discussion of the Asiatic mode of production.[51] It is true in any case that Bukharin, like Lenin, was centrally concerned with this problem.

On the basis of Bogdanov's argument that "the ruling class in any given society is that group which organizes the economy, whether or not it actually owns the means of production," Bukharin forwarded the idea that class exploitation could (and did) exist

[50] Donny Gluckstein, The Tragedy of Bukharin (London; Boulder, CO: Pluto Press, 1994), p. 73.
[51] We will discuss this issue in the conclusion to this chapter.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

where there was no private property. A Party elite was emerging which threatened an evolutionary return to exploitative relations.[52] As Cohen put it,

> From 1921 onward, Bukharin's attention focused on the "non-party masses," and his previous enthusiasm for revolutionary coercion shifted to an emphasis on persuasion and education. He began to see in the "colossal" bureaucracy erected during war communism all that was symptomatic of the party's isolation, associating its growth with the "vacuum" that had opened between the Bolshevik government and the people. The equation resulted in one of his basic ideas. The antidote against bureaucracy consisted in filling this void with "hundreds and thousands of small and large rapidly expanding voluntary societies, circles and associations," which would provide a "link with the masses."...
>
> The "masses," of course, meant the peasantry. Never having been an extremist among Bolsheviks on the "peasant question," Bukharin now accepted the fact that the party's stability depended on a lasting rapprochement with the rural population. The other problems that concerned him in 1921 to 1923--Russia's backwardness, bureaucratic overcentralization, and the Bolsheviks' isolation--were each a part of this larger one.[53]

This represented Bukharin's acceptance of something Lenin had recognized long before: Russia was "semi-Asiatic" in the Marxist sense. But Bukharin, of course, had not been part of the 1906 debate between Lenin and Plekhanov. He arrived at his position by a different route.[54] Whether he was aware of the debate is uncertain, and Cohen did not

---

[52] Stephen F. Cohen, Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography, 1888-1938, Revised ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 143-144.

[53] Ibid., p. 145. Emphasis as published.

[54] Indeed, Cohen argues that it was the events of 1905 that "completed" Bukharin's ideological development, op. cit., p. 10, and that his years abroad from 1911 to 1917 were the ones that crystallized his intellectual outlook, during which he read Western authors, particularly economists, and learned French, German and English. During this period Lenin was not Bukharin's chief inspiration, though Bukharin respected Lenin highly. Bukharin spent more time and made a bigger name for himself among other Bolshevik circles, particularly in Germany, and when Bukharin went to visit Lenin he had considerable disagreements with the latter, who accused him of being "semi-anarchistic." Cohen, op. cit., pp. 15-18, passim.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

mention it; but it seems that Bukharin knew of Marx's concept of the Asiatic mode of production, for he regularly referred to Russia as "semi-Asiatic."

In any event it seems clear that Bukharin shared many of the same concerns that Lenin evinced toward the end of his life in "On Our Revolution." Lenin's incapacity during 1923 and his death in January 1924 left Bukharin to develop these ideas in terms of his theory of "growing into socialism," which began with the awareness cited by Cohen above and took shape in the context of the industrialization debates of the 1920s, chiefly as a counter to the theories of Preobrazhenskii.[55] We shall consider what Bukharin's position meant in terms of the "return to NEP" in Chapter IV; but for now it should be recalled that Bukharin was one of the chief targets of Stalin's brutality. Stalin's methods, as we have seen, found authority in both Marx and Lenin. Bukharin, like Lenin, had also found theoretical justification for the application of force in the construction of socialism, witness his support of War Communism. But in the 1920s he favored withdrawal of coercive methods. Essentially Bukharin tried to shift the emphasis in tactics from coercion to implementation of genuine socialist democracy. His position had as much authority in the Marxist scriptures as did the Stalinist alternative. Cohen's book is, in a very significant way, an attempt to argue that Bukharin's position was in fact more correct, since with the diminution of intensity in class struggle violence ought to have been less necessary. Why, then, could Bukharin's formulations not be concretely defended? Why would his theory of socialist development turn out not to be definitive?

---

[55] Cohen, op. cit., p. 165 et. seq.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The answer, I believe, lies in consideration of the crisis of Marxist science. Because of the indeterminate nature of the dialectic any paradigm of social development could conceivably be justified. Again, this was a major reason for the wide variety of interpretations of Marxism that prevailed before the Revolution. A proper deterministic model was necessary for a social theory to be "correct," i. e., be able properly to foresee long-term social development. The "correctness" of one idea necessarily, for "scientific" reasons, precluded the veracity of the others. Ironically, the clearest defense of Bukharin's theoretical position, expressed in precisely these terms, is set forth in the one book by Lenin that Cohen attacked most harshly: Materialism and Empirio-Criticism. Yet as we have seen, Lenin's defense of this doctrine did not resolve its problems. Bukharin's only option, then, seems to have been to pursue political power, which was how Stalin guaranteed the implementation of his own doctrine of socialism. Thus, only by understanding the deepest sources of Soviet Communist philosophy can one appreciate Bukharin's true position.

F. Lenin's Legacy of Despotism

Lenin's outlook was one of a determinist, of course, but it is important to remember that he was not a fatalist. He not only demonstrated this in the context of the politics of the NEP, but following the founding of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in 1898 he had shown that the key to political success in Russia was to seize political advantage by whatever means possible, to make every effort to secure for oneself and one's supporters the most decisive roles in political leadership. He knew that he and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

his Party were important determining agents. Lenin's rivals among Russian Marxists were the fatalists; perhaps the most striking example of their philosophy in practice would be the Menshevik position during the February Revolution. The Mensheviks thought that the laws of history would vindicate them in due time, that it would in fact be foolhardy for them to attempt to take power prematurely.

Yet Lenin framed his entire political discourse in terms of historical materialism. He may not have been a fatalist in politics, but it is clear that he had faith in the premises of Marxist social science. His debate with Plekhanov over the issue of the Asiatic mode of production and its implications for revolutionary potential in Russia showed that he, like Plekhanov, believed in the progressive development of society, propelled by forces of history leading ineluctably to specific social structures.

The implementation of the NEP was a "scientific" measure as much as a tactical one. As far as Lenin was concerned, he had made a "social miscalculation." The precise steps in the process of social transformation may be unpredictable, but definite outcomes in terms of changes in modes of production are supposed to be inevitable, given certain circumstances. His phrasing of the problem necessitating the inauguration of the NEP could only mean that he felt himself to have erred in determining those circumstances before 1917 and an "Asiatic restoration" had in fact occurred as Plekhanov had warned. Even in the context of the NEP, however, Lenin did not lose sight of his goals. In fact, to Lenin the NEP constituted a new method of socialist construction developed through more "correct" theoretical reconsiderations. Again, this reflected his conviction that there

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

were principles in nature that validated the concept of historical inevitability. The NEP, then, was the "correct" policy for addressing the problem of the "Asiatic restoration."

Unfortunately, it did not accomplish this. The system that Lenin established to "safeguard" socialist gains and clear the way for socialist democracy actually laid the groundwork for Stalinism. But Lenin alone was really responsible for this. Lenin was active until March 1923 and it was he, and not Stalin, who made the most important theoretical and institutional contributions during this time. Second, debate was lively at the five Congresses of the Party held annually from 1921 to 1925; those theorists who disagreed with the Leninist course were given ample opportunity during this period to air their views. It was only with the XV Congress, in 1927, (which had been delayed one year) that the sway of Stalin over the Party was clearly perceptible.[56] Third, although Lenin and Trotsky had sought to curtail Stalin's caprice at the XII Congress (Lenin's illness had prevented this from transpiring), the harshest aspect of Lenin's denunciation of Stalin in his "Testament" was that Stalin seemed not always to use his power with sufficient caution. When Lenin finally suggested ten days later that Stalin be removed, his harshest criticism of him was that he was "too rude," and "capricious," not that his socialist convictions were incorrect.[57]

---

[56] John S. Reshetar, Jr., The Soviet Polity: Government and Politics in the USSR, Third Edition. (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1989), p. 112.

[57] The "Testament" was actually Lenin's "Letter to the (XII) Congress." It was dictated on December 23-25, 1922, after Lenin's second stroke, and the "codicil" recommending Stalin's removal and replacement with someone less rude, capricious, etc. was dictated January 4, 1923. However, the Letter to the Congress was not opened until after Lenin's death and it was not published until after the XX Congress in 1956. It is translated, along with its addenda, in Robert C. Tucker, ed., The Lenin Anthology (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1975), pp. 725-728. Continued difficulties with Stalin, as well as Lenin's anger with Stalin over his rudeness to Nadezhda Krupskaia, Lenin's wife, can be found in three secret letters of March 5 and 6, 1923, translated in Tucker, op. cit., pp. 747-748. But in what was probably his last message to Stalin

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Thus, Stalin cannot fairly be blamed for what was built during this period. He assumed control of the Party and state apparatus gradually, gaining ground after 1922; but the system was constructed initially and mainly under the auspices of Lenin. Although Lenin's third and final stroke on March 9, 1923 removed him permanently from administration of the system he built, it continued in the framework that he designed. The state structure bequeathed by Lenin, and also used repressively by him, was what allowed Stalin to make the moves that he did in the mid-1920s and beyond.[58] Indeed, Bukharin himself must share some of the blame for his own downfall: notwithstanding his reservations about "bureaucratism" and his convictions that socialist economics needed more careful consideration, he did not protest this system significantly until after 1928.

G. Stalinism Before Stalin: Platonov's Chevengur

Those who make too much of the liberalization seemingly inherent in the NEP forget the ambiguous nature of Lenin's concept of the NEP that was rooted in its philosophical problems, as well as the fact that the Soviet leadership never actually abandoned the true goal of War Communism: political and social transformation to the

---

Lenin demanded only that Stalin apologize for his rudeness to Krupskaia, not that he renounce any of his ideological positions.

[58] For a detailed description of the bureaucratic machine that Lenin built, see T. H. Rigby, Lenin's Government: Sovnarkom 1917-1922. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1979) Sovnarkom was the state apparatus, as distinguished from the Party structure; but that did not mean that it was independent. Indeed, it was designed specifically to facilitate implementation of Party directives. On p. 223 Rigby writes of Sovnarkom, "despite its great expansion since the 1930s, its many reorganisations, its renaming as the Council of Ministers in 1946, and its several changes of leadership, its modern structures and processes have evolved organically out of those established under Lenin, and have manifested a remarkable level of continuity."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

socialist mode of production. Once again, "War Communism" was an apologetic label for a failed attempt to establish socialism. The formulations in "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" were taken in all seriousness by the Soviet Communists not only during the Civil War but for a very long time afterward. Chevengur illustrates the profound insistence of the Communists in the era of NEP on a firm nexus between natural and social law, as well as the problems that arose from it socially and politically. The novel undermines any attempt to characterize the NEP, even Bukharinism, as a viable variant of more "humane" socialism, thereby discrediting the moral philosophy of perestroika.

Those who refuse to accept that the horror of Stalinism was a logical extension not only of the Revolution and War Communism but also of the NEP will always abound, but their position is far from secure. Among the fruits of glasnost' was full publication in Russian of a work which, unfortunately, has not been given the same attention by historians as it has by specialists in Russian literature. A consideration of Chevengur by Andrei Platonov (1899-1951) makes a powerful case for the essential continuity of War Communism, the NEP, and, in light of the harsh repression of the novel, Stalinism. It also illustrates how the nexus between Marxist natural science and Marxist social science was perceived in practice. Completed by 1928,[59] Chevengur represents Platonov's perception of the development of Soviet power during its first decade of existence.

---

[59] In March 1978 Anthony Alcott claimed that Platonov began work on the novel in 1927 or 1928, and that it was "almost certainly finished by 1928," since "in that year no fewer than three of the five stories Platonov published were actually fragments of Chevengur." Andrei Platonov, Chevengur, translated by Anthony Alcott. (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1978), p. xvi. M. A. Platonova and T. S. Shekhanova place the start of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The first fifth of the novel is devoted to an allegory of both economic development and political and social misery during the last decades of tsarism and the first world war, but while this may seem superfluous it was a deliberate device which was intended to augment the impact of the overall message of the novel. Platonov wrote so that important historical events were obscured; what mattered to him was that life for the common Russian was the same always: monotonous, cold and cruel.

With the advent of Soviet power Platonov presented a dichotomy between real life and the varied ideals of socialism held by each of his major characters. By the end of the novel it was clear that the "communism" which they had labored so hard to build through the mid-1920s, and of which the town of Chevengur was supposed to be the personification, was no different from real life after all. The Communist Party had replaced the tsarist bureaucracy, and although the Chevengurians were supposed to have arrived at social harmony at the end of history their community was destroyed and they were still beleaguered by deadly enemies. Except for a few die-hards they abandoned their ideals, and the most idealistic of them, Kopenkin, ended up being killed in a battle with Cossacks.

---

writing in 1927 and its completion in 1930. A. P. Platonov, Izbrannoe, sostavitel' M. A. Platonova; predislovie T. S. Shekhanovoi. (Moskva: Moskovskii rabochii, 1988), pp. 7, 396. Although the short stories "Koltovan" and "Vprok (Bedniatskaia khronika)" did make their appearances in 1930 and shared the overall message of Chevengur, Alcott's periodization seems much more convincing. In any case it is clear beyond doubt from Alcott's evidence that Platonov's overall idea for the novel was completely formulated before 1928, even if it was not finished until 1930.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It is halfway through the novel that one is introduced to the meaning of its title. Chevengur's name change is explained to Alexander Dvanov in a conversation with Fyodor Fyodorovich Gopner, who is skeptical of Communism, and Chepurny, alias "The Japanese" because of the shape of his nose, who believes it to obtain in his village:

> "So where are you from, then, looking like that?" Gopner asked.
>
> "From Communism. Ever hear of the place?" the new arrival answered.
>
> "What's that, a village named in memory of the future?"
>
> The man was cheered that he had a story to tell.
>
> "What do you mean village? You must be a non-Party man, [bespartiinyi] huh? There's a place called that, an entire county center. Old style it used to be called Chevengur. And me, I was chairman of the revolutionary committee there for a while."
>
> "Is Chevengur near Novoselovsk?" Dvanov asked.
>
> "Of course it's near. Only there's nothing but noisemakers what live there and they don't come over our way. Our town is where everything ends."
>
> "What ends, for God's sake?" Gopner asked distrustfully.
>
> "All of world history, that's what! What do we need it for?"[60]

The epitome of socialist character in the novel was the "Commander of the Rosa Luxemburg Bolshevik Field Detachment of the Upper Motinsky Region, Stepan Efimovich Kopenkin,"[61] whose steed was called "Proletarian Strength." Kopenkin was

---

[60] Andrei Platonov, Chevengur, in M. A. Platonova, comp., Andrei Platonov: Izbrannoe (Moskva: Moskovskii rabochii, 1988), p. 185.
[61] Ibid., p. 139.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

portrayed as having had no consciousness of any sort prior to the Revolution, after which he assumed responsibility for the proper socialist education of all whom he encountered. Kopenkin had an enduring obsession with the German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, whose example he tried to emulate in promoting Russian revolutionary development. He was so convinced of the validity of the laws of history as interpreted by the Bolsheviks that he believed that one may persuade people to accept the social changes they loathed through simple entreaty: "Plow the land and feed yourself! You probably get so much salary a year that you ate up one entire farm by yourself! Now go live like the masses instead!"[62] Faith in "the masses" was not confined to Kopenkin, of course, but the idealism of two central characters, Kopenkin and Chepurny, is most illustrative of the novel's general theme.

Everyone seemed to think that the attainment of socialism, whatever it was, was essential to surviving the hard times. At one point during the Civil War Dvanov was called to present himself immediately to the President of the Executive Committee, Shumilin, to find out whether there was spontaneous generation of socialism among the masses.[63] Shumilin was concerned, among other things, for the health of his wife, Nadia, whom he was certain would be saved from typhus if only socialism were inaugurated as quickly as possible.[64] Everywhere the Communists sought evidence of popular initiative

---

[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., p. 95.
[64] Ibid., p. 92.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in socialist construction, and teachers were sent out into the countryside in strengths equal to Red Army detachments in order to eradicate illiteracy to further such consciousness.[65]

After the settlement of Chevengur/Communism and the ideals of its inhabitants are discussed the novel follows a clear line of development: Platonov describes how his characters' pure motives degenerate into the most evil decisions and policies, all in the name of defending revolutionary gains. One example that stands out is when Chepurny, in the process of protecting the people from thieves, insists upon lodging and feeding himself and his horse gratis at the home of an old peasant.[66] Chepurny, of course, never lost his ideals: in a later conversation with Kopenkin he declared, "But the basic profession is now the soul of man. And the product it produces is friendship and comradeship! So why isn't that an occupation for you, I ask you now?"[67]

Chepurny's idealism was starkly contrasted to reality on more than one occasion. He had seemed to think that once socialism was inaugurated there would be no further need for toil, but soon he "regretted that he had exiled the class of residual human scum away from exploitation. The scum could have helped move the rooted houses, instead of the proletariat, who had been tormented enough already."[68] And there were revelations that the Bolsheviks were not the bastions of moral rectitude which they claimed to be: when Zheev, an aged Bolshevik who had "grown fat" from the Civil War, prevailed upon Chepurny to procure some women for him, he did so with the clear suggestion that

---

[65] Ibid., p. 93.
[66] Ibid., pp. 189-192.
[67] Ibid., p. 219.
[68] Ibid., p. 258.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

without the tenderness of women the men might have to turn to one another for intimacy. Chepurny, in true socialist spirit, rebuked Zheev's motive but dismissed any idea that there was anything wrong with compelling some women to come to Chevengur, as long as they were poor and comrades, not given to flaunting beauty.[69] But perhaps Chepurny's absurdities were most clearly manifest when he tried to bring a boy who had died from illness and malnutrition back to life, certain that since Communism was present in Chevengur the newly-deceased child ought to be able to return to the living, if he were so inclined. Chepurny admitted that this would not be possible if the boy's body were in an advanced state of decay, but since he had only just expired, his insides were still alive. Chepurny, Zheev and Prokofy all came to the conclusion that people die because of social conditions alone, and that because they had given the boy the right social conditions in Chevengur, he could have lived had he so chosen.[70] The boy's mother asked to be left alone with her dead child until morning. As Chepurny walked out, he carried his ridiculous syllogism a step further: the child lived on in his mother's dreams, and therefore was still alive in a sense, all because he had made it to Chevengur before he died.

Chepurny asked himself,

> Where was [communism]? Even Chepurny, as he left the family circle of the transient woman could not clearly sense or see the communism in nocturnal Chevengur, even though communism now existed officially. But the ways people live unofficially! Chepurny was amazed; they lie in the dark with corpses and feel fine! And there's no point to it....[71]

[69] Ibid., p. 259.
[70] Never, incidentally, have I seen a clearer statement of the Marxist faith in the connection between natural and social law(!)
[71] Ibid., p. 305.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This passage is comprehensible only if one remembers that by this time the Civil War had been won, and, although the Bolsheviks still had internal enemies of significance until as late as 1926, they were securely in power. Platonov's characterization of Chepurny was meant to convey the enthusiasm and zeal that the builders of socialism felt in the 1920s, after the real physical threat to the Soviet regime had passed. Thus, while the socialist ideals of Platonov's characters varied widely, ranging from serious and theoretical to absurd, each was firmly convinced of the validity of his interpretation. One thing can be certain despite any discrepancies in their socialist convictions: they believed very much in what they thought they were doing.

But what they actually did was to destroy life as it was in the village of Chevengur. All semblance of the former town and its social structure was uprooted by the Communists' policies--even the buildings--and replaced with nothing. Platonov was adept at expressing profound ironies in brief conversations between his characters, and this one in particular was confronted by Gopner and Dvanov:

> "Sasha, it's about time we started getting this squared away, isn't it?"
>
> "Getting what squared away," Dvanov asked.
>
> "What do you mean what? What did we come here for? Communism in all its parts."
>
> Dvanov stood a bit, not hurrying.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"See Fyodor Fyodorovich, what we have here isn't a mechanism, it's people living here. You can't get them squared away until they get themselves arranged. I used to think of the revolution as a steam engine, but now I see that's not it."[72]

Indeed it was not: Gopner had realized the fallacy of the Communist link between natural and social law. Gradually everyone turned to the pursuit of his own happiness. One character, Kirei, was quite blunt about it: "What's communism to me? Grusha is my comrade now, and I haven't found the time to work for her. I've got so much going on now that there isn't even time to get food...."[73] By the end of the novel the only idealists were Kopenkin and Dvanov. After the former was killed in battle, the latter committed suicide in the river where he had fished as a boy, seeking somehow to reunite with his father. He claimed more continuity with the legacy of his father than with the bright future he and others had labored to build. Their efforts merely had brought their society to greater depths of despair. But why had they tried to build communism? An earlier musing of Dvanov's sheds some light on this:

> Dvanov felt a pang of loss for the time which had passed, for time constantly gets off track and disappears, while a man stays in one place with his hopes for the future, and then Dvanov guessed why Chepurny and the Bolsheviks of Chevengur so wanted communism. Communism is the end of history and the end of time, for time runs only within nature, while within man there stands only melancholy.[74]

Chevengur, then, is both a satire and a social commentary. Platonov would never be part of historical debates over whether the Soviet government was trying to build

[72] Ibid., pp. 327-328.
[73] Ibid., p. 387.
[74] Ibid., p. 328.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

socialism under both War Communism and the NEP, but in Chevengur he clearly maintained that it did, and he did so contemporaneously. Platonov would never have said that the NEP was a repudiation of socialist construction or that War Communism before it had been anything but an attempt to force socialist construction from above. In fact, the NEP was represented in the novel as a continuation of socialist construction but a retreat from the excesses of the period 1918-1921, which was prompted by peasant unrest that found expression in the Kronstadt revolt.[75] This was in keeping with the Soviet interpretation. Nor was Platonov part of the Party debates of the 1920s, in which Lenin's heirs tried to determine what in fact constituted legitimate socialism; although, again, Platonov makes the prevailing confusion over this question clear in Chevengur. Moreover, it will be recalled that the novel was either completed or mostly written by 1928, before the advent of Stalin; and it may be presumed that the battle that killed Kopenkin was set sometime before 1926, when the Bolsheviks eliminated the last of enemies left over from the Civil War.

In important ways Chevengur is reminiscent of Soviet literature of its time, but it also stands out. Its message of disappointment with what had become of Soviet socialism by the end of the 1920s, for example, finds parallels in the later works of Maiakovskii, particularly "The Bedbug" (1928). Maiakovskii was perhaps the best known of those who had become disillusioned with Soviet socialism. Maiakovskii's protest culminated in

---

[75] The often-repeated fallacy that the NEP was inaugurated as a direct result of the Kronstadt uprising has been immortalized in the literature, despite E. H. Carr's reminder that the NEP was in the works before that revolt broke out. See E. H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923, Vol II, (London: Macmillan, 1952), pp. 271-272, footnote 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

suicide in 1930. But that was under Stalin. Many followed Maiakovskii's example, of course, if not through suicide then by heavy criticism of Stalinism. But, again, Chevengur came before Stalin. Therein lies its true importance. Stalin did not betray the revolution, Platonov would argue. By the time Stalin came to power the revolution had already been destroyed from within by its own incompatibility with human nature, which was much stronger. Lust, graft, selfishness and despotism were as characteristic of Bolsheviks as of anyone else before and after the revolution, and despite their attempts to build communism and eradicate these things, they merely expressed them in a different guise.

One simply cannot dismiss Chevengur as a bitter diatribe if something of the history of the novel itself is known. It was first published in full only in English in 1978.[76] A partial Russian edition had been released by YMCA Press in 1972;[77] but it was not until 1988 that a complete Russian edition appeared, thanks to glasnost'.[78] Platonov had tried for years to publish the novel, but his efforts were met with severe repression by Soviet authorities, who decried it as counterrevolutionary despite Platonov's insistence that he was portraying the revolution as it was.[79] As a result, by the time of his death in 1951 he had been able to publish only a few sections of it in the form of short stories.

---

[76] Andrei Platonov, Chevengur, translated by Anthony Alcott. (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1978).
[77] For discussion, see Alcott's introduction, p. xvi.
[78] This was the edition included in M. A. Platonova's select compilation, supra.
[79] This was related by Platonov in a letter to Maksim Gorky. A. Platonov, "Pis'mo Gor'komu," M. Gor'kii i sovetskie pisateli: Neizdannaia perepiska. Literaturnoe nasledstvo, v. 17, (1963). A brief quote from pp. 313-314 appears in Alcott's introduction, loc. cit.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Soviet government's repression of Chevengur suggests clearly that it did not agree with the novel's central message, namely, that there never was a let-up in the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union, as the Soviet mythology consistently claimed, and that the most base drives of human nature lay at the heart of even the most ostensibly noble of attempts to implement socialist policies in the 1920s. What obtained, in effect, was Stalinism before Stalin, and it remained for the dictator merely to consolidate and to augment what Lenin and the Bolsheviks had already "achieved." The implications of Platonov's work reached deep into the heart of Soviet socialism. They denied both the Soviet attempt to set the period of the NEP apart from "socialist" development as such; and they condemned "socialism" as intrinsically flawed in the form that it assumed in the Soviet Union in the 1920s.[80] Stalin saw the same problems as did Platonov, and he offered a solution. He simply reasoned that to avoid such disorder, order must be imposed--strictly and harshly--from above, by those whose benevolent and all-encompassing understanding of the laws of nature and history could guide the masses to claim what was rightfully theirs.

H. Implications of the Leninist Legacy

Unfortunately the despotic nature of the Soviet system was as resilient as Marx had said was characteristic of old Russia, whether or not one agrees with his classification of Russia's social structure. A key manifestation of this was the disinformation that was

[80] Although Platonov suffered persecution at the hands of Soviet authorities I have found no evidence to suggest that he was anything but a Soviet patriot and a Marxist. His strongest supporters during the years of his persecution were Marxists; among them was Gyorgy Lukacs. There is no gainsaying that Chevengur was a criticism of Soviet socialism; but it was not a repudiation of the Revolution.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

rife in Soviet history and politics. As a result, even under glasnost' many critics of Stalinism did not fully understand the interdependence of the ideas of the Russian Social Democrats and the common problems associated with their implementation. There was a tendency to blame Stalin alone for having betrayed the Revolution, and this was understandable. Stalin, after all, was personally responsible for the massive social destruction and the murder of millions in the 1930s. It was natural to look for an alternative. Only a very few Soviet intellectuals ultimately would assert that Stalinism had its roots in the Social Democratic movement in general. Ironically, however, the notion that there was an ideological and thus institutional alternative to Stalinism was fueled not so much by scholars like Cohen as by the obvious distortion of Soviet intellectual history perpetrated by Stalin himself, through his repression of ideas that might compromise his power.

Stalin could not allow the concept of the "Asiatic restoration" to impugn the credibility of his interpretation of scientific socialism for political and ideological reasons. Free discussion of the issue might have resulted in Stalin's being branded an Oriental despot. The fact that Lenin said that the October Revolution had been socialist but then hinted at an Asiatic restoration might once again raise the question of why the NEP was implemented and call Leninist social theory and the legitimacy of the October Revolution itself into question. Therefore, in 1931 Stalin forbade all discussion and debate over the Asiatic mode of production and its significance for Russia.[81] After 1931

[81] Wittfogel, op. cit., pp. 402-412, passim.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

old Russia was said to have been "feudal," following the paradigm for Marxist development in the West. The Asiatic mode of production was absent from Soviet discussions of Russia's historical development for three decades, its principal adherent being Wittfogel. In the 1960s Soviet historians began to refer to the concept indirectly in their discussion of Oriental societies;[82] but the debate that had taken place between Lenin and Plekhanov and which was so central to the nature and development of the Bolshevik Party was not given full treatment by any scholar until 1972.[83] Indeed Samuel Baron, Plekhanov's principal biographer, did not really appreciate the impact of Oriental despotism on Plekhanov's thought when he published his initial work in 1963; but in his 1995 study he still did not seem to have grasped the full extent of Lenin's understanding of the concept, and he was apparently inclined instead to portray Plekhanov as the one Social Democrat who really understood the Asiatic mode of production and all of its potential consequences for the Russian revolutionary movement.[84]

This historiographical development is much more interesting for the present discussion when we realize that the facts of the controversy among early Social Democrats over Russia's "semi-Asiatic" heritage were repressed until late in the

[82] See Donald W. Treadgold, "Soviet Historians Views of the Asiatic Mode of Production," Acta Slavica Iaponica, 1987 Tomus V (Sapporo, Japan: The Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University), pp. 1-20. See also Baron, Plekhanov in Russian History and Historiography, Chapter 7.
[83] This was done by Joseph Schiebel in his dissertation, cited above.
[84] Although Baron certainly documented Lenin's perception of Russia as an Asiatic despotism he did not seem to understand its impact as Schiebel, Wittfogel and others have. On p. 115 of Plekhanov in Russian History and Historiography, he concludes, "...as a result of recent developments, an alternative way to understand Russia's past, while remaining faithful to Marxian precepts, has become available. It has only been adumbrated rather than fully worked out."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Gorbachev era.[85] Gorbachev was certainly aware of the cover-up of the Asiatic mode of production in Soviet Marxism, the problems that this posed, and the need to confront the issue. But even he would address it only obliquely:

> Today we understand better the meaning of Lenin's last works and the reasons for the appearance of those works, which comprised, in essence, his political legacy. Being gravely ill, he was deeply troubled over the fate of socialism. He saw dangers which loomed over the new regime. And we must understand this concern. He saw that socialism was running into colossal problems and that he had to work out a great deal of what the bourgeois revolution had not resolved. It is for this reason that there were employed formulations which were somewhat "uncharacteristic" of socialism proper and which, in some way, at least, departed from generally accepted propositions about socialist construction.[86]

A statement such as this would have been unthinkable before the advent of Gorbachev. By calling into question the orthodoxy of Lenin's policies, Gorbachev came dangerously close to admitting that Lenin had erred in his application of Marxist principles to Russia. The specific nature of Gorbachev's concern was obvious. It was directly related to Stalin's interpretation of the Leninist legacy. Yet he could not spell it out, for he based his legitimacy on his promise to revitalize and to justify Soviet socialism, which had its main roots in the institutions that Lenin and Stalin had built. As perestroika unfolded,

---

[85] On p. ix of his introduction, ibid., Baron cites a late-June 1989 article in Argumenty i fakty discussing the question of whether the Plekhanov alternative is better than the Leninist, Bolshevik one. Baron does not give the precise date. Baron also cites the publication of a letter by Plekhanov in Voprosy istorii 1989 (12) which had been long suppressed and in which Plekhanov criticized the Bolshevik seizure of power. Most interesting of all is Baron's citation of a newspaper interview of Moscow mayor Gavril Popov (Izvestiia, June 28, 1990). Popov called the Soviet experience a seventy-year utopian experiment which violated basic ideas of Marxism and failed to take into consideration the views of leading Marxists like Plekhanov.

[86] M. S. Gorbachev, Perestroika i novoe myshlenie dlia nashei strany i dlia vsego mira (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1987), p. 21.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

however, it became increasingly clear that the question of reforming Communism in the USSR could not dispense with discussion of the concerns of the early Russian Marxists, including Lenin, over the significance of the Asiatic mode of production for Russia. The theoretical question of what the NEP really represented and indeed whether Lenin and his successors, including Gorbachev, were actually Oriental despots, could not forever be ignored. While the day of reckoning had long been delayed in the USSR, however, this was not the case in the Soviet bloc. Communist reformers in Eastern Europe were very much aware of despotism in Soviet socialism and the effects that it had on the Soviet system in general. East European reformers generally regarded these attributes as a major obstacle to the reform of Soviet socialism, on the basis of Marx's characterization of "Asiatic" societies as socially stagnant. Yet, ironically, it was to the East European attempts at Communist reform that many in the Soviet Union looked for institutional models as it became clear that initial efforts, patterned after the policies of Iurii Andropov, were not having their desired effects. We will consider these issues in more detail in Chapter III.

Thus, the cover-up of the Asiatic mode of production in Soviet thinking undermined Gorbachev's efforts to present Soviet socialism as a viable social system, inherently democratic and capable of effective adaptation to the world of the late twentieth century. At the same time the notion of Oriental despotism, in one way or another, lent the most credibility to the critics of Gorbachevism, who argued that Soviet socialism was inherently despotic and not reformable at all.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Even the era of the NEP, which many hoped would provide the key to resolving problems bequeathed by Stalin, made clear the inability of Lenin himself to resolve the problems of his regime. Lenin in fact entrenched the very despotism that he had hoped to eradicate, paving the way for Stalin.

Bukharin opted for continuation of the more liberal aspects of the NEP and development of relatively free institutions under socialism; but Stalin, after defeating Bukharin and other rivals, chose the path of political repression and forcible collectivization, arguing even that the NEP continued until 1936, when "socialism" was finally achieved. History has left us with clear evidence of the failure of Stalinism, but the flawed character of Marxist science makes it unrealistic to argue that the Bukharinist alternative would have been any more effective in reaching the goals of the Revolution. Although is likely that the system that would have resulted would have been more humane, there is no guarantee that it would have been a democratic socialist order of the sort that the Bolsheviks idealized. Platonov's characterization in Chevengur was a description of the years in which Bukharin had the most influence.

Although it is clear that Gorbachev worked for a more humane socialism from early in his career, it is also obvious that he sought initially to avoid these controversies, seeking instead to reform the system within the framework in which he inherited it, essentially following Andropov's example. Within a year and a half, however, that proved impossible, and Gorbachev was forced to deal not only with the systemic problems of Soviet socialism but also with the fact that Communists in other countries had known about them--and their roots--for quite some time. Thus, Gorbachev's reforms

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

were quickly transformed from an effort to revitalize the Soviet economy to a struggle to defend the very legitimacy of the Soviet system.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER III

FROM DEVELOPED SOCIALISM TO THE NEO-NEP: THE CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND OF THE SEARCH FOR A PROGRAM

When Mikhail S. Gorbachev was selected in March 1985 as CPSU General Secretary, the Soviet economy had been in a period of steady decline for thirty years; by the late Brezhnev era overall growth rates were zero or negative. Gorbachev had long been known to his colleagues in Stavropol' krai from 1955 to 1978 as a reform-minded individual, but when he took office it appeared that he would continue the policies of his immediate predecessors, albeit with more energy and resolve to tackle problems. The extent and depth of Gorbachev's commitment to change the system was not immediately apparent to very many, at least not among Western specialists,[1] but it soon became obvious. Gorbachev based his radical moves in the economy on his own reinterpretation of Lenin's writings in the early years of the NEP.[2] In fact, already by 1986 his reforms

---

[1] Archie Brown deserves credit as an exception to this general rule. He perceived the potential of Gorbachev's promotion to full membership in the Politburo on October 21, 1980, and reiterated its significance in an address at Yale University on the following day. Archie Brown, The Gorbachev Factor (Oxford: 1996), p. ix. Brown continued to observe Gorbachev closely and had high expectations for him in 1985. There were others, such as Darrell P. Hammer at Indiana University, who recognized Gorbachev's potential when he became General Secretary in 1985. There was much informal talk in Bloomington at that time of Gorbachev's intention to adopt the NEP as his model for reforming the Soviet system. Just how he would do this, however, was not clear. From a conversation with Dr. Matthew J. Ouimet, April 24, 1998. Dr. Ouimet was one of Hammer's undergraduate students at the time that Gorbachev came to power.

[2] In his article, "Gorbachev and Economic Reform," Foreign Affairs, 1985, 64(Fall):56-73; p. 61, Marshall I. Goldman recognized the tendency of some historians of the NEP era to advocate a return to NEP, but failed to see such a predilection in Gorbachev himself. Richard Sawka, Gorbachev and his Reforms, 1985-1990, (New York, London: Prentice-Hall, 1991), contrasted the NEP and the early years and perestroika (p. 32), but emphasized their differences over any similarities. Sawka noted later Nikolai Shmelev's characterization of the parallel in 1987 (pp. 108-111, passim). Shmelev had in fact been developing this position for a considerable while, witness his "Avansy i dolgi," Novyi mir 1987, 63(6, June):142-158. But Sawka did not see the deeper meaning of Gorbachev's connection of "cost-accounting" (khozraschet) and the "human factor," discussed below.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

had come to be known as the "neo-NEP," even among ideologists.[3] But by the end of 1987 Gorbachev realized that even his approach to the problems faced by the USSR was inadequate. Gorbachev needed new ideas, but to draw on the experiences of other socialist states was too risky. Gorbachev's solution was to broaden the scope of perestroika through a relatively honest reexamination of Soviet history and ideology. Once again, the NEP era seemed to offer solutions.

A. Initial Development of the Neo-NEP, 1985-1987

Whereas in early 1985 Gorbachev relied on discipline and control to revitalize the Soviet economy and strengthen the position of socialism in the world,[4] by the time of the XXVII Congress of the CPSU in 1986 he was calling for radical changes in economic administration. The "Basic Provisions" of June 1987 resulted from that Congress and stipulated extensive reorganizations of production to engender self-management and fiscal responsibility. Yet, there was essential continuity in Gorbachev's position during this period. The shifts in policy were based on Gorbachev's efforts to realize his socialist convictions, which were consistent.

As the journalist and historian Vasilii Seliunin put it, in the USSR by the middle of 1985 economists had become more popular even than star hockey players. "What self-

---

[3] A. S. Cherniaev, Shest' let s Gorbachevym. Po dnevnikovym zapisiam (Moskva: Izdatel'stvaia gruppa "Progress" "Kul'tura", 1993), p. 127. Cherniaev here said that the economic experiment of 1986 had not been allowed to go beyond the ideological boundaries of the "neo-NEP"; but he did not specify what those were. In any case it would have been politically foolhardy for Gorbachev to state openly that he advocated a return to NEP ideology. History was supposed to progress forward.

[4] That is, Gorbachev was continuing the Andropov line. For discussion of the sources and impact of Gorbachev's earlier reform efforts, see Vladimir Kontorovich, "Discipline and Growth in the Soviet Economy," Problems of Communism 1985, 34(6, November-December):18-31.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

respecting newspaper," he asked, "would be printed these days without articles on business?" The reason was simple, said Seliunin: when people have gone for years without necessary consumer goods and have tolerated unacceptably low levels of quality and availability, they will naturally be interested in ideas from the experts that sound at all new. The two chief purposes of the "experiment," as he called it, were to require enterprises to fulfill orders placed on them as soon as possible; and to induce them to raise productivity without being goaded and without embezzling profits.[5] Seliunin was well aware of the changes that this would demand of Soviet society, but he was confident that the transformations could be effected:

> Like anything worthwhile, the experiment not only gives answers to life's demands, but raises new questions. These we need not fear. New problems appear to the extent that old ones are solved, and not a moment sooner. You can't do anything about that--that is the dialectic. The best economic mechanism is not eternal--contradictions crop up in it with time. This is an indication of the dynamism of socialist economics.[6]

Seliunin maintained that strict principles of accounting must be observed if the experiment was to succeed; but, more important, a clear delegation of responsibility and rights had to be established to avoid a bureaucratic mess.[7]

Three months later another journalist, Gennadii Lisichkin, asserted that such rhetoric as was current in mid-1985 about raising the levels of science and technology had prevailed for at least the last ten years, and that this was totally counterproductive. Emphasis needed to be placed on the agro-industrial complex at the local rayon level

---

[5] Vasilii Seliunin, "Eksperiment," Novyi mir, 1985 (7, July):173-194; p. 173.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., pp. 192-193.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

through agro-industrial unions;[8] success was evident in Estonia and Georgia, which had been given privatization rights. The autonomous nature of these agricultural experiments, he maintained, is what made them work.

Others agreed with this principle but focused on businesses as such; an incisive analysis by V. P. Kurashvili in EKO in May 1985 held that the promotion of business independence under conditions of socialism would actually undermine the "exploitation of man by man" prevalent under capitalism.[9] He argued, just as Gorbachev would two and a half years later, that the central planning system devised by Stalin had functioned perfectly well in its time and made an important contribution to Soviet progress.[10] It was now necessary to establish a socialist market. Planning would retain a role, but it would not be an all-encompassing one. Heavy industry, however, should remain under state administration, under a single ministry. Even if this ministry were huge, Lisichkin maintained, it would not compare with the bureaucracy necessary to administer the whole economy.[11]

Academician Abel G. Aganbegian agreed: he cited the period 1979-1982 as a time when production generally fell because of autonomous ministries that contributed to bureaucracy but to little else.[12] He repeated the general concerns of others enumerated

---

[8] Gennadii Lisichkin, "Za vedomstvennym bar'erom," Novyi mir 1985 61(10, October):167-190; pp. 168-169.
[9] V. P. Kurashvili, "Kontury vozmozhnoi perestroiki," Ekonomika i organizatsiia promyshlennogo proizvodstva: EKO, 1985 (5, May):59-79; pp. 60-61.
[10] Ibid., p. 63.
[11] Ibid., p. 73.
[12] A. G. Aganbegian, "Na novom etape ekonomicheskogo stroitel'stva," Ekonomika i organizatsiia promyshelennogo proizvodstva: EKO 1985 (8, August):3-24; p. 7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

here, and echoed Seliunin's concern over product quality with an emphatic slogan: "Quality! One more time: quality!"[13] Most important, however, was Aganbegian's stress on the need for and advantages of collective forms of organization as conducive to effective self-management of workers.[14]

All these viewpoints, and many more like them, pointed to some central concerns. First, there could be no further hidden state subsidy of enterprises. There had to be price reform (i.e., realistic price increases) before there could be improvement in the quality and competitiveness of Soviet goods. Finally, there had to be organizational initiatives that took into account the needs of Soviet people, to get them to produce more, better, and faster. Nobody was immediately recalling the limited experiments in this regard from 1960 to 1965, but reversions to those models were soon attempted.

In any case these positions were reflected at the XXVII Congress in 1986. Glasnost', or open discussion of problems, ideas and information, began to characterize Gorbachev's politics by the end of 1985, and it became a household word all over the world as people were not only shocked by the frankness of the Soviet leadership but eagerly anticipated what Gorbachev might do next. The result of this process of open examination of the system was an ambitious program of reform, generally known as perestroika.

By July 1987, an attempt was made to set down the major guidelines of perestroika in a highly complex set of reforms known as the "Basic Provisions." It is safe

[13] Ibid., pp. 19-20.
[14] Ibid., pp. 22-24.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to characterize the "Basic Provisions" as a revolutionary attempt to introduce a mixed economy, with a market and a state sector. However, Gertrude Schroeder has observed that the reforms did "not go nearly far enough to create a market environment, as Lenin did in 1921 with his New Economic Policy (NEP)."[15]

In brief, the state would remove itself as much as possible from central rationing to free up supply systems, and enterprises would be required to operate with complete responsibility for profit and loss, (though there was really no price reform in the Basic Provisions, which made this difficult). There was extensive reorganization of the state administrative machinery, though essentially Gorbachev was fighting bureaucracy with more of the same. The most important document to come out of the "Basic Provisions," however, was the Law on Enterprises, to take effect on January 1, 1988. This was a major step in making a "socialist market" something that had legal precedence and support. Even so, as Schroeder's overall analysis suggests, these were impossible goals in the short time that Gorbachev allocated for them (they were supposed to have been realized by 1989); and the reform package evinced contradictions, vagueness, and other signs of not having been carefully drafted.

Yet as poorly planned and optimistic as they might have been, the Basic Provisions were more basic, as it were, than any Western analyst realized. The idea behind them was to promote fiscal responsibility and individual initiative, but also some

[15] Gertrude E. Schroeder, "Anatomy of Gorbachev's Economic Reform, Soviet Economy 1987 (3, July-September):219-241; p. 233. Schroeder, of course, was right; it was not until 1990, with the Shatalin Plan, that a more full attempt at the introduction of a market economy would be made. Schroeder's analysis is perhaps the best concise yet well-researched and executed account of these reforms available in English. See also the following commentary by Herbert S. Levine, ibid., pp. 242-245.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

notion of individual rights, in the context of state administration of the economy overall.[16] However, this more limited attempt at establishing a socialist market also relied heavily on concepts that had their origins in the NEP; and it thus revealed much about what ideas governed the thinking of the Soviet leadership. Nikolai Shmelev was drawing this parallel openly by the fall of 1987.[17] Yet while the deeper reasons for this label may have been missed by Western analysts who approached the program chiefly in terms of its economic feasibility, they were not lost on Soviet observers. To understand those roots, as well as the continuity of Gorbachev's thinking from 1985 to 1987, it is necessary to examine the development of the concept of khozraschet in Gorbachev's mind and in the context of perestroika.

B. Khozraschet and Perestroika: Concepts and Problems

Anders Aslund has argued that at the heart of Soviet reform efforts in the era of perestroika lay both the NEP and the reforms of 1965;[18] Iurii Afanas'ev maintained that the main sources of Gorbachev's experiment were the NEP and the Khrushchev reforms.[19] Both men were right. These policies were all symptomatic of the constant Soviet search for better production and management methods. This search, in turn, was

---

[16] Pavel G. Bunich, for example, stated early in 1986 that under the new conditions of economic management incentive for the individual was the key, because it was really up to individual participants in the economy to make it work. State administration could not do it for them. He shared the conviction of many that restructuring of management meant restructuring of notions of individual rights. "Novye usloviia khoziaistvovaniia: dostizheniia, problemy, perspektivy," Ekonomika i Organizatsiia promyshlennogo proizvodstva: EKO 1986 17(5, May):3-20.

[17] Sawka, loc. cit.

[18] Anders Aslund, Gorbachev's Struggle for Economic Reform, updated and expanded ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 115.

[19] Iurii Afanas'ev, "S pozitsii pravdy i realizma," under the rubric, "My rodom iz oktiabria," Sovetskaia kul'tura, March 21, 1987, p. 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the main driving force of Mikhail Gorbachev's career. Gorbachev's motivation may be effectively described by the Russian word khozraschet, which originally referred generally to "principles of self-support" but by the time of the Gorbachev era came to mean not only that but also something like "good business practices in general."[20] Gorbachev drew his chief inspiration from Lenin in developing his concept of khozraschet. Initially he applied it myopically, in a fashion reminiscent of Khrushchev's reforms. But as time passed and the scope of perestroika widened, the context in which the general principle of khozraschet was applied also broadened. Gradually khozraschet came to be associated with economic and concomitant social freedom, and it was regarded as a key legacy of the NEP.

A significant feature of the concept of khozraschet is that it had a dual nature, an ideological and a practical aspect. The ideological aspect, which was a key part of Gorbachev's thinking, is of more direct concern here; but the pragmatic aspect of khozraschet, which developed even during the Stalin era,[21] also had important ramifications for socialism under perestroika. Reconciling the two proved most difficult,

---

[20] As we have seen, Soviet usage of this word dates from the era of War Communism, when the full form, khoziaistvennyi raschet, was often used. It has been translated as "cost accounting," but this rendition does not reflect the much broader ramifications in the Russian usage. Confusion can also arise from this translation given the fact that for most of Soviet history there was no market economy.

[21] An important proponent of development of this concept in general was Iakov Abramovich Kronrod (1912-1984), who convinced Stalin in 1941 that a law of monetary value functioned under socialism and should be developed theoretically. M. I. Voeikov, "Rossiiskaia situatsiia i sotsialisty," M. I. Voeikov et. al., eds., Ia. A. Kronrod: Lichnost uchenogo, politicheskaia situatsiia, ekonomicheskaia teoriia (Moskva: Institut Ekonomiki RAN, 1996), pp. 5-16; p. 8. Kronrod had actually been developing the theory since the mid-1930s. Its implementation in Soviet economic reality, however, was a different proposition altogether. Kronrod would go on to be instrumental in the reforms of 1965. Leonid I. Abalkin was among others in the "Kronrod Circle" at the Institute of Economics, which fell into disfavor after the reforms of 1965 were shelved.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

however, and provided a significant contrast between ideology and reality in the last years of the Soviet regime.

Gorbachev had long been concerned with the role of individuals in production. By early 1974 he was articulating his position in the nationwide Soviet press:

> V. I. Lenin emphasized several times that under no circumstances should a bonus function merely as a supplement to the pay that one earns, but it should become <u>an important economic lever for raising the productivity of labor</u>. Unfortunately, cases in which our material incentives are dissipated in a purely symbolic way are still common. Therefore we strive to carry on a struggle against any leveling tendencies, directing the strength of Party committees to see to it that the incentive fund is used in strict accordance with the socialist principle, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work."[22]

Gorbachev made some very important assertions here. First, he criticized the Soviet system--albeit indirectly--as being largely perfunctory in character, offering incentives not for real work but for conformity to prescribed norms. Second, he defended individual profit as a motive for real productivity, asserting its Leninist character. Third, he reiterated the importance of the Party's role in seeing to the enforcement of that standard. The Party, he claimed, guaranteed the fulfillment of the cardinal principle of socialism. He went on to illustrate how the motto, "the progress of each is significant," was at the heart of management principles in Stavropol' krai, where kolkhoz leaders were rewarded for the achievement of the kolkhoz overall, but so were those individuals who produced more than was expected of them.[23]

---

[22] M. Gorbachev, "Moguchii uskoritel'," Don 1974 (2, February):3-8; p. 5. Emphasis Gorbachev's.
[23] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Two years later Gorbachev promoted similar principles in the context of presenting his analysis of the potential of the village labor collective. He asserted that the cooperation between producers in kolkhozy and sovkhozy in Stavropol' krai and their primary Party organizations was both improving and of central concern to their continued effectiveness. Specifically, he said, primary Party organizations were

> more energetically assisting the establishment of the essentials of businesslike work [delovitosti], comradely frankness [vyskazatel'nosti], showing intolerance for shortcomings, making fuller use of the right of Party control over administrative activities, and being more concerned with enlisting the broader work force in the administration of production and social issues.[24]

Here Gorbachev issued a clear call for what he would later call glasnost': under the guidance of the Party, workers should communicate openly and honestly; then the system will work as it is supposed to. Of course, Gorbachev gave a great deal of credit to Party cadres in Stavropol', saying that Party workers at the rayon level were better educated, more knowledgeable of local concerns, and thus able to change local organization and infrastructure as necessary for better effectiveness.[25] He maintained that all this had been made possible through planning in advance: young people had been induced to stay in Stavropol' krai because new living facilities had been installed beginning in the mid-1960s. More resources, therefore, needed to be devoted to such things as housing construction.[26] Such an observation was in keeping with Gorbachev's conviction that the "great accelerator" of production is incentive for the individual.

---

[24] M. Gorbachev, "Sel'skii trudovoi kollektiv: puti sotsial'nogo razvitiia," Kommunist 1976 (2, January):29-38; pp. 29-30.
[25] Ibid., p. 31.
[26] Ibid., pp. 34-35.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In this article Gorbachev made four major points: first, the key to better production, as the Stavropol' experience demonstrated, was in the rural sector. Second, better administration at the local rayon level was what produced results. Third, when people are given individual incentives to produce their production is better. Fourth, the Party, as always, is the best instrument for the administration of such policies, but with the stipulation that it is the local cadres that matter most. Even so, since these are ultimately subordinated to the central Party organs, in theory the CPSU retains full control over the process.

What matters here is not Gorbachev's claim that production in Stavropol' krai was improving; Soviet propaganda always claimed that for the entire country. In fact the USSR was in the middle of what Gorbachev would later call the period of "stagnation" (zastoi). It was not until 1990 that Soviet production statistics began to reflect reality.[27] What is of interest is what Gorbachev regarded as the primary factors behind the stimulation of production and khozraschet: individual as opposed to collective incentive; the focus on the needs and potential of the countryside; and the close coordination of all efforts with the Party apparatus. Each of these was characteristic of the NEP era. The ideas from Lenin that Gorbachev employed since the mid-1970s were also Lenin's justification for his shift in policy under the NEP, in his effort to get people to produce to revive the shattered economy.

[27] Aslund, op. cit., p. 232.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

These ideas would continue to drive Gorbachev, and they underlay his subsequent administrative initiatives. In early 1983 the future General Secretary was engaged in a rediscovery of Lenin's later writings, most likely including "On Our Revolution," which reinforced some of the ideas that had germinated in his mind during his student years and taken root during the early stages of his career. Andropov had telephoned Gorbachev in March, informing him that he had recommended to the Politburo that Gorbachev be approved as the speaker at the memorial meeting marking the 113th anniversary of Lenin's birth. In the process of preparing his speech, Gorbachev was challenged by the quandary that Lenin had found himself in during the last years of his life. As Gorbachev recalled,

> Throughout my life I have often resorted to Lenin's works. I assumed that the drafting of the report would not be difficult. However, my initial attempt failed. I then set about studying Lenin's writing anew, with a particular emphasis on the post-October period. Some volumes I re-read, others I just thumbed through.
>
> Gradually I became so absorbed in the logic of events in the post-Revolutionary years that I sometimes had a sense of being a participant, and wondered what I would have done to try to solve the problems that had confronted Lenin. That was 'going too far'...
>
> Yet all this reading was useful. I was interested in Lenin's later writings, especially those articles and speeches which evaluated a whole stage in the history of Bolshevik power, and his blunt statement that the Bolsheviks 'had committed an error'. In my own time as General Secretary I was to draw on ideas generated by reading Lenin's works.
>
> My speech in 1983 remained within the political and ideological framework of the time; there was no critical re-interpretation.[28]

---

[28] Mikhail Gorbachev, Memoirs (New York: Doubleday, 1996), p. 148.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

We have already seen what the "error" was that had concerned Lenin and Gorbachev: Lenin had been concerned in 1921 that the Bolsheviks had effected an "Asiatic restoration"; and we have explored the question of why Gorbachev could not describe Lenin's "error" in those terms.[29] Given the passage quoted in Chapter II from Gorbachev's book, Perestroika (1987), it is obvious that Gorbachev's preoccupation with these issues in 1983 endured in his tenure as General Secretary. In any case the perspective on Lenin and Leninism that had been characteristic of Gorbachev since the mid-1970s, with its emphasis on individual motivation in tandem with judicious Party administration, was based more on Lenin's later works than his earlier ones. Thus, it is fair to say that at least since the mid-1970s Gorbachev had been in a subconscious process of assimilating NEP ideology as set down in Lenin's last writings. Both chronologically and philosophically, Gorbachev's return to the later Lenin was, in effect, a "return to NEP."

A diversion into the period from Brezhnev's tenure to Gorbachev's would be complex and would constitute too great a distraction from our story. It would be well to remember, however, that perestroika did not emerge from a political, social and economic vacuum. Most of those who were later involved in perestroika had been active

[29] It is likely that the words of Lenin that Gorbachev had in mind were taken from Lenin, PSS, vol. 44, p. 157. Lenin was discussing the "error" of implementing "War Communism," i.e., of going over directly to Communist production and distribution. What matters here, however, is the broader meaning of that "error."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in the era of "developed socialism,"[30] and by the 1980s they knew very well that it was in trouble. At any rate, the course adopted by Gorbachev at the outset reflected this concern.

Khozraschet remained a key concept for articulating reform issues and implementing them in practice. In March 1986 V. P. Moskalenko wrote about an experiment that had been carried on since 1985 in the machine-building factory in Sumskii. The purpose of the experiment was to try to find some way to induce workers to develop interest in their factory's ultimate output. The economists involved sought to measure the extent to which the principles of khozraschet were bearing fruit in a given enterprise. The experimenters proceeded on the assumption that the main shortcoming of the old system was the orientation of growth incentives only on the basis of plan fulfillment. They proposed a new system of criteria on which to judge enterprises, "norms of potentiality," which would allow for the establishment of a direct relationship between collective capacity and ability to meet plan targets and the provision of incentive in direct proportion to the amount produced. Ultimately, it was thought, this would produce true peredoviki, or exemplary factory workers.[31] Concomitant to these changes, of course, were changes in the management structure of the factory. The Sumskii experiment, Moskalenko maintained, introduced the first specific production standards in

---

[30] At the end of 1984, for example, the editorial board of the authoritative journal Kommunist included Iu. N. Afanas'ev and A. S. Cherniaev; and L. I. Abalkin wrote an article published in the last number for 1984 in which he called for "restructuring" of the economy of developed socialism. L. Abalkin, "Razvitoi sotsializm i formirovanie sovremennogo ekonomicheskogo myshleniia," Kommunist 1984, (18, December):61-71. Eduard Shevardnadze also made an interesting contribution to the same number, which was prescient of Gorbachev's later concern with Soviet youth, and, by extension, the Soviet family: "Vospityvat' molodezh' lichnym primerom," ibid., pp. 24-36.

[31] V. P. Moskalenko, "Khozraschetnaia zainteresovannost' v vysokikh konechnykh rezul'tatakh," Ekonomika i organizatsiia promyshlennogo proizvodstva: EKO, 1986 17(3, March):99-118; p. 101.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the country, standards which needed to be given more attention than they were by the government.[32] He held that the experiment constituted a practical substantiation of new economic concepts of fiscal accountability.[33] These principles had their philosophical roots in khozraschet; but they began, with the Sumskii experiment, to take on a new, empirical meaning.

During 1985-1986 many books appeared on the subject of finance and khozraschet, though the authors of these works did not emphasize so strongly the philosophical connection with Leninism that Gorbachev's writings in the 1970s exhibited. Their interest may be described as more pragmatic. Ultimately, however, they were just as much concerned as Gorbachev seemed to be with the same issues: the proper role of finance in management; the influence that new methods of management would have on the allocation of resources; the impact of profit, credit and credit unions on production and management relations; more effective investment of working capital; and many others.[34] At the same time, however, these authors stressed the need for state economic entities to continue to participate in management. Some of them emphasized this more than others, of course; but there was no question of an outright return to capitalism. At the heart of khozraschet was an effort to preserve centralized planning. It was thought

---

[32] Ibid., p. 103.
[33] Ibid., p. 105.
[34] Some examples of such books are G. B. Bazarova, Finansovyi mekhanizm upravleniia promyshlennost'iu. Predpriiatie--samostoiatel'nost' i otvetstvennost'. (Moskva: Finansy i statistika, 1985); Iu. P. Kalmykov, Finansy khoziaistvennykh kompleksov. (Moskva: Finansy i statistika, 1986); D. S. Moliakov, Teoriia finansov sotsialisticheskikh predpriiatii i otraslei narodnogo khoziaistva. (Moskva: Finansy i statistika, 1986); and V. V. Radaev, Sovershenstvovanie khozraschetnykh otnoshenii razvitogo sotsializma. (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1986). Such analyses dominated economic thinking in the first two years of perestroika; but after 1987 their character would change as key concepts of Soviet socialism were increasingly challenged.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that the planning system was effective but merely needed to be streamlined with the good sense provided by thinking in terms of khozraschet, and that, as a result, the scientific-technical level in the Soviet economy would be improved.[35] Such thinking would not be seriously called into question until 1989-1990.

The human factor of khozraschet also continued to develop. Two of Gorbachev's key advisers in the first two years of his tenure were Abel G. Aganbegian and Tat'iana G. Zaslavskaia; both were known for their contentions that one could not restructure Soviet socialism without attention to actual economic concerns of the general populace. People had rents to pay, food budgets to meet, clothing to purchase. They needed more than just incentives based on a recalculation of production potential. Society was in dire need of some relief from the very real economic stagnation that had prevailed since the mid-1970s. Thus, "developed socialism" began to acquire its "humane" characteristics, reiterated by Gorbachev in his speeches at the XXVII Congress in 1986. By the middle of 1987 this change was clearly perceptible in economic policy. E. K. Ligachev, in an analysis of the Soviet agro-industrial sector which was thought-provoking regardless of whether it was possible to believe its statistical assertions, argued anew that there were direct connections between the well being of people and collective organization. The organization of the person meant the organization of labor in such a way that provided for proper equipment, training and motivation. It also entailed the simultaneous establishment of economic and social conditions that would allow for maximum

[35] This had also been a major concern through the Andropov and Chernenko periods.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

productivity.[36] While the Party had addressed these problems in the past, of course, the point now was to consider them as an organic whole. The bulk of the article was devoted to how this would work in practice in a number of fields of agriculture, with the principles of khozraschet as a guide. Ligachev hoped that perestroika would provide for the Soviet consumer and free the Soviet Union from having to import grain, allow for savings of surplus, and engender other forms of economic growth. "It is time to consider seriously how investments work and what advantages can be derived from them," he wrote.[37] He admitted that the primary capital for such development would have to be the result of an investment in the "human factor," which was so vital to production and the importance of which had in recent years been significantly underestimated by the Soviet leadership. Ligachev said outright that a qualitative change in the socio-economic situation in the countryside was needed.

The fact that the Soviet Union had a huge agricultural sector yet continued to import such agricultural basics as wheat pointed up the urgency of Ligachev's call. One statistic he enumerated was that in twenty years Soviet agricultural labor productivity had only doubled.[38] The actual issues involved in the transformation of the Soviet agricultural sector do not concern us here. What is of interest is Ligachev's expectation of what would bring about those changes. True, he had emphasized the "human factor," and

---

[36] E. K. Ligachev, "Chelovecheskii faktor, khozraschet i perestroika v agropromyshlennom komplekse," Kommunist, 1987, 64 (4, March):28-42; p. 29.
[37] Ibid., p. 31.
[38] Ibid., p. 33.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

there is no reason to suggest that he was duplicitous in this. But his position also had a strong ideological component:

> With the current year the agro-industrial complex, along with other branches of the economy, has begun to function in the framework [pri usloviiakh] of a new economic mechanism. The principal directives of its execution are defined in the materials of the XXVII Congress of the CPSU, in the speeches of M. S. Gorbachev. In its approach to the resolution of these problems the Central Committee is guided by a great Leninist example of the substantiation, development and implementation of an extraordinarily daring turn to new methods of economic management, which was the transfer to the tax in kind and the New Economic Policy.[39]

Ligachev did not say that there had been a reversion to the NEP example, only that its outline was being used as a guide by the Party; and he did not consider the factors by which this thinking had come about since the 1970s. It did not seem to occur to Ligachev that by espousing his own interpretation of Lenin's writings in the 1920s Gorbachev had in fact "returned to NEP," as discussed above. But neither would Gorbachev have admitted this. He would have argued--and did--that the 1980s were a new context, presenting new problems. One could not dispute that point. Despite its relatively free economic system, for example, the NEP did not emphasize focusing on the "human factor" in government relations with the NEPmen. Entrepreneurial initiative was only marginally encouraged and mostly tolerated. Moreover, the NEP was an ideologically different policy in that it represented a step in the journey toward socialism; perestroika claimed to be developing socialism itself. Before the year was out Gorbachev would in fact defend Stalin's decision to collectivize agriculture and to commence

---

[39] Ibid., p. 32.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

industrialization. However, it is clear that by the middle of 1987 the Soviet leadership was attempting to view these problems from a perspective characterized by a reinterpretation of Soviet economic thinking of the 1920s. One cannot go back in time or change society to make it as it was in the past, so in that sense a return to NEP was impossible. But one's thinking shapes one's actions, so it is logical to assert that perestroika was colored by this thinking significantly.

In fact, the theoretical connection between the NEP and all of effective socialist economics was already maintained by some philosophers by the beginning of 1987. Two important such figures were N. P. Fedorenko and V. P. Perlamutrov. Khoziaistvennyi raschet, they held, was the basic link between all sectors of the economy, and it had its beginnings in March 1921 when Lenin wrote, "I believe in establishing trusts [tresty] and businesses [predpriiatiia] functioning on the principles of khozraschet [na khoziaistvennom raschete] precisely in order that they themselves may be exclusively responsible to see to it that they do not sustain losses."[40] The contribution of Fedorenko and Perlamutrov was especially important because they outlined the significance of the NEP legacy for all forms of economic activity from small-scale agriculture to state syndicates, whereas Gorbachev, Ligachev and others were emphasizing the importance of the countryside. Others, of course, appreciated the significance of khozraschet for industrial concerns; but Fedorenko and Perlamutrov emphasized the interdependence of

[40] Lenin, PSS, vol. 54, p. 150, quoted in Nikolai P. Fedorenko and Vilen P. Perlamutrov, "Khozraschetnye otnosheniia--dinamika i perspektivy," Voprosy filosofii 1987 41(2, February):3-16; p. 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

these principles in all branches of a socialist economy.[41] They also made a very significant statement that could have profound implications for khozraschet in practice:

> [W]e have experience, as Pushkin put it, "the son of difficult mistakes." We have it in the fraternal countries of the CMEA. We don't have to think up anything from scratch. We must realize this experience, materialize it under modern conditions.[42]

Here Fedorenko and Perlamutrov raised a point that was to present great difficulties to the Soviet leadership. How could the Soviets acknowledge that their East European clients had been all along generally more socialist than the USSR? And even if the Soviets could adapt the policies of the East European reformers, could they do so without incorporating the philosophical criticisms of Soviet socialism inherent in them? Dilemmas such as this, unforeseen by the Soviet leadership, were a natural by-product of glasnost'. But Gorbachev's realization that he himself had given rise to such problems did not make them easier for him to solve.

C. Eastern Europe: Was Perestroika Genuinely Soviet?

The legacy of East European reform Communism had a dual significance for Gorbachev. On the one hand it formed an important part of the background for perestroika as Gorbachev looked for institutional models for "humane" and productive socialism. In many ways the East European reformers seemed to validate the Soviet

---

[41] Another important contributor to this idea was the law professor Iu. Kh. Kalmykov, "Leninskoe nasledie i sovremennost'," Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo 1987 (4, April):22-28. Kalmykov, however, stays focused on Leninist principles. In a sense, his presentation is a refined analysis of the Leninist character of the principles of khozraschet that Gorbachev had been developing for years and effectively endorsed at the XXVII Congress of the CPSU. Fedorenko and Perlamutrov, on the other hand, carried the implications of these ideas much further than either Gorbachev or his supporters at that time, such as Ligachev, would have liked.

[42] Fedorenko and Perlamutrov, op. cit., p. 16.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

experience under the NEP. This was especially apparent in the East European reformers' appreciation of Bukharin. On the other hand, the East European experience with socialism also illustrated clearly the institutional problems with Soviet socialism that Gorbachev had tried to minimize for the sake of the legitimacy of perestroika. The Czechoslovak reform movement exposed some of the most glaring problems with Leninism, and that of Poland seemed to demonstrate that people were not naturally inclined to support socialism. Since the Soviet reformers clearly recognized these pitfalls for Soviet socialism in the East European example, they tried to glean its advantages for Soviet socialism by turning again to the example of the NEP. Ironically, East European criticisms of Soviet socialism would be mirrored by Soviet thinkers in the 1980s in the context of the neo-NEP.

Like the Soviet Union the East European regimes were in dire need of reform by the mid-1980s. They generally supported limited measures, to varying degrees, in order to ameliorate their economic situations, but at the same time they could ill-afford economic reform because of its potential political consequences. Whereas Gorbachev's reforms called for significant changes, the East European governments owed their power to Soviet maintenance of the status quo. Thus they were "all too eager, from Moscow's perspective, to seize every opportunity to avoid reform."[43] Ironically, many of the more innovative contributions to "reform" Communism came from Eastern Europe, especially Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland. The potential of the East European intellectual

[43] Thomas Cynkin, "Glasnost, Perestroika, and Eastern Europe," Survival 1988 30(4, July-August):310-331; p. 312.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

legacy lay in what examples it could offer for proper application of the principles of khozraschet; but Soviet adaptation of East European revisionism was also an important spur to the unintended consequences of the Soviet reform process.

The Hungarian reform experience held the most promise institutionally as far as the Soviets were concerned.[44] Janos Kadar's New Economic Mechanism (NEM) seemed to be a showcase of economic innovation without unreasonable political difficulties. Kadar had shown the Soviets proper obeisance since the Soviet intervention of 1956, and "ghoulash" Communism seemed to function despite Hungary's debt problems.[45] Of all the East European economies Hungary's was the best developed according to some scholars, though others maintain that the GDR was in a better economic position.[46] However, despite efforts on the part of Imre Pozsgay of the small Peoples' Patriotic front at radical adoption of glasnost' and perestroika and major political shakedowns for the sake of significant economic recovery in Hungary,[47] it was adaptation of the NEM

[44] Academician Abel Aganbegian thought very highly of the Hungarian NEM as a model for perestroika. See R. W. Davies, "Soviet Economic Reform in Historical Perspective," Catherine Merridale and Chris Ward, eds., Perestroika: The Historical Perspective (London, New York: Edward Arnold, 1991), pp. 117-137; pp. 125-126. Gorbachev's treatment of the Hungarians was "slightly more positive" than that given other reformers in Eastern Europe. Aslund, op. cit., p. 33.
[45] Hungary ranked third in indebtedness of the bloc countries, following Poland and East Germany. See Karen Dawisha, Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and Reform: The Great Challenge (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 149.
[46] The assertion in favor of Hungary comes from Charles Gati, "Gorbachev and Eastern Europe," Foreign Affairs 1987 65(5, Summer):958-975; p. 967. Karen Dawisha has called the GDR "the most economically successful of any country in Eastern Europe," op. cit., p. 53; but this was due mostly to the substantial financial support given by the Federal Republic of Germany.
[47] Gati, op. cit., pp. 966-967.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

initiated in 1968, and the political moderation characteristic of the Kadar regime, that the Soviet establishment found most palatable in the early years of perestroika.[48]

The position of the other East European regimes with respect to glasnost' and perestroika varied from country to country, as did the degree to which the Soviets paid attention to their reform efforts. For political, historical and ideological reasons, Yugoslavia was neither an enemy nor a real friend of the USSR, so the Soviets were not so concerned about Yugoslavia's brand of socialism.[49] Albania was isolated and Stalinist. Romania remained as adamantly maverick as ever in its policies. By the 1980s Bulgaria was, in the words of one scholar, "groping for a reform concept,"[50] but Todor Zhivkov was wary of the glasnost' that Gorbachev insisted must be part and parcel of perestroika. At any rate, no reform concepts emerging from Bulgaria were of particular concern to the Soviet Union. The GDR was staunchly anti-reformist;[51] but even if it

---

[48] Again, what appealed to the Soviet political leadership was that the Hungarian NEM functioned without causing the Soviets undue political or ideological difficulties. On the other hand, Soviet intellectuals who looked to the NEM for institutional models for perestroika had a variety of reasons for doing so, some of which were tied to complex social problems of the development of the neo-NEP in the Soviet Union, and so their estimation of the potential of the NEM was generally broader than that of Soviet politicians. The social history of the "return to NEP," however, is beyond the scope of the present work, so we will not treat the NEM extensively.

[49] One might think that Gorbachev would consider that Yugoslavia had much to offer the authors of perestroika. The dispute between the USSR and Yugoslavia had formally ended, after all, in June 1955. But the Soviets denounced the Yugoslav Party Program of 1958 as "revisionist," and continued to distance themselves from Tito. On a formal visit to Yugoslavia in 1987 Gorbachev did admit that the rift of 1948 and the subsequent difficulties had been the Soviets' fault and were a grievous blow to the cause of socialism. However, "new thinking" in foreign policy had achieved much by then. For Gorbachev to have allowed in 1985 or 1986 that perhaps there was something to Yugoslav ideas of "self-management" as such, would have been too much for him to bear politically.

[50] Ilse Grosser, "Economic Reforms in Bulgaria," Hubert Gabrisch, ed., Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), pp. 99-109; p. 99.

[51] This had not always been the case, however. In a television broadcast in May 1985 Gorbachev praised the East German reform of 1966-1970, presumably to make a point to Erich Honecker. Aslund, op. cit., p. 32.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

were inclined to reform, for Gorbachev to have adapted any of its policies would have been politically cumbersome.[52] The GDR was socialist, but it was still German; and memories of the war were still vivid in the USSR.

Czechoslovakia and Poland remained, and their contributions to socialist theory were the most significant for the USSR, despite the Soviet infatuation with the Hungarian NEM. In addition, these two countries were the most important politically of the Soviet East European clients. The combination of these factors demanded that Gorbachev take them seriously. The Soviets eventually embraced many of the concepts developed by Czechoslovak and Polish intellectuals as elements of Soviet "humane" socialism. The criticisms of Soviet socialism that had been voiced by the Poles and Czechoslovaks would also be echoed by Soviet critics. Since the Soviets could not openly adopt the formulae for socialism which had been set forth by East European Communists, they sought evidence of precedent for these ideas within their own history. Eventually, the Soviet reformers would focus on the NEP period as the genesis of reform Communism, thus indirectly claiming that a more viable form of Soviet socialism pre-dated the reform efforts in Eastern Europe. Yet, to understand this Soviet search for historical justification of "humane socialism," and the significance that it had for the Soviet reform movement as a whole, it is necessary to examine the Czechoslovak and Polish cases more closely.

D. Czechoslovakia

---

[52] This was unfortunate for those Soviet reformers interested in NEP-style institutions, for the East Germans had a high percentage of small proprietors. These accounted for 75 per cent of the service sector in the GDR and worked with relative effectiveness, offering consumers wider selections of goods and services. See Aleksandr Levikov, "Remeslo," Novyi mir, 1986 62(4, April):180-198.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Though there had been no reform movement to speak of in Czechoslovakia since the Soviets crushed the Prague Spring in 1968-1969, the Czechoslovak experience of the late 1950s through the 1960s was perhaps the richest source of ideas for the reforms eventually attempted in the USSR. Many observers likened what was happening in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev to a "Moscow Spring,"[53] and on May 21, 1990 Dubcek himself seemed to concur when he embraced Gorbachev in tears.[54] For political reasons Gorbachev consistently avoided making this association, though a cursory examination of the reform movement in Czechoslovakia would indicate clearly that the parallel was a valid one.

Because of the fact that the Communists in Czechoslovakia enjoyed a high degree of popular support in the aftermath of World War II, owing to their staunch opposition to the Munich agreement, wartime resistance, and effusive patriotism after 1945, it was very difficult for opponents of Klement Gottwald and Stalin to convince the public of the danger that Communism represented. The legitimacy of Eduard Benes had its sources in the traditions of democracy and nationalism most clearly associated with Thomas Masaryk. Gottwald recognized the popular support for these values and was careful to create the illusion that the Communists respected Benes's legitimacy.

---

[53] Such characterizations were clearly evident by the middle of 1987; but the most noteworthy example was perhaps the book by William and Jane Taubman, Moscow Spring (New York: Summit Books, Simon and Schuster, 1989). The purpose of their book, however, was not to draw a parallel with Czechoslovakia. To the Taubmans the term referred to the process of liberalization and democratization of Communism in the specific Soviet context.

[54] Mikhail Gorbachev, Memoirs (New York: Doubleday, 1996), pp. 482-483. It remains true, however, that the Soviets did not renounce the invasion of 1968 until after the Communist government in Czechoslovakia collapsed in December 1989.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Czechoslovak intellectual tradition had a strong respect for socialist ideas, but rejected the political repression inherent in the Soviet model.[55] The "revelations" of Khrushchev at the XX Congress of the CPSU in 1956 came as no surprise to the Czechoslovak Communists, who had long recognized the shortcomings of the Soviet system and had been developing new ideas of socialism in the Czechoslovak context.

These intellectual currents continued into the 1960s and culminated in the Prague Spring of 1968. Through a careful reinterpretation of Marx's writings, Czechoslovak intellectuals arrived, by the mid-1960s, at the belief that the rule of law was the only truly democratic and viable option for a functioning socialist society. Civics became all-important in their minds; in particular, they strongly criticized the notion that the Communist Party ought to be allowed to have arbitrary power by virtue of its representation of the "will of the working class." These views had their ultimate expression in a 1964 book by Zdenek Mlynar, State and Man. The Communist Party's duty, Mlynar felt, was to uphold and to strengthen the rule of law and genuine constitutionalism.[56]

---

[55] The nature of Russian society and politics was well known to the Czechoslovaks. In his efforts to build a free Czechoslovak-Polish confederation in the interwar and early war years, Benes often referred to Russia's inherently non-democratic political makeup. Indeed, this was why such an effort was made by both Poles and Czechoslovaks to secure the confederation, which was thwarted by Soviet Russia. This early awareness of Russia's political character on the part of Benes goes far to counter assertions that similar characterizations of the Soviet Union in the postwar period were fabrications of Western anti-Communists for use in Cold War ideological polemics. See Piotr S. Wandycz, Czechoslovak-Polish Confederation and the Great Powers, 1940-43. Indiana University Publications Slavic and East European Series, Vol. 3 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1956), pp. 59-60, 96-97.

[56] For discussion of these issues see Vladimir Kusin, The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring: The Development of Reformist Ideas in Czechoslovakia 1956-1967 (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 28-52, passim. At the heart of the Czechoslovak re-thinking of socialism was the idea of separating "Stalinism" from "socialism."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Karl Kosik and Ivan Svitak were two philosophers who, on the basis of such ideas as the rule of law, began to reexamine socialist concepts of the position of man in society. Svitak's approach was characterized by an attempt to cut through the amorphous formulations of Communist ideology and get to the roots of society's problems. That is, he wanted to give true meaning to the principles of historical materialism, in which he strongly believed. Karl Kosik developed these ideas fully in The Dialectics of the Concrete, which has been called "the first swallow of the Prague Spring."[57]

The importance of culture was not lost on the Czechoslovak intellectuals. They valued art and literature because these offered media of expression which were closed in the political sphere. A significant example was Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka (1883-1924), which was hailed by the reformers as a genuine expression of humanity and its struggles, from which developers of socialist society could learn much.[58]

The Czechoslovak reformers' ideas of "socialist legality" (which took a much different, harsher form in the USSR), their virtual repudiation of "socialist realism," and their continued appreciation of their own traditions in art and literature all conflicted with the notion that Czechoslovakia's national past was merely a manifestation of bourgeois development and needed to be repudiated in the interest of socialism. Hence Czechoslovak intellectuals devoted much space in their works to the proper place of socialist nationalism.[59]

---

[57] This was noted by Peter Hruby in Fools and Heroes: The Changing Role of Communist Intellectuals in Czechoslovakia (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980), p. 190.
[58] Kusin, op. cit., pp. 53-62, passim.
[59] Vladimir Kusin, Political Grouping in the Czechoslovak Reform Movement (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 143-161, passim.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Yet although these concerns were prominent, the most urgent problem that spurred the reform movement in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s was the economy, just as would be the case in the USSR in the 1980s. As in Gorbachev's USSR, attention was paid in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s to the Marxist axiom that technological development is the great economic--and hence social--equalizer. Although in 1956 the government had declared the establishment of "socialism" in Czechoslovakia as had been done in the USSR twenty years earlier, some Czechoslovak socialists viewed the command economy model inherited from the Soviet Union as counterproductive because it stifled the economic growth necessary to produce social change. Very significantly, the Soviet model was branded as "Asian."[60] It is clear that the reformers had the Marxist definition of that term in mind, for they denounced "bureaucratism" in Soviet socialism as it was being imposed on Czechoslovakia, defining it as "a system which pivoted around the principle of centralized power discharging orders and bans through the channels of rigid subordination, i.e. a system which was directly opposed to free and independent thinking."[61] It will be recalled that such a power structure was a key feature of those societies which Marx characterized as Oriental despotisms, in which the "Asiatic" mode of production prevailed. Czechoslovak intellectuals argued that, in order to revamp socialism successfully in Czechoslovakia, a "return to Europe" was necessary.[62] That is, Czechoslovakia had developed along European lines and its economy was best suited to

[60] Kusin, The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring, p. 101.
[61] Ibid., pp. 42-43.
[62] Ibid., pp. 100-101.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

socialist expansion on those same foundations. Three economists, Ota Sik, Eugen Loebl and Radoslav Selucky, were very closely tied with criticism of the economic structure. Sik's program for economic development, based mostly on realistic pricing as opposed to the labor theory of value, is perhaps better known than the contributions of the others. Loebl, while in prison in the early 1960s, came up with a formulation that applied the principles of Adam Smith's On the Wealth of Nations to Czechoslovakia. Selucky was important because he was thoroughly acquainted with the Soviet system of command economy and was able to expound upon its shortcomings. All these men were dedicated Marxists who saw how necessary changes might be put into effect. Their goal was the construction of more effective socialism.[63]

The culmination of all these various currents set the stage for Dubcek's reform movement in 1968. Discussion of the specific events of December 1967 through the spring of 1969 would take us too far afield; but what is important is that a pro-Soviet Communist regime which featured precisely the characteristics of open discussion and pragmatic problem-solving that Gorbachev would promote as most essential to the success of perestroika was harshly repressed.

Most of the reformers in Czechoslovakia in 1968 had been instrumental in the Communists' rise to power in 1948. Though the participants in the Prague Spring certainly had differing personal motives for their actions, all were united in their conviction that the harsh imposition of the Soviet model on Czechoslovak socialism was

---

[63] Hruby, op. cit., 81-130, passim.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ruinous. This was the impetus of the Prague Spring. The reaction to reform in Czechoslovakia was as much characteristic of Soviet socialism as the social and economic structure that the reformists of the Prague Spring were trying to eradicate. The Soviet invasion brought with it systematic repression and persecution of the reformers, based on "class origins" and ideological "deviations." The victims of persecution responded by becoming some of the most prominent of anti-Communist dissidents.[64]

The Soviet treatment of the Czechoslovak reform movement cost the Kremlin in terms of stability in Eastern Europe. It eliminated the possibility of genuine cooperation between reform movements in Eastern Europe and the USSR, which eventually would complicate matters immensely from Gorbachev's perspective. The supporters of the Prague Spring had representatives from the entire spectrum of ethnic and socio-political heritage in Czechoslovakia, so the Soviet move had no real basis of support in the country outside of those members of the Czechoslovak Communist Party who were directly indebted to Brezhnev for their political positions. What emerged from the repression of the Prague Spring was not slavish conformity to the Soviet fiat but adequate obeisance to the Soviet Union, punctuated by continued resistance to Husak's government on a level which did not give the Kremlin any further pretexts for direct intervention in Czechoslovakia.[65] Nevertheless, Czechoslovak resistance to Soviet control had its effects throughout Eastern Europe after 1968, most notably after January 1, 1977, when

[64] These included Pavel Kohout, the author of the 1968 July Manifesto, and Milan Hubl, who in 1954 had saved Gustav Husak from being imprisoned on charges of national deviation and helped him rise to power but later refused to support him because of human rights abuses on the part of the Communists.
[65] This was similar to Adam Michnik's concept of new evolutionism in Poland, discussed below.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Charter 77 was drafted, calling on Prague to respect human rights as a principle of socialism in general and reminding the state of its own laws obligating it to do so, as well as its participation in international agreements upholding principles of human rights.

Twenty years after the Soviet invasion, Mlynar observed bitterly:

> Where force has been used to suppress attempts to follow an independent course (Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968), the matter [of the imperialistic hegemonic policies of the USSR] is passed over in silence. But when a past event becomes an immediate political issue (as happened during the twentieth anniversary of the "Prague Spring"), Soviet propaganda repeats the old politically opportune lies about the need to "defend socialism" by military intervention.[66]

In reality, in 1968-1969 the Soviets were defending themselves against intellectuals whose ideas were potentially destabilizing politically. By 1985 Gorbachev, a friend of Mlynar since the two men were students at Moscow State University in the early 1950s, was convinced that he could surmount this difficulty and make a similar program work. In fact, he was confronted with the same problems of Soviet socialism that Lenin had tried to address through the NEP--and which had been voiced again by the intellectuals of the Prague Spring. Indeed, they would be addressed again in 1988, in the context of the rehabilitation of Bukharin in the Soviet Union:

> In Prague, the discussion about Bukharin and the revision of Soviet history presents an even greater legitimation for the attempt at removing the taboos from their own history of forward-looking reform concepts. All those who link a plea for the rehabilitation of Dubcek with a demand for radical change of course, and who want to give the Prague Spring of 1968 a new chance, will take courage from these developments. It would be

[66] Zdenek Mlynar, Can Gorbachev Change the Soviet Union? The International Dimensions of Political Reform, translated by Marian Sling and Ruth Tosek. (Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press, 1990), p. 136. Mlynar conceived and wrote this book in the summer of 1988, at the time of the XIX All-Union Conference of the CPSU.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> easy to extend almost indefinitely the list of problems that the reappraisal of Bukharin and of the NEP will create for the communist parties within (and outside) the Soviet sphere of influence.[67]

Thus, some argued that if some kind of socialist government were to function at all, it seemed increasingly unlikely that it would benefit from being constructed on the basis of anything like the Soviet model, even well into the Gorbachev era.[68]

E. Poland

The case of Poland was much more complex. Poland had a long tradition of opposition to Russia and the Soviet Union, and it was strongly religious. It is fair to say that the majority of Poles were generally much more devoted to Roman Catholicism than to historical materialism. There were, nevertheless, Polish Communists and advocates of various forms of socialism which took into account Polish social, political and economic realities, and the advocates of these ideas, especially after the December 1970 Gdansk uprising, developed policy formulations which were strikingly reminiscent of the Prague Spring and prescient of Gorbachev's perestroika. Unlike that in Czechoslovakia, Poland's reform movement survived and thrived. The Polish United Workers (Communist) Party (PUWP) was enthusiastic about Gorbachev. Glasnost' and perestroika seemed to provide a medium for the reconciliation of the PUWP and the Polish dissident movement,[69]

---

[67] Heinz Timmerman, "Is Gorbachev a Bukharinist? Moscow's Reappraisal of the NEP Period," The Journal of Communist Studies, 1989 (1, March):1-17; p. 14.

[68] Ironically, Stephen F. Cohen had predicted in his work on Bukharin that should reform Communism resurface in the Soviet Union, it was likely that it would do so on the basis of the NEP and Bukharinism, a topic that was being discussed seriously by the Czechoslovak reformers in 1968. See Stephen F. Cohen, Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography, 1888-1938, revised ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 384-386. But Cohen did not expect that the "Bukharin card," as it were, would be played against Gorbachev.

[69] Cynkin, op. cit., pp. 313-316, passim.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

whose criticisms of Soviet socialism Gorbachev acknowledged in part, albeit obliquely. But Poland was a country where the consequences of reform--and its non-viability--were most evident.

The Solidarity movement emerged from this social and intellectual milieu. Yet while it was worker-oriented it was truly democratic and mainly non-Communist; and it was precisely this kind of development that Gorbachev would seek to avoid in the USSR. It is for this reason that Solidarity sheds important light on some of the key dilemmas facing Gorbachev in the 1980s. The measures pursued by Solidarity were not overtly anti-Communist or anti-Soviet; even the union's staunchest supporters felt that such a stance might invite a replay of Hungary in 1956 or, at best, of Czechoslovakia in 1968. But the very existence of Solidarity made it inevitable that the Kremin's prerogatives in Poland would ultimately be challenged. Moreover, the broad support for Solidarity from Poles of differing social backgrounds and from some within the PUWP itself, suggested strongly that support for the union was great enough to exert pressure on the regime for social change. This was underscored by the imposition of martial law in December 1981 and the banning of Solidarity in October 1982 by the pro-Soviet Polish Communists, who hoped thereby to maintain the social order that they and Moscow desired.

To define the Polish Solidarity movement is a difficult task at best; but perhaps the endeavor can be made simpler if we consider that the word "solidarity" implies mutual support of individuals and groups in a common struggle. The Solidarity union was highly eclectic, embracing religious, economic, social and political elements.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Timothy Garton Ash, an Oxford historian and a first-hand observer of the events that led up to the August 31, 1980 formation of Solidarity, has characterized the basis of the movement as a "...tacit alliance of workers, intelligentsia and Church...."[70] This symbiosis gave Solidarity a nationwide base of support that made all the difference in the effectiveness of its resistance efforts.

The history of the Polish labor movement under socialism is a long and complicated one, in which liberal elements figured prominently and strove for basic privileges and rights, particularly the right to strike. In the decade before the emergence of Solidarity there were workers' revolts, in 1970-1971 and in June 1976. A significant feature of these strikes was that each had both Communist and non-Communist elements voicing protests concertedly. In the February 1971 post-Gdansk strike negotiations, forty percent of those elected by secret ballot to the negotiation committee were Communists.[71]

Worker opposition to the regime, of course, had little if anything to do with Marxist ideology. In both 1970 and 1976, the impetus of the strikes arose almost entirely from practical economic concerns, the most pressing of which were unreasonable increases in the prices of essential foodstuffs. State agricultural policies, moreover, decreased productivity, so that even significant wage increases were meaningless: there

---

[70] Timothy Garton Ash, The Polish Revolution: Solidarity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984; Copyright 1983 by Timothy Garton Ash), p. 25.
[71] David R. Stefancic, Robotnik: A Short History of the Struggle for Worker Self-Management and Free Trade Unions in Poland, 1944-1981 (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1992; distributed by Columbia University Press, New York), p. 27.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

was nothing to spend the money on.[72] Poland's consumer goods industry before the 1980s, except under Gierek in his early years, was not substantial enough even to meet basic necessities much of the time.

Edward Gierek's economic program was designed to compensate for the austerity that led to the 1970 Gdansk strike by borrowing large sums of money from the West and investing it to achieve economic growth. Gierek, however, did not have good economic advisers and as a result the money was wasted through both improper investment and corruption.[73] Gierek realized that his program was a palliative, and he embarked on it in the hope that he would placate angry workers. In fact he merely increased their discontent as it became clear that Polish workers would have to pay for the debt that Gierek's mismanagement had incurred.

In June 1976 the Gierek regime raised prices in the belief that this was justified by improved living standards. As in 1970 the workers responded with a strike. This time, however, the intelligentsia was prepared to cooperate with the workers. The Committee for the Defense of Workers, KOR, was founded to allow workers to secure for themselves what they realized that the government could not, or would not. But KOR also represented a response to two earlier manifestations of problems in the nationwide Polish resistance movement. In March 1968 Polish intellectuals were voicing criticisms of the Polish Communist government that were echoed--with much more publicity--by their

[72] The biggest problem was the seemingly perpetual food shortage. A good summary of the food availability and distribution problems as they prevailed under Gierek can be found in Denis MacShane, Solidarity: Poland's Independent Trade Union (Nottingham, England: Spokesman Press, 1981), pp. 47-49.
[73] Piotr S. Wandycz, The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 260-262.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

contemporaries in Czechoslovakia.[74] Part of the reason why this movement of intellectuals was not very effective was that it lacked worker support. In December 1970 the intelligentsia, in its turn, seemed to turn a blind eye to developments in Gdansk. By March 1976 the two groups had joined forces; KOR was the institutional representation of that union. Workers and intellectuals alike participated actively in its administration.[75]

Although KOR voiced concerns of workers that are common in strike demands everywhere, on September 26, 1977 its members decided to charge the organization with defense of the rights of all citizens:

> The main purpose of KOR is to secure legal, financial and medical help for the victims of the post-June [1976] repression....However, in the course of KOR's activities a series of persons persecuted for political reasons not related to the June events have turned to it, seeking help in the struggle for their rights. A number of problems arose, connected with the illegal activities of the security organs and the citizens' police, justice, prison administration, etc. KOR could not turn away from a consideration of these socially important questions. This need found its expression, in part, in the creation of the Bureau of Aid and in the announcement of the creation of a Foundation for Public Defense. In this situation we, the undersigned, consider it imperative to broaden the Committee's agenda and activities. We resolve to transform KOR into a Committee of Public Defense.[76]

---

[74] The impetus here was the banning of the play "Forefather's Eve" about Poland under tsarist rule, because the authorities felt that it was potentially subversive. For discussion see Norman Davies, God's Playground: A History of Poland Volume II: 1795 to the Present (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 588-589.

[75] This idea was one of the underlying principles of KOR and permeates its literature. KOR's two principal founders, Adam Michnik and Jacek Kuron, wanted the alliance of workers and intellectuals to serve as a basis for the foundation of a new civil society that did not challenge Soviet prerogatives in Poland's foreign policy and its participation in the Warsaw Pact. This was known as "the new evolutionism"; the concept was developed fully by Michnik in his essay bearing the same title, discussed below.

[76] Komitet zashchiti rabochikh, "Zaiavlenie, Varshava, 26 sentiabria 1977," Vladimir Malyshev, comp., Pol'sha 1980: "Solidarnosti" god pervyi (London: Overseas Publications Interchange, Ltd., 1981), p. 12.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

That defense was directed, of course, at the Gierek regime, which was by this time on very shaky ground: its unwise economic policies had forced Poland deeply into debt, and its brutal repression of the 1976 strikes had strengthened the arguments of dissidents such as Jacek Kuron, who advocated the nonviolent policy of resistance groups forming a "civil society" through the establishment of their own Party committees.[77]

The Committee for Public Defense lost little time in issuing public appeals for support against the Gierek regime over workers' hours, the state monopoly on information related to social and economic problems, and the strict ideological control of the PUWP over the content of art, literature and other media.[78] KOR, believing in the capacity of the Polish workers to marshal whatever resources that were necessary to resolve the social and economic crisis in Poland in the late 1970s., was demanding outright that the leadership of the PUWP recognize the workers' right of independent management. It was in the documents of KOR that the word "solidarity" began to appear and to take on significance as a catchword of the workers' movement.

By 1980 the institutional development of the Polish labor movement outlined above had prepared Polish workers for the advent of Solidarity. The election of thirty-seven-year-old electrician Lech Walesa as president of the union was to some degree symbolic of Solidarity's appeal to both workers and traditional Polish values.[79]

---

[77] Wandycz, The Price of Freedom, p. 260.
[78] Since revitalization of the economy was another major element of KOR's program, the demands related to the economy were necessary; but the political and cultural ones, of course, were also of significance.
[79] While Walesa was a good unionist, he would come under fire as President of Poland; but that is another story.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It is important to realize that while labor in Poland in this period was indeed anti-Soviet, it was not necessarily antagonistic to socialism. Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski were two Marxist theoreticians who in the mid-1960s were challenging Soviet prescriptions for the development of socialism in Poland. Their challenges were set forth in their "Open Letter to Party Members" of 1965. In it they referred to the Poznan uprising of 1956 as "the first anti-bureaucratic revolution." Since 1956, they alleged, the stifling effects of Soviet bureaucratism had become unbearable and continued struggle against it was necessary. At the same time, Kuron and Modzelewski realized that the USSR would necessarily be an opponent in the struggle:

> ...The anti-bureaucratic revolution is the affair of the international revolutionary movement and of all the movements in favor of colonial revolution. It is part of the world revolutionary movement. Like all revolutions, it threatens the established order and it is menaced by the forces which defend this order...Our ally against the intervention of the Soviet tanks is the Russian working class, the Ukrainian, the Hungarian and the Czech. Our ally against the pressure and threats of imperialism is the working class of the industrialized West and the rising colonial revolution in the underdeveloped countries. Against the collusion between the international bureaucracy and the international imperialist bourgeoisie, we raise the historic slogan of proletarian class struggle: "Workers of the World, unite!"[80]

Kuron and Modzelewski, then, also recognized the problems posed by the "bureaucratic" nature of Soviet socialism, which had been voiced by Czechoslovak critics and had been so problematic for Lenin.[81] Their "Open Letter," both because of its wide

---

[80] Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, "Open Letter to Party Members, 1965," partially reprinted in Stan Persky and Henry Flam, eds., The Solidarity Sourcebook (Vancouver, BC: New Star Books, Ltd., 1982), p. 56.

[81] This viewpoint, based on Marx, should not be confused with more traditional Polish views of Turkey as an "Oriental despotism," Austria as a "clerical despotism," and Russia as a "barbarian despotism," which date from the sixteenth century. See Norman Davies, God's Playground: A History of Poland, Volume I:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

circulation and because of its appositeness to the nature of the conflict between the Polish and Soviet Communist systems in 1980, is perhaps the best example of anti-Soviet (but not anti-Russian) Marxist dissident writing under Gomulka and Gierek. "National Communists" were common among Polish workers, especially in the late 1960s, just as they were in Czechoslovakia at that time; and Communists were often voted by secret ballot to represent workers on factory and negotiation committees.

As much as the literature of KOR and the various Polish unions would try to reconcile the Polish resistance with the Soviet Union, claiming that the Poles, in effect, were simply pursuing their own "road to socialism," this proved impossible. Indeed, in the autumn of 1976 Adam Michnik argued that since repression had constituted the authorities' response to protests on the part of both intellectuals and workers, "revisionism" was no longer tenable. The alternative, he asserted, was embodied in the ideas of Stanislaw Stomma. Stomma, a nationalist and a Catholic, regarded the USSR as "the same old Russia." His approach to Polish-Soviet relations, which he called "neopositivism," advocated the eradication of Marxism-Leninism from Polish governmenf and society while taking loyalty to the USSR for granted.[82]

The Origins to 1795, (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 361. Stefan Batory, King of Poland and Grand Duke of Transylvania from 1576 to 1586, started the war with Muscovy (1576-1582) in the name of the defense of Christendom, largely because he feared the potentially deleterious effects of Ivan IV's despotic government and expansion on the whole of Europe. (Ibid., pp. 428-430.) Aleksander Wat expresses an analogous view in his description of Stalin's Russia in My Century: The Odyssey of a Polish Intellectual. (An abridgment and translation of Moj wiek, London, Book Fund, 1977.) Edited and translated by Richard Lourie, with a foreword by Czeslaw Milosz. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 173-174. I am indebted to T. David Curp for this insight.

[82] Adam Michnik, "The New Evolutionism," Survey, vol. 22, nos. 3-4 (issues 100-101), Summer/Autumn 1976; reprinted in Adam Michnik, Letters From Prison and Other Essays (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1985; first paperback edition, 1987). See especially pp. 135-136. Stomma's idea derives, in part, from late nineteenth century Polish efforts to coexist with the tsarist regime.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It is easy to see how quickly such a position could generate concern in the Kremlin. The government in Poland was, after all, one of the "democracies of a new type" which Moscow had established after World War II. The Soviets could not allow this polity to repudiate its Communist ideological foundations altogether. Even so, neither the Kremlin nor its Warsaw representatives could arrest the decline in support for Communism in Poland. By 1980, and certainly by the late 1980s, the drop in Party membership would become significant.[83] This was the case despite the fact that political control in Poland was more mild than anywhere else in the Soviet bloc. Michnik has argued that this was because, while the Poles caused much trouble for Moscow, for the Soviets to retaliate against them would exact a very high political cost, especially after the Soviet interventions in Eastern Europe in 1956 and 1968. Even so, Michnik asserted, the Soviets did have a limit to their tolerance: an invasion was always possible. Therefore, while "revisionism" was dead (the failure of the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia had discredited it) and open rebellion was foolhardy (because one could not expect the Soviets to repudiate the Brezhnev Doctrine), social evolution within the limits of Soviet tolerance was the best course of action. This was the essence of the idea of "new evolutionism."[84]

In addition, there were those who forwarded ideas that were based entirely on traditional Polish nationalism, and who made no attempt whatsoever to accommodate

---

[83] Antoni Sulek, "Farewell to the Party," Janine R. Wedel, ed., The Unplanned Society: Poland During and After Communism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 249-250.
[84] Michnik, op. cit., pp. 142-144.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

themselves to revisionism, neopositivism, or other ideas which endeavored to reconcile the workers and intellectuals to Marxism or to the Soviet Union. The underlying theme of such ideas was, of course, that Russia was Poland's historical enemy; that Russia would try, at any cost, to keep Poland weak; that the Communists in Poland were satraps of Moscow and had their own political interest in mind when making decisions which nonetheless affected all Poles.[85]

There was, finally, the element of religion in the Polish resistance movement that gave it universal cohesion and augmented the aspirations of those who wished to see a change in their nation's government. Roman Catholicism served the resistance movement in many ways. It, too, had been recognized in Michnik's classic essay:

> The role of the Catholic Church is a crucial element in Poland's situation. The majority of the Polish people feel close to the Church, and many Catholic priests have strong political influence. The evolution of the Polish episcopate's program of action should be carefully analyzed. This evolution can be observed easily in official Church documents. The Church hierarchy's consistently and specifically anti-communist position, in which all social and political changes that have taken place since 1945 were rejected, has been evolving into a more broadly antitotalitarian stance. Jeremiads against "godless ones" have given way to documents quoting the principles of the Declaration of Human Rights [made by the UN in 1948]; in pastoral letters, Polish bishops have been defending the right to truth and standing up for human freedom and dignity.[86]

---

[85] Polish nationalist feeling was ambivalent with respect to the PUWP. While many Poles hated the Soviet-backed Party, they were reluctant to attack the PUWP without reservation, because the Communists continually reminded them that the Soviets had defeated Germany and now protected Poland against German revanchism. An exception might be when the unionists exploded in anger at the government's insistence that the PUWP be recognized in the statute passed in October 1980 that gave Solidarity its official recognition, as recounted in MacShane, op. cit., pp. 55-56.

[86] Ibid., p. 145.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

When Solidarity was finally formed in August 1980, Pope John Paul II emerged in strong support of the union's aspirations for his people; and he was able simultaneously to garner the support of Catholics around the world, especially in the United States.

In an atmosphere such as the one created over a quarter of a century by the forces outlined above, it is difficult indeed to see how a Soviet-supported Communist regime could be expected to endure. Certainly, the Communists still had the option to use force in 1981; but they must have realized how tenuous their hold on Polish life and politics had become, and certainly they were afraid to apply force for some time, as they were unsure of the consequences.[87]

In the heady fifteen months between the founding of Solidarity in August 1980 and the imposition of martial law in December 1981, the Solidarity union wasted no time: the world learned about as much about this courageous organization as the media of the free world could transmit. Walesa was named Time magazine's Man of the Year in 1980. Probably the most significant event in the development of Solidarity in this period, however, was the National Delegates Congress held in Gdansk on September 5-10 and

[87] Adam Michnik, like most Polish intellectuals, never discounted the possibility of a Soviet invasion. But Afghanistan was already giving the Soviets problems, and they realized that military action in Poland could lead to a major confrontation with the West. See Richard F. Staar, Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1991), pp. 157-158. However, other factors besides the Western threat needed to be considered as well, and by the middle of June 1981 the Soviets made a final decision not to invade Poland under any circumstances. They had determined that because of widespread Polish support for anti-Communist entities like Solidarity and the Roman Catholic church the cost of an invasion would be too great, and they were willing to allow the Communist government in Poland to fall, if that were to occur. They retained this posture even through the imposition of martial law in December 1981. Michnik, of course, could not have known that; no one did. But the fact attests to the power of the tide against the PUWP in those years. See Matthew J. Ouimet, "All That Custom has Divided: National Interest and the Secret Demise of the Brezhnev Doctrine, 1968-1981," Ph. D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1997, pp. 438-445, passim.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

September 6-October 7, 1981. The reason for this is that, at this unique congress, Solidarity members were discussing exhaustively the question of workers' self-management and what needs would arise from it, seemingly without fear of Communist reprisal.[88]

By now it seemed clear that the Polish labor movement, backed by the intelligentsia and the Roman Catholic Church, had broken away from all effective political control, making direct application of force the only way the Communists could hope to make it bend to their will. At length the Kremlin opted to employ General Wojciech Jaruzelski to serve its ends. On December 13, 1981, the general declared that a "state of war" existed in Poland, and inaugurated martial law. It is not known for certain whose idea this was, but it is certain that Moscow threatened Jaruzelski into taking some action.[89]

The implementation of that decision was swift: Solidarity leaders from all over the country were arrested simultaneously and taken to Warsaw to be interrogated and, the Communists hoped, to be compelled to repudiate their views. Solidarity activists, supporters and PUWP members critical of the regime were rounded up by the thousands and shipped off to internment camps. The political activity of the general populace was repressed by a curfew, travel restrictions, and "suspension" of the rights to assemble and

[88] The proceedings of the Congress have been made available by George Sanford, ed., trans., The Solidarity Congress, 1981: The Great Debate (London: Macmillan, 1990). Although care was taken to avoid discussion of political issues, some delegates were bolder than others. Especially irksome to Moscow was the appeal made at the Congress for the working class in other socialist countries to form free trade unions.
[89] Sabrina P. Ramet, Social Currents in Eastern Europe: The Sources and Meaning of the Great Transformation (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991), pp. 66-67.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to strike, among other measures.[90] The success of these steps was limited. The pressure brought to bear on Solidarity could not be too great to endure, since excessive repression would only increase the anger of Solidarity's supporters nationwide and could lead to riots. It seemed, moreover, that in December 1981 the Poles were ready to respond to the government in this way; at any rate, they had demonstrated their capacity to do so in the past. Doubtless those who were imprisoned took comfort in this understanding. The fact that the government chose to respond to the crisis in Polish society by declaring martial law suggested its fundamental weakness in terms of popular legitimacy.

The imposition of martial law and the general repression, however, did not result in the silencing of the union that the Communists had hoped for. The international identification of Walesa and his colleagues with the cause of freedom in Poland became much stronger. On October 8, 1982, Solidarity was outlawed by the Polish parliament, the Sejm, which was nothing more than a rubber stamp representing the Communists. Martial law was suspended in December 1982 and abolished in July 1983,[91] but Solidarity was not repressed completely. The union would continue bitter underground attacks on the Jaruzelski regime until it was legalized--and Poland rejected Communist government altogether--in 1989.[92] In November 1980 Adam Michnik alluded to what may be regarded as having been Solidarity's ultimate aim:

> What happened to Poland in 1944-45? Was there a social revolution that gave state power to workers and peasants? Or, rather, was a style of social

---

[90] Garton Ash, op. cit., pp. 263-264.
[91] R. J. Crampton, Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 379.
[92] A very good treatment of the underground activities of Solidarity after 1982 can be found in Ramet, op. cit., pp. 74-87.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> relations imposed on us that we did not agree to, and which we have been trying to rid ourselves of ever since?[93]

From the very beginning, then, Solidarity stood for the same ideals for which it was recognized in 1989. It had always represented not only an attempt to ameliorate the working and living conditions of the Polish worker but a bid for freedom from social and political control of all Polish citizens by the PUWP.

Poland was the second significant example of the effects of "reform" Communism on a country burdened with the Soviet system that Gorbachev was so bent on improving. Hungary was humbled, but had not forgotten 1956; Czechoslovakia was silenced, but had taught the world much about the problems of Soviet socialism. The Polish Communists had tried their best to make reform work, but as the reform process continued it increasingly undermined the legitimacy of Polish Communism. The PUWP was clearly in trouble by 1981, and its fortunes declined rapidly thereafter.

Reform Communism in Eastern Europe ultimately presented Gorbachev with a significant dilemma. It was clear to Gorbachev soon after his assumption of power that Andropov-style denunciation of specific shortcomings of contemporary Soviet society and reaffirmation of the principles of khozraschet, although they continued, would not be enough for effective reform in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev needed new ideas. If he hoped to survive politically in his effort to reform socialism in the USSR Gorbachev could not acknowledge openly the implicit criticisms of Soviet socialism made by the

---

[93] Adam Michnik, "What We Want to Do and What We Can Do," lecture given on November 14, 1980; reprinted in Telos, No. 47, Spring 1981. Translated by Douglas Collins and reprinted in Persky and Flam, eds., op. cit., p. 113.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

reformers in Eastern Europe; but neither could he ignore them. Indeed, he shared many of the ideals of the Polish and Czechoslovak reformers; and he had been a friend of Zdenek Mlynar. Gorbachev therefore promoted further research and an honest evaluation of wider issues in Soviet history in order to facilitate the establishment of a theoretical and historical basis for the Soviet version of "humane socialism." Not surprisingly, that research tended to gravitate toward the NEP era.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER IV

PERESTROIKA AND THE REEVALUATION OF THE NEP ERA, 1987-1989: LESSONS FOR SOVIET INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICE?

Although initially Gorbachev was averse to employing glasnost' in illuminating issues of Soviet history and even denied the existence of "Stalinism" in February 1986, by February 1987 his attitude had changed. At that time he declared that there must be "no forgotten names [or] blank spots" in Soviet history or literature.[1] He had come to regard the proper rendering of the Soviet past as an essential ingredient of perestroika. Balanced, objective historical scholarship was important in order not only to clarify the form and direction that reform measures should take, but also to establish the ideological, institutional and historical validity of Soviet socialism. The issues that were important as far as the reevaluation of the significance of the NEP was concerned can be expressed in terms of the following questions: did the adoption of the NEP mean that there was something inherently wrong with Leninism, and hence with Gorbachev's claims that perestroika would result in the "true" democracy that Lenin had sought? Could the Stalin model have been avoided? What was Bukharin's contribution to the ideology and institutions of Soviet socialism, and how should it be evaluated in the context of

[1] Stephen White, ed., New Directions in Soviet History (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. xi. Gorbachev's initiative was further energized, as it were, by the historian of France Iurii Afanas'ev. "The Energy of Historical Knowledge," Moscow News, 1987, 2(January 18-25):8-9. Afanas'ev's work demanded repudiation of ideological conformity in the name of methodological and factual credibility, and drew the immediate and forceful reaction of the established Soviet historical profession. By May, however, Afanas'ev's appeal had left its mark: V. A. Kozlov's article, "Istorik i perestroika," Voprosy istorii 1987 (5, May):110-122, showed that a shift had taken place in the priorities of Soviet historians. Kozlov called on them to produce true history, to replace the efforts of publicists and belles lettres, to minimize the dangers of historical distortions that might arise from popularization. Kozlov maintained that it was possible to do this while remaining true to Marxism-Leninism.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

perestroika? In the process of addressing these issues Soviet intellectuals developed new understandings of the meaning of freedom under socialism, some of which were instrumental in undermining Gorbachev's political position.

A. The Revolution Continues: Gorbachev and the Return to NEP

On November 2, 1987, in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses, Gorbachev made a speech to the Joint Ceremonial Session of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Supreme Soviets of both the USSR and the RSFSR, commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the October Revolution. Gorbachev argued that socialism was viable, dynamic and not only progressive and capable of cooperation with former enemies but also destined shortly to become the world's most prevalent system of social organization. His speech cleared the way for the institutional innovations that were characteristic of Soviet society toward the end of the Gorbachev era and set the ideological guidelines for the effort at restructuring Soviet socialism from that point until the demise of the Soviet polity. One statement in it can fairly be said to have launched the "return to NEP":

> We are turning more and more often now to the last works of Il'ich, to the Leninist ideas of the New Economic Policy, and we are striving to take from that experience everything of value and essential to us today.[2]

Gorbachev was careful, however, to qualify this assertion. He did not mean to suggest that the institutions of the 1920s be adapted to the contemporary USSR, but, rather, that the principles behind the NEP take the fore in perestroika. He maintained that it would be "erroneous" to equate the NEP with the perestroika of the 1980s, acknowledging that

[2] M. S. Gorbachev, "Oktiabr' i perestroika: Revoliutsiia prodolzhaetsia," Kommunist 1989 (17, November):3-40; p. 8.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

social conditions in the Soviet Union were not the same as what they had been in the 1920s. The theory behind the NEP was of greater interest to him than the practice of those times:

> But the NEP also had a more distant target. The task was set of building a new society "not directly relying on enthusiasm," as Lenin wrote, "but aided by the enthusiasm engendered by the great revolution, and on the basis of personal interest, personal incentive and fiscal accounting.... This is what life has told us. This is what the objective course of the development of the revolution has told us."
>
> Speaking of the creative potential of the New Economic Policy, we should evidently refer once more to the wealth of political and methodological ideas underlying the food tax. We are of course interested not in its forms of those days that had been meant to secure the bond between workers and peasants, but in the possibilities inherent in the idea of the food tax in releasing the creative energy of the masses, enhancing the initiative of the individual, and removing the bureaucratic obstacles that limited the operation of the basic principle of socialism, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work."[3]

Gorbachev's quotation of Lenin and his subsequent assertion showed clearly how he expected that the legacy of the NEP would contribute to perestroika. First, he endorsed the notion of the role of the individual and individual interests in the construction of socialism. Second, business acumen was reaffirmed as something to be valued. These were primary theoretical features of the NEP, and they played out in its institutions, despite the "commanding heights" principle. But Gorbachev embraced the whole theoretical legacy of the NEP in the last part of this statement, when he maintained that the foregoing had as its ultimate object the elimination of the bureaucratism that stifled the operation of the fundamental principle of socialism. This had been Lenin's chief aim

[3] Ibid., pp. 8-9. The quote of Lenin comes from PSS, vol. 45, p. 151.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for the adoption of the NEP in the context of the "Asiatic restoration," and ultimately Gorbachev faced squarely the same dilemma that Lenin had. The results in each case, however, were quite different. Despite his concern over bureaucratism, Lenin realized that the NEP had the potential to place Bolshevik power in jeopardy and until his death he wrestled with the proper place of coercion in the construction of socialism in the 1920s. The issue was resolved for him by Stalin, who strengthened state power immeasurably. By contrast, in the context of glasnost' and perestroika, Gorbachev's position on the nature of bureaucratism opened the way for the erosion of the power of the Soviet government. However, while he did what he could to avoid the abuses of Stalinism, there is every indication that Gorbachev intended to maintain the Party's central position in Soviet society, as well as his own power and prerogatives.

Significantly, in his effort to streamline the Party and democratize the Soviet administrative process Gorbachev rejected the alternatives offered by the opponents of Stalin in the 1920s:

> Also, at the very end of the 1920s a sharp struggle developed over the ways of getting the peasantry on track toward socialism. In substance, it revealed the different attitudes of the majority in the Politburo and of the Bukharin group on how to apply the principles of the New Economic Policy at the new stage in the development of Soviet society.
>
> The concrete conditions of that time--both at home and internationally--made a considerable increase in the rate of socialist construction an urgent task. Bukharin and his followers had, in their calculations and theoretical propositions, underestimated the significance of the time factor in building socialism in the 1930s, practically speaking. In many ways, their posture was shaped by dogmatic thinking and the non-

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> dialectical character of their assessment of the concrete situation. Bukharin himself and his followers soon admitted their mistakes.[4]

Clearly, the majority in the Politburo to which Gorbachev referred was that which Stalin had constructed in the course of the debates over the best way to realize the Leninist program. Although Gorbachev credited Bukharin along with Feliks Dzerzhinskii, Sergei Kirov, Grigorii Ordzhonikhidze, Ian Rudzutak and others for helping to defeat Lev Trotsky, Grigorii Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev for the sake of the theoretical integrity of Leninism, he maintained that the Party nucleus, which was headed by Stalin, was what had safeguarded Leninism.[5] Gorbachev further recalled Lenin's assessment of Bukharin's theories as not evincing a proper understanding of Marxist dialectics.[6]

Thus dispensing with the pragmatic response to the excesses of Stalinism embodied in Bukharin's approach, Gorbachev was left with no choice but to continue his defense of Stalinism to its logical conclusion:

> And looking at history with a sober eye, considering the aggregate of internal and international realities, one cannot help asking whether a course other than that the Party chose could have been taken in those conditions [during the 1930s]. If we wish to be true to historical reality and the truth of life, there can be only one answer: No, that was not possible.[7]

The Stalinist system, Gorbachev held, was progressive in essence, for the basis of it had been established by Lenin. Gorbachev enumerated those theoretical features of the NEP

---

[4] Ibid., p. 12.
[5] Ibid., p. 11.
[6] Ibid., p. 12. Gorbachev referred here to Lenin, PSS, vol. 45, p. 345.
[7] Ibid., p. 12.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

which justified industrialization, collectivization, and the development of a command economy:

> When thinking of the time when "socialist Russia will emerge from NEP Russia," Lenin could not, and never meant to, take on the task of drawing the picture of the future society in every detail and nuance. But the ways and means of advancing to socialism through the building of a machine industry, through a broad-scale establishment of cooperatives, through the enlistment of the working masses to a man in running the state, through organizing the work of the state apparatus on the principle of "better fewer, but better," and through the "cultural development of the entire mass of the people," through the consolidation of the federation of free nations "without lies or bayonets"--this and this alone was to shape the face of the country as it attained a fundamentally new level of social order.[8]

In other words, Gorbachev argued that the NEP had laid the institutional foundation for the advance toward socialism, and since Stalin's policies were consistent with that legacy they reflected a proper interpretation of theory. Gorbachev maintained that Stalin's rigid command system was wholly appropriate for the development of industry in the 1930s, where it produced effective results. Stalin erred in his transferal of the same rigid command structure to agriculture, even though ultimately, despite the tremendous costs, this was also a progressive development.[9] The manner in which the collectivization was implemented, Gorbachev held, was what led to the strengthening of bureaucratism, the horrible abuses in domestic policy, and the development of the "personality cult" under Stalin. Through such logic Gorbachev hoped to persuade himself and his listeners that Soviet socialism was reformable through modification of those institutions which, while

---

[8] Ibid., p. 9.
[9] Ibid., p. 13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

they had been progressive in earlier contexts, had hampered the development of the socialist spirit for so long. Gorbachev argued that the excesses of Stalinism could have been avoided by more correct consideration of theoretical issues:

> And if there had been more consideration for objective economic laws and if more attention had been given to the social processes taking place in the countryside, if in general the attitude toward the vast mass of the working peasantry, most of whom had taken part in the Revolution and had defended it from the White Guards and the interventions, had been politically more judicious, if there had been a consistent line to promote the alliance with the middle peasant against the kulak, then there would not have been all those excesses that took place in carrying out collectivization.[10]

All of the "ifs" in Gorbachev's weak apology for Stalinism left a lot of room for interpretation of what "objective economic laws" and "social processes" were conducive to proper socialist development not only in the 1920s but also in the era of perestroika. After all, Gorbachev asserted that what was most important about the theoretical legacy of the NEP was the latitude that it gave to socialist innovation, and he flatly declared the ideological soundness of this idea:

> The decision to implement the New Economic Policy, which radically expanded the horizons of the concept of socialism and the ways in which it may be constructed, was permeated with the most profound revolutionary dialectics.[11]

After Gorbachev's speech, however, there occurred a strong revival of interest in the economic and social policy of the 1920s of a sort which he did not intend. Intellectuals in all fields seized upon opportunities to reexamine heretofore closed areas

---

[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid., p. 7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of historical inquiry, in order to recapture the faith in socialism that Gorbachev was also trying so earnestly to instill. However, while the intellectuals strongly supported the general idea of perestroika they were willing to discard Gorbachev's apologetics in their own search for solutions, in a way which undermined Gorbachev's claims to legitimacy philosophically, institutionally, practically, and, ultimately, politically. This process transpired subtly, and began with the rehabilitation of Bukharin.

B. Bukharin: The Prophet of Soviet Socialism?[12]

Unofficially, the rehabilitation of Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin had been long in the making. Though he had been condemned as a "right deviationist" for many years, he had not been forgotten; but those who remembered him had to wait for the most opportune time to recall his contribution to Soviet socialism. Naturally, that opportunity emerged with the advent of glasnost'. Ultimately, Bukharinism came to be seen as the embodiment of humane socialism, both philosophically and institutionally. At the same time, however, Bukharin's legacy proved as problematic for the Soviet leadership in the 1980s as it had been in the 1920s.

Although Bukharin began to be portrayed favorably in the Soviet press as of January 1987,[13] the appeal on the part of his widow, Anna Mikhailovna Larina, to Gorbachev, published late in 1987, was probably the major spur to his official

---

[12] The late Isaac Deutscher, of course, used the word "prophet" with reference to Trotsky rather than to Bukharin in his estimation of the significance of the legacy of the 1920s; but there is no better word to describe how most Soviet intellectuals felt about Bukharin in 1988.

[13] Herbert J. Ellison, "Perestroika and the New Economic Policy (1921-1928): The Uses of History," Mel Gurtov, ed., The Transformation of Socialism: Perestroika and Reform in the Soviet Union and China (Boulder, CO, London and Oxford: Westview Press, 1990), pp. 21-35; p. 25.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

rehabilitation.[14] That was in full swing by February 1988, with the Soviet government officially recanting Stalin's murder of Bukharin and recognizing Bukharin's achievements. This was a major step, allowing that perhaps Bukharin had ideas which, if they had only been given proper consideration, might have proven more beneficial to Soviet socialism than the course ultimately pursued by Stalin. The work of Stephen F. Cohen on Bukharin assumed central importance among Soviet intellectuals in this period. Cohen, of course, had been known to them before; but under glasnost' he was often discussed in a number of Soviet works on Bukharin.[15]

Bukharin was valuable to Soviet reformers for a number of reasons. First, he was well-acquainted with theories forwarded by agricultural economists whose work covered the first two decades of the twentieth century, and he understood well the problems associated with the atomization of Russian agriculture, a development which concerned both liberal and Marxist economists.[16] In fact Bukharin once wrote that one could get sufficient information on Russian agriculture only from non-Bolshevik economists.[17] Such familiarity with the problems of cooperative ownership schemes in agriculture made

---

[14] The appeal was published in Ogonek, 1987, (48, November 28-December 5):26-31, "On khotel peredelat' zhizn', potomu chto ee liubil."
[15] While Cohen was indeed widely acclaimed in the Soviet Union, not all assessments of him were favorable. Lev Timofeyev produced a scathing review of Cohen's 1985 work, Rethinking the Soviet Experience: Politics and History Since 1917 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), entitled "How Stephen Cohen Re-Thinks the Soviet Experience," Survey, 1989 30(4, June):189-195. The review originally appeared in the March 1987 Moscow Referendum and was reprinted in Russkaia mysl' in February 1988, the month of Bukharin's official rehabilitation. Timofeyev castigated Cohen for failing to recognize many of the problems with his approach to Bukharin that we covered in Chapter II, such as the continuity of NEP with War Communism, the roots of Stalinism in early Bolshevism, and similar issues.
[16] Herbert J. Ellison, "Russian Agrarian Theory in the 1920s: Climax of a Great Tradition," G. L. Ulmen, ed., Society and History: Essays in Honor of Karl August Wittfogel (The Hague, Paris and New York: Mouton Publishers, 1978), pp. 471-482; pp. 480-481.
[17] Bukharin, Bol'shevik 1924 (7-8, July-August), p. 21, cited in Ellison, op. cit., p. 481, footnote 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Bukharin attractive to reformers under perestroika, who by the time of the XIX Party Conference in mid-1988 were reexamining seriously the cooperative both as a NEP institution and as a possible model for collective ownership under perestroika.[18] Indeed, it was the economists in the Gorbachev era who were most enthusiastic about the rehabilitation of Bukharin, and after 1988 their numbers among those who sought to learn directly from the NEP experience exceeded those of other intellectuals by far.[19] So widespread was the impact of the rehabilitation of Bukharin that Gorbachev's reforms began to be regarded by some as "Bukharinist" by the end of 1988:

> Without any doubt, Moscow's attempts at 'new thinking,' reach far beyond the ideas of Bukharin and Lenin. At the same time, the reformers tend more and more to combine their new start with cardinal principles and important elements of NEP socialism as developed by Bukharin and his adherents with respect to domestic construction and international relations. In this sense, Gorbachev could indeed be called a modern "Bukharinist."[20]

In addition, the tendency to characterize the NEP itself as Bukharinist, rather than Leninist, also prevailed among Soviet writers. This was to have a significant impact on Gorbachev's claim to legitimacy through a proper reinterpretation of Leninism, and that

---

[18] The contributions of all of the major economists of the 1920s were reexamined in the 1980s, with particular attention to the ones who seemed to have had the most influence on Bukharin. Several studies were devoted to Aleksandr Vasil'evich Chaianov (1888-1937?). An important aspect of his work was on the problems of persuading the peasantry to join large cooperative organizations (the emphasis here is on persuasion rather than coercion). Another prime candidate for "rediscovery" was N. D. Kondrat'ev (1892-1937?), a student of M. I. Tugan-Baranovskii (1865-1919), who worked primarily on the economics of business and money. After the February Revolution Kondrat'ev was responsible for supplying the peasantry with industrial goods. He wrote a great deal from 1919 to 1931 on the Russian economy, with emphasis on agricultural issues; but his models of the growth of the Russian economy since the eighteenth century, which did not fit the Bolshevik ideological scheme, made him the bitter enemy of the Communists. Both he and Tugan-Baranovskii were anathematized.

[19] Ellison, "Perestroika and the New Economic Policy," p. 25.

[20] Heinz Timmerman, "Is Gorbachev a Bukharinist? Moscow's Reappraisal of the NEP Period," The Journal of Communist Studies 1989 (1, March):1-17; p. 15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

challenge would come, ironically, from those who most enthusiastically supported his reforms. In any case Gorbachev finally would open the door wide to Bukharinism on September 13, 1988, when in his speech at Krasnoiarsk he admitted that what had transpired in the 1930s was the essential destruction of the Soviet peasantry, and this represented a detriment to socialism.[21] After that, Gorbachev could only defend narrowly-defined "progressive" aspects of Stalinism, and could no longer assert that it was the only possible course, as he had done up to that point. The evidence, however, is that he had felt this way for quite some time. It is true that Gorbachev's concession came late in the course of events. Yet in the months since his November 1987 speech the discussion of NEP ideas and Bukharinism had resulted in a great deal of ideological and institutional innovation with which Gorbachev was intimately involved, particularly at the XIX Conference of the CPSU in the summer of 1988. Even so, not all of those who supported perestroika wholeheartedly understood it in the way Gorbachev did, and eventually this would cause the General Secretary significant difficulty.

C. The Place of the NEP in Soviet History: Continuity With Perestroika?

On May 6, 1988, a "roundtable" discussion of fourteen academics was held by the respected journal Problems of History and led by journal editor A. A. Iskenderov. It dealt directly with the legacy of the 1920s and their relevance to the contemporary USSR.[22] It

[21] N. Krivomozov, A. Cherniak and G. Iastrebtsov, "Zavtra nachinaetsia segodnia: Prebyvanie M. S. Gorbacheva v Krasnoiarskom Krae," Pravda, September 14, 1988, pp. 1-2.
[22] The conference, with some abridgments, was published as "Kruglyi stol: Sovetskii Soiuz v 20-e gody," Voprosy istorii, 1988 (9, September):3-58. The participants were V. A. Shishkin, V. P. Danilov, V. P. Dmitrenko, V. S. Lel'chuk, L. F. Morozov, V. Z. Drobizhev, E. P. Ivanov, L. E. Fain, V. V. Kabanov, Sh. F. Mukhamed'iarov, T. Iu. Krasovitskaia, V. A. Kozlov, E. A. Ambartsumov, and V. I. Bakulin.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

is well worth analyzing in detail because its participants are representative of the various positions taken by academics in the debate over the "return to NEP." Most of the contributors focused on specific problems posed by NEP measures to perestroika practically. While theory was of course also discussed, three panelists in particular, V. P. Danilov, L. F. Morozov, and E. A. Ambartsumov, were most concerned with the question of whether the NEP experience was truly relevant ideologically to the Gorbachev era. In the course of the discussion the philosophical problems arising from the issues that we discussed in Chapters I and II were readily apparent.

Danilov made the strongest case for the "return to NEP." He stated that "the uniqueness of the 1920s consisted first of all in the many various forms of socio-economic development, in the dynamism and openness of political life, and an unprecedented intellectual richness [nebyvaloe dukhovnoe bogatstvo]."[23] By "intellectual richness" he meant the impassioned striving for the socialist transformation of Russia on the part of both heroes of the Revolution and Bolshevik thinkers who developed revolutionary theory and practice. He asserted that since the NEP dominated this milieu it was the central issue of the 1920s. "This is especially clear," said Danilov,

> in light of the needs of the present day, from the point of view of the quests going on in our society at this time. We are now turning to the experience of the NEP. We are searching for and finding in it practical responses to the questions of modern life, which in itself bears witness to both the historical significance of the NEP and the fact that it has not yet been completed, in that the problems that it was meant to respond to have not been resolved, and have given rise to the most serious difficulties in the long-term development of Soviet society.[24]

---

[23] Danilov, V. P., "20-e gody: nep i bor'ba al'ternativ," "Kruglyi stol," ibid., p. 3. Henceforth "20-e gody."
[24] Ibid., p. 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Danilov asserted that it was therefore necessary to reexamine the history of the NEP in order to understand the development of its policies and institutions; but it was also necessary to understand why it was cut short, since Lenin had originally envisioned the policy as one to be taken "seriously and for the long term."[25] Danilov charged that Lenin's dictum was distorted by the political climate of the 1920s to the point where, until very recently, the Stalinist line that the NEP ended with the victory of socialism in 1936-1937 had resounded in the literature and in Party dogma, although in historical fact one could not support such a claim.[26] In 1987 M. P. Kim had forwarded the periodization of 1921-1927 for the NEP, and Danilov viewed this as a consequence of the NEP arising as a topic of serious scholarly discussion in the context of perestroika.[27] Most interesting is Danilov's recollection of the Eighth Symposium of Soviet-Japanese historians at the beginning of June 1987, at which Nobuo Simotoman delivered a paper entitled, "The end of NEP (1929-1936)." In the discussion of Simotoman's paper, there was quick agreement that the shift from the NEP began in 1928-1929 and was characterized by the replacement of the bread tax with forcible methods that had nothing to do with economics. What could not be agreed upon was when the process of transition from the

---

[25] Ibid.; the citation of Lenin is from PSS, vol. 43, p. 329.
[26] Ibid. Danilov noted that there had been in years past some ill-fated attempts to break away from the official prescriptions of Soviet historiography, but these had been suppressed by censors who would allow only work that was in conformity to official interpretations. One heavily-censored "discussion" that Danilov cited in this regard was Voprosy istorii KPSS, Editorial Board. "K itogam obsuzhdeniia problem novoi ekonomicheskoi politiki," under rubric "Obsuzhdeniia." Voprosy istorii KPSS 1968 (12, December):81-91. But this, he asserted, was the only effort that had been made to assess the significance of the social formulations forwarded during the NEP in twenty years. The publications that had appeared since then had simply supported the transition to Stalinism unquestioningly.
[27] See I. I. Mints, chairman, "Osnovnye etapy razvitiia sovetskogo obshchestva: 'kruglyi stol' zhurnala 'Kommunist' under rubric, "K 70-letiiu velikogo oktiabria" Kommunist 1987 (12, August):66-79; p. 70.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

NEP to socialism ended. This was because the regime claimed that the NEP was still in progress, and because there were a wide variety of isolated policies still in force as late as 1937 that were reminiscent of the NEP.[28]

Danilov did not consider arguments that there was no alternative to the course taken by Stalin, reminding attendees of the conference that he had already given his opinion on that issue in an earlier "roundtable" talk held by Problems of History in March 1988. By the time of the present discussion, he said, he had become convinced that the entire period of Russian history from the beginning of the 1880s to the end of the 1920s was one of realistic alternatives, not only in terms of the possible choices of key individuals, but also with respect to socio-economic conditions.[29] Stalin, Danilov charged, simply ignored all laws of social and economic development. The course he took was not necessary at all.[30]

Danilov did not, of course, deny the progressive nature of the Revolution; but he insisted that there were several alternatives to the Stalin course, among them Bukharin's plan to preserve the NEP,[31] the further development of the cooperative system,[32] and the five-year plan worked out at the XVI Party Conference in April 1929 and adopted at the

---

[28] Danilov, "20-e gody," pp. 6-7. Danilov recalled that many of the participants in the present conference were also at the symposium in Japan.

[29] Ibid., p. 7. Danilov's position in the earlier roundtable appeared as "Tret'ia volna," Voprosy istorii 1988 (3, March):21-24.

[30] Ibid., p. 9.

[31] Ibid., pp. 11-12. Danilov here referred to Bukharin's last public speech, "Politicheskoe zaveshchanie Lenina," of January 1929.

[32] Ibid., p. 9. At the heart of this idea was Lenin's dictum, "We must not adapt the cooperatives to serve the purposes of the NEP, but gear the NEP to the requirements of the cooperatives." (Lenin, PSS, vol. 54, p. 195.) Some others at the conference agreed with Danilov on this point, particularly L. E. Fain, "Gluboko osmyslit' leninskuiu kontseptsiiu kooperatsii," "Kruglyi stol," ibid., pp. 41-44.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

V Congress of Soviets of the USSR in May. Danilov characterized the latter as realistic despite its heavy demands.[33] He cited Lenin's warning that Stalin had concentrated too much power in his hands as General Secretary, arguing that Stalin's forcible methods were not only wrong but also not at all consistent with Leninism.[34] He asserted that the more he studied the history of the Soviet period, the more he became convinced that the transition from capitalism to socialism was not yet complete.[35] He felt that in order to understand the significance of the NEP it would be very important to devote further research to the question of "state-capitalism," which was discussed before the inauguration of the NEP; in any case, he maintained,

> In the course of the restructuring of our economic, political and intellectual life, in the solution of the problems of organization and development of socialist society we will have to return many times to the practical experience of the 1920s, to the legacy of ideas of that period. And this is entirely understandable: both the 1920s and the second half of the 1980s are times of alternatives, of conscious choices regarding the ways and means of socialist creation.[36]

Danilov made some very profound statements in his presentation, but perhaps the most important was his assertion that, as a result of his continued study of the problems of the 1920s, the USSR had not yet attained socialism. This represented a complete repudiation of scientific Marxism as it had been interpreted in the Soviet Union after 1936 and upon which Gorbachev based the ideological and political legitimacy of his regime. Of all the participants at the conference, it was L. F. Morozov who most

[33] Danilov, "20-e gody," pp. 11-12.
[34] Ibid., pp. 8-9; Lenin, PSS, vol. 45, p. 345. Danilov, like many who cite Lenin's "Testament," did not take into account that Lenin never called into question the correctness of Stalin's ideological position.
[35] Ibid., p. 12.
[36] Ibid., p. 13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

forcefully recalled this to the attention of the others.[37] Morozov admitted that Danilov touched on one of the most critical questions of the historiography of the transition from capitalism to socialism, but that it was "difficult" to concur with his assessment that the NEP was wrecked by "the evil will of Stalin."[38] Morozov could not believe that it was possible that the actions of one man could stand in the way of the forces of social development; to assert this would be to subscribe to idealism. He reminded the others that Stalin was not alone in the transformation of policy at the end of the 1920s, and that Bukharin's position lost favor in the late 1920s not because of Stalin's opposition but due to the fact that it was no longer relevant to socio-economic conditions. To underscore the need to avoid errors in evaluating the significance of the NEP, Morozov cited Gorbachev's discussion of these issues along the same lines in his speech of the preceding November.[39]

Morozov continued to attack the idea of the primacy of the role of the individual in history, represented, among others, by Plekhanov. He asserted that it was essential to consider the Leninist legacy in broader terms. Questions such as what might have resulted had Stalin been removed from the post of general secretary after the XIII Congress, or indeed what might have happened had Napoleon perished at the start of his career, were really imbued with an idealistic rather than a scientific character. Morozov maintained that Lenin's warning about letting the general secretary amass too much power

---

[37] L. F. Morozov, 'Istoricheskaia nauka otstaet ot protsessov perestroiki," "Kruglyi stol," ibid., pp. 25-28. Morozov was the fourth presenter at the roundtable, preceded by Danilov, Lel'chuk and Kozlov.
[38] Ibid., p. 25.
[39] Ibid., p. 26.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

had to do with the importance of maintaining the collective nature of decision-making. He further argued that the decisions taken by the Central Control Commission and the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate were made collectively.[40]

Morozov asserted that historical biography and historical analysis were entirely different. The former was naturally disposed to popularization while the latter by definition had to be scientific. Morozov did not deny that history was supposed to be about people. He was concerned, however, that historians were abandoning their discipline, and in the context of glasnost' popularizers were filling the void:

> Of course, it is a difficult task to create lifelike portrayals of historical figures. Without a doubt, writers excel over historians in this. This is understandable. But it is hard to understand how writers sometimes outdo historians even in historical generalizations, when they deal with the characteristics of historical eras. This is what is meant by the statement that our historical science stands aside from the processes of perestroika.[41]

Morozov here reminded his listeners of the duty of the USSR's tens of thousands of historical "scientists": they must take back history, so to speak, in order to interpret it properly for the understanding and utility of the present generation.[42] Perestroika was the

---

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., p. 27.

[42] Many historians shared Morozov's concern here, but not all for the same reasons. The question was how to define the place of history in perestroika. This was the subject of not only books, but also many letters to the editors of journals. One of the best that I found was I. S. Galkin, "Ob effektivnosti nauchnogo potentsiala vuzovskikh istorikov," Novaia i noveishaia istoriia, 1988 (5, September-October):205-207. Galkin insisted that Soviet historians assume their rightful place not only in interaction with foreign colleagues but also in the establishment of their own domestic associations to facilitate historical inquiry. He noted how Soviet historians had enjoyed such privileges before the Great Purge. Only through unfettered historical inquiry, asserted Galkin, would Soviet historians be free to combat the sort of historical falsehood that underlay ineffective Soviet institutions and methods. In this point, however, Galkin would have been in disagreement with Morozov, who sought to preserve history as a tool for "socialist construction," i.e., as a support of the Party. The real question, then, was whether the Party would be able to afford intellectual pluralism.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

chief social phenomenon of the contemporary USSR. Historical science, therefore, must do its duty to facilitate the restructuring of socialism, not attack its very foundations. Morozov pointed out that, to the best of his knowledge, lawmakers failed to consult historical specialists in drafting the 1988 Law on Cooperatives. He reminded his listeners of the Leninist principle of firm state controls over the cooperatives, and decried those such as Academic E. M. Primakov, who supported deregulation. Morozov stated flatly that such arguments did not help the restructuring of socialism.[43] Indeed, the Soviet leadership had officially espoused a position similar to Morozov's since the XXVII Congress of the CPSU:

> A responsible analysis of the past clears the way to the future. But half truths, shamefully sidestepping sharp corners, impede the formulation of realistic policy and confound our forward movement.[44]

E. A. Ambartsumov's appraisal[45] was less categorical in its assertions, though Ambartsumov was mindful that in the context of perestroika the NEP was more than just history. He was concerned, however, about the meaning of the words "transition period." Was the NEP a "transition" in a concrete socio-structural sense, or did it represent the sort of "transition" that is characteristic of historical development in general? Russia in the 1920s was transforming from capitalism, to be sure, but into what? The "socialism" that was expected as a result of the Revolution, according to Marx, Engels, and Lenin, had not transpired despite characterizations of the NEP as a socialist policy. The Revolution gave

---

[43] Morozov, op. cit., pp. 27-28.
[44] Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza, Materialy XXVII s"ezda KPSS (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1986), p. 23.
[45] E. A. Ambartsumov, "Nep i sovremennost'," "20-e gody," pp. 35-38.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

rise to what some called state-bureaucratic socialism and others referred to as the command system. Yet, Ambartsumov noted, the democracy which was supposed to characterize socialism was certainly absent under Stalin.

There was further confusion, said Ambartsumov, when one considered the economic results of the NEP. Yes, there were economic gains; but this led some to refer to the completeness of the NEP while others maintained that the policy was unfinished.

Ambartsumov held that it was precisely the reformist character of the NEP which lay at the heart of all of its difficulties. It was not at all characteristic of "socialism" proper.[46] Inevitable problems would surface. To this end he cited Hungary and Poland as being by their own admission in the midst of crisis despite their respective experiments with economic liberalization. China, said Ambartsumov, also profited greatly from its emulation of NEP-style economic reforms, resulting in the literal flowering of that country. "But," he asserted,

> certain specific qualities of ours, in part built into the political structure and the character of the ruling power--the Party--told on the final crisis of the NEP, on its collapse.[47]

Ambartsumov thus seemed to call into question the validity of the NEP model for the USSR as long as the political system remained as it was. But in the next sentence he blamed the downfall of NEP not on the Soviet system but on the weakness of the Party as a socialist organ because of the millions of new members who were part of the "Lenin

---

[46] A major weakness of Ambartsumov's assessment was that he never really defined "socialism," but this was a problem with all who took positions such as his.
[47] Ibid., p. 36.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

enrollment." These were basically opportunists, said Ambartsumov, who were looking for the advantages conferred by Party membership and who generally came from non-cultured strata of society. The Party was not, in fact, so strong a social force as the "middle peasants" and the traders.[48]

In evaluating the significance of the Stalin course Ambartsumov asserted that it was far from optimal and even farther from being the only option available. He thus disagreed with Morozov, but did not entirely support Danilov's position, either. He agreed with Morozov that a congeries of factors, and not the evil will of Stalin, was involved in the decision of the Soviet leadership to abandon the NEP.

In summing up his presentation Ambartsumov cited a 1981 roundtable discussion headed by Iu. A. Poliakov, at which, initially, an attempt was made to apply the lessons of NEP to the contemporary Soviet Union. Because of fear, the conference degenerated into a simple observance of the sixtieth anniversary of Lenin's inauguration of the policy. Ambartsumov, however, reiterated the appositeness of the 1920s to perestroika nevertheless, as evidenced by the speeches being made of late; in the final analysis the influence of the NEP on Soviet reform could not be denied.[49]

These, then, were the questions facing Soviet scholars in the 1980s who wished to embark on the return to NEP. Were they prepared to eschew Stalinism altogether in their search for ideological rationale for reform, thus pitting themselves against Gorbachev?

---

[48] Ibid., p. 37.
[49] Ibid., p. 38. Unfortunately Ambartsumov did not give the exact date of this discussion or where its proceedings, if any, might be found. He only stated that it took place sometime in 1981 in the Moscow Polytechnical Museum building.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Would they be faithful to the assumptions of Marxist-Leninist science and try to defend "socialism" as they understood it to have been built under the Stalinist system, ignoring as much as possible the need for institutional change? Or would they tend to adopt a position somewhere in the middle which would advocate attention to the merits of both extremes? As the next few years unfolded Gorbachev found himself more and more confronted by those who supported, in essence, the position of Danilov, though certainly not all scholars shared these views. They were, however, the most troubling to Gorbachev, for they challenged not only his political legitimacy but also his understanding of perestroika and its purpose.

D. The Root of the Problem: What is Needed is a Perestroika of Perestroika

No single article demonstrated more clearly the problems inherent in the "return to NEP" by the middle of 1988 than did Vasilii Seliunin's "Roots [Istoki]," published in May.[50] Seliunin's essay argued, in effect, for the complete dismantling of Gorbachevism, using the NEP experience as an example of how that might be done. Ironically, Seliunin was an enthusiastic supporter of both perestroika and Gorbachev; and both men saw the solution to the Soviet Union's problems in the NEP; but they approached it from fundamentally incompatible viewpoints. Gorbachev took the viability of the Soviet system for granted[51] and held that in principle it was based firmly in khozraschet, which originated in the NEP and had as its most basic component true respect for the rights of

---

[50] Vasilii Seliunin, "Istoki," Novyi mir 1988 64(5, May):162-189.

[51] For a concise analysis of this position generally, see Herbert J. Ellison, "Gorbachev and Reform: An Introduction," Lawrence W. Lerner and Donald W. Treadgold, eds., Gorbachev and the Soviet Future (Boulder, CO and London: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 1-20.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the individual. Seliunin maintained that the Soviet system as it was could not be reformed at all, precisely because it did not and could not really recognize the "human factor" which, he agreed, had been an important aspect of NEP ideology. While he acknowledged that there was and always should be a state sector in the economy, Seliunin argued that socialism must adopt true economic and political pluralism in order to work. Seliunin believed that perestroika must not be limited to restructuring of the system on its current foundations. There had to be a total restructuring, a rebuilding the entire system from the ground up. The current system, Seliunin asserted, must be abolished from above or smashed from below.[52]

Critics of Seliunin's piece have focused on his enthusiastic assessment of the implementation of the NEP as an example of how state power can be used to effect the transformation of the Soviet economic system into a highly effective one in a matter of months, charging that the USSR of the 1980s was fundamentally different from what it had been in 1921. This is a valid criticism that was shared by many Soviet economists,[53] but it falls far short of the point of "Roots." We shall address Seliunin's arguments in detail because the attention paid to their wider implications has been inadequate.

In evaluating War Communism, Seliunin pointed out that the Bolsheviks concluded that the failure of the collectivization arose precisely from technological backwardness. Give the peasant what he needs to produce well in a commune, and he

---

[52] Seliunin, "Istoki," p. 188.

[53] R. W. Davies, "Soviet Economic Reform in Historical Perspective," Catherine Merridale and Chris Ward, eds., Perestroika: The Historical Perspective (London, New York: Edward Arnold, 1991), pp. 117-137; pp. 132-133. These included Grigorii Khanin, who by 1990 was saying that only a capitalist economy could ever have worked in Russia.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

will join it willingly. The Bolsheviks adhered to this reasoning even in the light of severe peasant resistance to the Communists during the latter half of the Civil War, and Seliunin faulted them for not remembering a maxim of Lev Tolstoi: "neither nitrogen nor oxygen in the soil and air, not a special plow and manure--the main implement that puts nitrogen, oxygen, manure, and the plow into action is the working peasant." [54] Soon Lenin realized that the "'bourgeois axiom' of the ineffectiveness of forced labor was valid after all."[55]

By adopting the NEP Lenin put this principle into practice. Gone was the notion that to retain surplus was to be by definition an exploiter. Moreover, Lenin replaced War Communism with the NEP very quickly, in the course of a year.

> In this lesson I see support for our present restructuring. There lie before us changes that are no less revolutionary--the working people do not wish to live in the old way any longer, and the administrative apparatus can no longer manage in the old way. The directions of the radical reforms being undertaken today are in general clear, but even fervent supporters of perestroika speak with a sense that the democratization of public life and economic innovations must be introduced gradually, over a period of years. But such a variant is highly improbable--there is simply not enough time, it has been exhausted and licentiously dissipated in the decades of stagnation.[56]

While Seliunin praised the easing of restrictions on commodity production and Bukharin's denunciation of the tendency of the Bolsheviks to overcentralize everything, as expressed in his Notes of an Economist, he erred when he equated Preobrazhenskii's plan of forced industrialization with Lenin's concept of the NEP.[57] Lenin, as we have

[54] Seliunin, "Istoki," p. 168.
[55] Ibid., p. 170.
[56] Ibid., p. 171.
[57] Ibid., p. 173.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

seen, did not wish to employ coercion for its own sake, and was wrestling with the theoretical problems of Soviet socialism as it stood in the 1920s right up until his death. However, Seliunin was also not far off the mark: Lenin indeed had allowed for the element of coercion; and Preobrazhenskii's model fit with this and, by extension, with Stalinism. Seliunin asserted that the choice for industrialization came as a result of failure to act on warning signs that the system was developing into a dictatorship, warnings voiced, ironically, by F. E. Dzerzhinskii. He rejected flatly any notion that the Stalinist course was mandated by scientific principle:

> ...there is no absolute determinism or doom in the fate of an individual or the fate of peoples. This is a dangerous misconception which the powers that be have always used to their advantage at virtually all times: the events are predetermined, it is practically impossible to exert a serious influence on them, so reconcile yourself and submit.[58]

Yet, it was this very principle of scientific socialism which Seliunin defended by virtue of his defense of Bukharin. The dialectic was unmerciful. One could not predict what it would bring. The only thing that could be certain was that the victory of socialism was inevitable, along with the events that led up to it. In other words, whatever happened was right, because the laws of history had demanded it. Seliunin argued that the dialectic did not guarantee that Stalinist abuses were inevitable. There was a Bukharinist alternative. But neither had the dialectic guaranteed that the Bukharin alternative was what was proper to socialism, and Stalinism emerged instead. How to deal with that was the central ideological problem of perestroika. Yet, on the basis of the "laws of history"

---

[58] Ibid., p. 174.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

argument, Gorbachev was justified in taking his position in November 1987 that, while there may have been severe excesses in Stalinism, it was the only possible course in its time. What was needed now was a random dialectical "jump" that would allow the social transformations necessary for perestroika.

But Seliunin was concerned with far more than a proper understanding of dialectical and historical materialism. His object was to secure humane socialism. Seliunin took seriously Gorbachev's often-repeated maxim that socialism is a society of creative people. Ostensibly, at least, Gorbachev's position had little to do with the formulae of Marxist ideology that had prevailed from 1928 to 1985. Seliunin's argument also rejected most, if not all, of that legacy. He called the Great Break (velikii perelom) the breaking of the backbone of the Soviet people,[59] not the push onward to socialism. True internationalism, he maintained, was in the hearts of Soviet people naturally, and it had shown itself most clearly in his experience when exiles from all over the Soviet Union were sent to Seliunin's community to live.[60] However, although he detested the notion of Russia as an Oriental despotism and castigated the American historian Richard Pipes for applying the label to his country,[61] Seliunin did not deny the problem of bureaucratism in Soviet socialism. His approach to the issue seems to have derived from his understanding of Bukharinism; in any event, there is no evidence that he was aware of the views of Marx and Lenin on the subject.

---

[59] Ibid., p. 177.
[60] Ibid., p. 178.
[61] Ibid., pp. 184-185.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Even so, Seliunin's assessment of the problem of "bureaucratism" in the Bolshevik Party was practically identical to G. V. Plekhanov's characterization of Russia as "semi-Asiatic." Seliunin held that bureaucratism, much admired by Stalin in the person of Ivan IV, had deep historical roots. They evinced themselves most clearly in the reigns of both Ivan and Peter I.[62] The most obvious effect of bureaucratism, Seliunin held, was the lack of permanence of cultural innovation, particularly under Peter. The state had the power to marshal resources to achieve specific goals, such as Peter did when he constructed the Baltic navy, but then the inertia of Russian society would set in, the infrastructure would become outdated, and the country would remain backward. The one institution that contributed the most to this phenomenon, according to Seliunin, was the peasant commune.[63]

Seliunin maintained, therefore, that the fact that the state structure was smashed in 1917 did not at all mean that the bureaucratic social structure of Russia was uprooted. In fact, he said, instead of instituting a new, democratically-based society as he had hoped, Lenin had restored that very same social order through War Communism. Lenin was the first to recognize this and he inaugurated the NEP as a result.[64] The NEP was a progressive move precisely because it gave Russia a chance to cast off that bureaucratism,

---

[62] Ibid., pp. 181-183. Interestingly, Seliunin uses the word "feudalism" in describing this characteristic with respect to Ivan. This usage comes from a Leninist distortion. Lenin argued that Russia had developed capitalism from "feudalism" at the end of the nineteenth century, against Plekhanov's insistence that Russia was still an Oriental despotism. After the "Leningrad Discussion" of 1931 Soviet theorists claimed that Russian development, including a "feudal" stage, had followed the Marxist paradigm for Western European history.

[63] Ibid., p. 185.

[64] Ibid., p. 187. Here Seliunin shows his ignorance of the significance of the "Asiatic mode of production." Again, it will be recalled that the first to assert from a Marxist point of view that Russia had these characteristics was Marx himself, followed by Plekhanov, with whom Lenin argued about the issue in 1906.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

a chance that was lost when Stalin forced an end to the NEP in 1928, and he restored a much stronger variant of the same social structure that had prevailed under War Communism.[65]

Stalin's effort to remove the Marxist and Leninist concept of Russia as "semi-Asiatic" from the Soviet memory had done quite well except among those who were very well versed in Marxism, but even these people had a distorted understanding of its significance.[66] There were a very few exceptions; one was the writer and historian Leonid Batkin. Batkin grasped Lenin's concept of aziatchina[67] and his reasons for inaugurating the NEP. Like Seliunin, Batkin argued for a "perestroika of perestroika" in order that socialism may fulfill its true humanistic and dynamic potential.[68]

What is remarkable about Seliunin's essay, however, is that, working from Bukharin's understanding of the problem of bureaucratism and using the same logic, he arrived at the same position that Lenin had by March 1921. He also valued the NEP in

---

[65] Ibid., pp. 188-189.

[66] M. Gefter, "Rossiia i Marks," Kommunist, 1988 (18, December):93-104; p. 98, col. 2. Gefter here mentions the Asiatic mode of production in the context of Marx's difficulty in classifying Russia's social system; but, again, no connection is made with the Lenin-Plekhanov debate. When I traveled to Moscow in 1996 I found it interesting that although scholars knew about the Asiatic mode of production they were surprised to learn of Lenin's fears of an Asiatic restoration in Russia, and the fact that Stalin later concealed Lenin's concern in his last years.

[67] The term aziatchina was used by Lenin to refer to the socio-cultural difficulties inherent in Russia's "semi-Asiatic" heritage. Batkin recognized that, to Lenin, the only solution to this problem was to develop full capitalism, through which Russia could rebuild itself "on historical soil cleansed of aziatchina." L. Batkin, "Vozobnovlenie istorii," Iu. N. Afanas'ev, ed., Inogo ne dano. Sud'by perestroiki. Vgliadyvaias' v proshloe. Vozvrashchenie k budushchemu. (Moskva: Progress, 1988), pp. 154-191; p. 175. This essay, which first appeared in February 1988, was reprinted in an anthology, Leonid Batkin, Vozobnovlenie istorii: razmyshleniia o politike i kul'ture (Moskva: Moskovskii rabochii, 1991), pp. 11-79. I have chosen to focus on Seliunin's work because he was more widely known and because of his association of these ideas with Bukharin, which was much more common than ascribing them, properly, to Lenin.

[68] Batkin, "Vozobnovlenie istorii," Inogo ne dano, p. 189.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the same terms that Lenin did: the policy had some potential to preserve freedom in Russia.

One might argue that Seliunin did not carry his logic far enough in terms of the despotic tendencies of the NEP; but this was his own interpretation. His only substantive error, again, was that he ascribed the proper understanding of "bureaucratism" to Bukharin, charging Lenin with advocating a more despotic variant of the NEP. As we have seen, both Lenin and Bukharin had inclinations to both repression and liberalization. But because of Stalin's thorough obfuscation of the history of Marxist thought, Seliunin, Stephen F. Cohen, Donny Gluckstein, and many others can be forgiven that oversight.

Thus, without intending to do so, Seliunin labeled Gorbachev a Stalinist. For anyone who would try rid the Soviet system of its more extreme repressive features yet retain any part of the Leninist order in fact preserved its essence, and it would return to its mature form just as an acorn grows into an oak tree.[69] While Seliunin was committed to perestroika and was a defender of socialism, therefore, he had come to the point where he could no longer advocate the sort of perestroika that Gorbachev had in mind. Only the Soviet bureaucrats, he maintained, had a vested interest in the system as it was.[70] Indeed, Seliunin was not the only one to arrive at such conclusions. The year 1988 was one in which the transformations of Soviet society in all areas indicated that people from all walks of life could perceive the same faults in the system that Seliunin did, and generally

---

[69] Seliunin asserted this symbiosis of Leninism and Stalinism as noted earlier, in describing Lenin's understanding of NEP as akin to Preobrazhenskii's. This idea was elaborated later by Aleksander Tsipko in his Is Stalinism Really Dead? The Future of Perestroika as a Moral Revolution, translated by E. A. Tichina and S. V. Nikheev, (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1990).
[70] Seliunin, "Istoki," pp. 188-189.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

they were not nearly so knowledgeable as he was about either their country's history or Marxism.

E. The 19th Party Conference and the Economy

As if Gorbachev did not have enough to concern him already, the economic performance of the USSR was in serious decline by the middle of 1988. The "Basic Provisions" of 1987, as predicted by specialists, had not produced the results necessary to validate perestroika. As Marshall Goldman put it, "Even if [Gorbachev] had an ideal program [in mid-1988], he would have had a great deal of difficulty redressing his past mistakes.[71] Glasnost' had done much to make those mistakes known, along with deep systemic shortcomings that would not easily be rectified. The XIX Party Conference, held in the summer of 1988, was a major step toward what Gorbachev seemed to consider to be the solution: if the "Neo-NEP" were to flourish, the system had to be changed in a way that provided for state guidance of the economic creativity of individuals and cooperatives as opposed to state interference in the entire economic process. This was a delicate operation in the current Soviet political climate. An attempt to eradicate the system and replace it, as Seliunin suggested, might lead to anarchy and the collapse of the Soviet Union, whereas not enough decisiveness would entrench Gorbachev's opponents in the apparat and could derail perestroika.

[71] Marshall Goldman, What Went Wrong With Perestroika (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1991), p. 128.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

During 1987 and 1988 the nature of Soviet economics began to become clear to the Soviet public and, perhaps, many Soviet politicians as well.[72] A cardinal principle of socialism was the labor theory of value, which assumes that the amount of labor put into making a product was it what gave it its relative worth. This reasoning, while based in sound Marxism, was fraught with difficulty. For example, if one spends one hour producing a pottery bowl and another spends one hour making a gold ring, do the two products have the same value? Because of the labor theory of value Soviet prices were typically fixed at cost, with some prices being subsidized. Difficulties arising from ideological strictures were manifest in Soviet economic science, as well: despite glasnost', because of faulty Soviet economic methodology journals of economic theory and statistics were the least informative sources about the problems of Soviet economics. Better information could be had from literary journals.[73]

While Gorbachev's reforms had done much in terms of promoting new forms of economic organization, only partial headway was realized. The number of cooperatives and the private sector grew rapidly, and the May 1987 Law on Individual Labor Activity and the March 1988 Law on Cooperatives[74] helped to bolster the legal status of the cooperatives vis à vis the state sector.[75] Institutionally, a "mixed economy," as had been

---

[72] Goldman, ibid., claims that even Gorbachev, when he questioned Andropov about whether the Soviet Union had a budget deficit, was denied access to any information. In 1985 Boris Gosteev, then Minister of Finance, claimed a surplus of R4.1 billion; but in 1988 he admitted that there had been in 1985 a deficit of R37 billion. (At that time, this was about $59 billion.)

[73] These issues are covered in a lucid and interesting fashion in Alec Nove, Glasnost' in Action: Cultural Renaissance in Russia, (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 191-223.

[74] The provisions of this legislation were highly reminiscent of NEP-era prescriptions for private economic activity. Persons were permitted to work in "cottage-industries" and to hire out their own labor under specified conditions.

[75] Judith Thornton, "The Perils of Perestroika," Mel Gurtov, ed., op cit., pp. 203-218; pp. 206-208.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

characteristic of the NEP and promoted by Bukharin, was emerging. But as long as prices were state-controlled, there would be little incentive for people to make any kind of investments. This was not lost on the Communists. As the XIX Party Conference approached, they tried to come to grips with the growing crisis, but they preferred to be oblique in phrasing the problem:

> The main issue in the current situation is the real contradiction in the present stage of perestroika in that the economy is at a turning point in which measures taken to rationalize it do not always yield an effect, a visible result. And this must be considered in all areas of Party work, political, organizational and ideological.[76]

Pressure was building rapidly for the establishment of at least a limited market economy, but the state clearly wanted to retain its guiding role. Gorbachev turned to Academician Leonid Ivanovich Abalkin for advice over the first few months of 1988. Abalkin, in fact, gradually supplanted Aganbegian as Gorbachev's main economic adviser.[77] The reasons for this are not clear, but given subsequent events it seems that Gorbachev valued the calculated temperament that seemed to moderate Abalkin's often daring reform proposals. Some stability was needed in the midst of systemic upheaval if the Soviet Union were to weather the crises it faced. Abalkin's name would very soon become a household word; he was known for his candor about economic issues. Eventually he would be a key participant in the debate over how to implement a market

---

[76] Nikolai N. Sliun'kov, "Perestroika i partiinoe rukovodstvo ekonomikoi," Kommunist 1988 65(1, January):11-26; p. 15.
[77] Archie Brown, The Gorbachev Factor (Oxford, 1996), p. 148.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

economy under socialism. But for the time being the question of introducing a market economy was postponed.

The XIX Party Conference of June 1988 was the first such gathering since 1941, but much more than that made it unusual; it was truly extraordinary in its attempts at sweeping change. Gorbachev and the seventy-odd delegates called for major changes in services such as housing, medicine, and education, as well as legal reform. At the same time, however, Gorbachev emphasized the continuity of current proposals with the directives of the XXVII Congress. Little was actually achieved at the Conference in terms of concrete institutional change. Nevertheless, it had profound long-term consequences.

The economy was the main focus at the Conference. For our purposes the most important proposed economic changes were the strengthening of the cooperative movement and the institution of "lease brigades" in agriculture. Central to both measures was the conviction that individual economic initiative and socialism were entirely compatible. Cooperatives and the lease, of course, had existed in Imperial Russia; but both institutions had precedents in Soviet practice as well. Under the NEP cooperatives were allowed to enter into lease arrangements whose stipulations were defined by the Bolshevik government.[78] The idea of the lease, however, would play an especially important role in the struggle to maintain socialism in 1989 and 1990, as property

---

[78] For the context of these relationships under the NEP see Alan M. Ball, Russia's Last Capitalists: The Nepmen, 1921-1929 (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 22, 130.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

relations underwent fundamental changes in the USSR. An old Gorbachev associate from Stavropol', A. A. Nikonov, was instrumental in promoting the transformation of agriculture in this stage of perestroika, drawing heavily on the work of the NEP-era Soviet economist Chaianov, whom he acknowledged as his "inspiration for dealing with the problems of individual incentives and the organization and management of farm services." Nikonov believed that Gorbachev and Chaianov were of like mind in their attempts to unite the entrepreneurial (khoziaiskoe) attitude of the laboring peasant with the technological and economic advantages of large scale production based on the attraction of the peasantry into cooperatives.[79]

The purpose of the Conference was to deal with the Soviet crisis, and in the minds of most in attendance that crisis was the failing economy more than anything else.[80] But the methods used to effect the proposed reforms were heavily political. The Conference was a showcase of glasnost' which Gorbachev used against conservative opponents. Speakers denounced Soviet politicians for incompetence or abuses and called for their demotion or removal while the latter sat listening to them, and for the first time the Soviet populace could watch all of this on their television screens.[81] Among those so shamed were Andrei Gromyko and Viktor Solomentsev. But a far more important target was

[79] Don Van Atta, "Theorists of Agraraian Perestroika," Soviet Economy, 1989 (1, January-March):70-99; p. 81. Nikonov, of course, was only one of many in the Gorbachev era who appreciated the contributions of the pre-Soviet and early Soviet non-Bolshevik Russian economists. Bukharin had been thoroughly acquainted with them as well. But extensive analysis of their views is beyond the scope of this work.
[80] Herbert S. Levine, chairman, "The 19th Conference of the CPSU: A Soviet Economy Roundtable," Soviet Economy 1988 (2, April-June):103-136; and "The Aftermath of the 19th Conference of the CPSU," Soviet Economy, 1988 (3, July-September):181-222, together provide a good overview of the Conference and its impact.
[81] This observation was offered by Jan Vanous at the second Soviet Economy roundtable, p. 185.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Egor Ligachev,[82] who, it might be said, was like Nina Andreeva in terms of how he felt about his principles.[83] Gorbachev felt that he had to make room for effective cadres, and soon, if perestroika was to endure.

The Conference marked the beginning of real democratization of the Soviet political system, with more separation between the Government and Party administrative apparatuses and emphasis on local over central government. "Key policy decisions...adopted at the Nineteenth Party Conference...envisaged the conversion of the soviets into 'genuinely working organs,' the establishment of their effective control over the executive machinery from top to bottom, and the restriction of the party's role to overall policy development."[84] This idea, which would be given further impetus with the revival of the old slogan, "All power to the soviets!" in early 1989, was at the heart of Gorbachev's thinking on domestic politics. Faith in the potential of local Party organs would prove to be his main hope for holding the Soviet Union together in its worst crises of 1989-1991.

While one may readily agree with Jerry F. Hough's observations that the Conference was dominated by Gorbachev and that he scored significant advances in setting the stage for the removal of Gromyko and replacing Ligachev with Georgy

---

[82] Baruch A. Hazan, Gorbachev and his Enemies: The Struggle for Perestroika (Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press, 1990), pp. 54-79, passim. Ligachev, of course, was not always at odds with Gorbachev; but he was much more inclined to adhere to ideological principle as he understood it, i.e., as defined by the system before the advent of perestroika.

[83] Nina Andreeva, "Ne mogu postupat'sia printsipami," Sovetskaia Rossiia, March 13, 1988. Andreeva's article, which appeared with the support of Ligachev, defended Marxist ideological principles against what conservatives regarded as unacceptable in perestroika and became a sort of touchstone of conservative thought.

[84] T. H. Rigby, The Changing Soviet System: Mono-organisational Socialism from its Origins to Gorbachev's Restructuring (Aldershot, Hants, England: Edward Elgar, 1990), p. 221.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Razumovskii, in retrospect it is difficult to concur completely with Hough's assessment that "on the surface at least, the Conference did not accomplish one major aim." Hough states precisely what Gorbachev's aim was on the same page: "[T]he obvious reason for the decision to hold the first party conference in 47 years was to change the party rules and to change some 15-20 percent of the voting members of the Central Committee."[85] Yet Hough seemed disappointed. His argument was that the system as it was had all of the political capability to implement the needed reforms; Gorbachev was merely altering it for his purposes. Moreover, Hough felt, even the changes in the Party rules were superfluous: how "in heaven's name" could Gorbachev expect the future XXVIII Congress, a body with more authority, to be bound by the revisions passed by the XIX Conference?[86]

The fact that the developments at the Conference were not all caprice on the part of Gorbachev, and that he actually saw it as an event that strengthened Soviet socialism ideologically, is proven by Gorbachev's reaction to Abalkin's speech at the Conference. Abalkin embarrassed Gorbachev by claiming that "perestroika had not achieved much thus far and that no economic breakthrough had taken place."[87] Abalkin's point was obvious: he wanted things to move much more quickly in terms of economic reform. Gorbachev understood Abalkin's concern, of course; but some remarks he made about the

---

[85] Jerry F. Hough, "The Politics of the 19th Party Conference," Soviet Economy 1988 (2, April-June):137-143; p. 139.
[86] Ibid., p. 140.
[87] Brown, op. cit., p. 148.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

speech in a secret Politburo meeting held soon afterward were most telling about how he viewed the matter:

> Our scholarship has taken on the interesting position of being a critical court. But the ideological aspect of this question must also be borne in mind.
>
> I see that some [academics; in this case, specifically, L. I. Abalkin] would like to try to jump, to make a leap, a somersault. Let them somersault themselves, but they cannot do that with the country. That's why we have to make a special effort to underscore the ideological question. We need to ground all measures of perestroika ideologically, as defined and confirmed by the Conference in its resolutions. This is the basis we need to develop this grounding from; we need to work around these guidelines. Some people don't understand this and want to demonstrate their opposition to the Conference.[88]

From this there can be little question that Gorbachev's position at the Conference all along had been to strengthen the vitality of Soviet socialism. Hough's position, however, is understandable since he did not have access to Gorbachev's statement. How else to explain the bizarre developments at the Conference? In my view, the answer lies in Gorbachev's profound belief in socialist democracy. Only under socialism was true democracy possible, and only with it could the Soviet Union be expected to overcome bureaucratic stagnation and effect real economic recovery. The old system, which was flawed because of its foundation in an improper understanding of socialism, had to be changed fundamentally. By the time of the XXVIII Congress this would be clear, but no

[88] Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza, "Zasedanie politburo TsK KPSS, 28 iulia 1988 goda," pp. 626-627, Tsentr khranenia sovremennoi dokumentatsii, Moskva (TsKhSD), fond 89, opis 42, delo 21, pp. 1-2. This document is especially interesting because it was labeled "top secret," and was the only copy thereof, being the working copy of the minutes of the Session. Unfortunately, not all parts were made available to me.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

time could be wasted. The process of implementing the changes needed to be started as soon as possible to make recommendations available for adoption by the Congress.

However, Gorbachev's political measures backfired. In its last years the Soviet polity did not develop toward a new kind of socialism but away from Party control. Moreover, socialist economics were quickly rejected in the midst of economic collapse. Gorbachev's faith in the individual as the vehicle for the realization of true socialist ideals was tested severely after mid-1988. Predictably and ironically, in the crisis of 1990-1991 he chose to respond by attempting to tighten central control through what remained of the Party apparatus.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER V

FREE INSTITUTIONS AND THE REJECTION OF SOVIET SOCIALISM, 1989-1991

A process of disintegration of Soviet politics and society began in 1988 with the XIX Conference of the CPSU. By 1989, and certainly by 1990, there were very few in Soviet politics who seemed to care much about ideological constructs. In the midst of economic crisis there was rapid abandonment of socialist economics in favor of a market economy. Democratization of Soviet society had led gradually yet quickly by 1990 to a situation in which the rule of law was beginning to acquire a meaning in the Soviet context akin to that in countries with legal systems based in English law. This process was demonstrated most clearly by the rapid development of private property in republics that had declared autonomy or independence, as in the Baltics. Since the Baltics, in particular, maintained their ties with Russian reformers, this development had further destabilizing effects on the union. Currents in economic and legal reform found a confluence in the Shatalin Program of August 1990, which Gorbachev ultimately rejected. In his attempt to reassert control over Soviet society after August 1990 Gorbachev hoped to save the Soviet Union, relying on what was left of the Party apparatus; but disintegration had already progressed too far.

A. The Institution of Economic Freedom: Socialism Versus the Market

Economic grievances were both longstanding and acute. The official ideology was directly attacked in a way that called for not only economic changes but also political transformations necessary to secure economic and personal freedoms. The efforts of the economist Larisa Piiasheva in this regard were most illustrative of the issues at hand. In

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

May 1987 the editors of Novyi Mir published a letter by Piiasheva, under the pseudonym "L. Popkova," entitled "Where is the Grass Greener?" [Gde pyshnee pirogi?].[1] Piiasheva declared flatly that the choice in economic policy was clear:

> To me that combination of words [market socialism] is absurd. Where there is socialism there is no place for the market and the liberal spirit and, I repeat, there cannot be. I extend my conviction to the present efforts to base the economy on the consumer wave [na volnu potrebitelia]. The law of valuation [stoimost'] cannot function advantageously [s pliusom] in the conditions of a planned economy. Socialism and the market are incompatible.[2]

In an interview given two years later in Komsomolskaia Pravda, Piiasheva asserted that although much had changed in the USSR her declaration was even more relevant.[3] She debunked notions that the Soviet Union had not yet built "real" socialism but was merely hampered by distorted forms of it, and if only the right variant were discovered, it would function as expected. She preferred a rule-of-law state with a system directed "first and foremost at protecting the individual from the state, and not the opposite."[4] She attacked doctrinaire Leninists, charging that they simply declare their belief in Leninist socialism and that they feel that they need no other proof. She defended herself from the charges of non-dialecticalism and dogmatism by maintaining that juggling the facts does not constitute dialectics. There could be no compromise between the market and socialism, not even in theory:

---

[1] L. Popkova, "Gde pyshnee pirogi?" under rubric, "Iz redaktsionnoi pochty," Novyi mir 1987 (5, May):239-241. Piiasheva employed a pseudonym because at that time such views as she expressed here were still politically volatile.
[2] Ibid., p. 240.
[3] I. Svinarenko, "Ekonomist Larisa Piiasheva: Obeshchaniami syt ne budesh'...kontseptsii svetlogo budushchego net mesta v ser'eznoi nauke," Komsomol'skaia pravda, May 25, 1989, p. 2, col. 1.
[4] Ibid., col. 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> Today we are in an era of democratic socialism, and we put Lenin down as a "marketeer," [rynochnik] remaining silent about how many curses he directed against money and the market and how passionately he battled against the ethos of capitalism.[5]

When questioned about whether she thought there should be a direct return to capitalism, Piiasheva replied that it was necessary to avoid completely the use of ideological jargon. "You cannot judge every practical step to see whether it does or does not correspond to 'our principles.'"[6] To her mind, there were not just two systems but a great many varieties of both "socialism" and "capitalism." What was needed to revive the economy was the resolve to take the requisite practical measures and assume responsibility for performance.

Of course, not all economists were so pessimistic as Piiasheva with respect to the prospects for Soviet socialism by 1989. However, they clearly recognized and criticized some of the same shortcomings of Soviet economic policy that Piiasheva did. The economist Pavel G. Bunich, corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences, enumerated some of the standard explanations for Soviet economic sluggishness. One was inefficient management, or management forced to act at variance with reform efforts because of draconian laws under which it must operate. Another, which Bunich claimed was the focus of most concern and had been discussed for several years already, was the bureaucratic nature of the ministries and the impact of this on economic initiative. Bunich also noted the tendency to look to the NEP as a model, though he did not attach

---

[5] Ibid., col. 4.
[6] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

any particular significance to this from a philosophical standpoint: "Some people believe...that our people have lost the great qualities of enterprise which still used to function fully under the New Economic Policy. It is possible that it really was easier for [people under] the NEP."[7] But while he did not consider the ideological implications of the NEP he did extol what he regarded as the versatility inherent in Soviet historical experience. Bunich asserted that the role of economic science under perestroika was to provide expertise in the innovation of economic policy. The Soviet Union, he maintained, was the birthplace of not only the flawed Stalinist model but also the NEP, to which the experience of socialism's greatest success so far, China, could be traced.[8] While he praised the effectiveness of Soviet economic science in its capacity to identify and to confront the deficiencies of the past, he maintained that more was needed in order to animate the economy. Bunich proposed the device of the lease as a method of combining both individual and state interests.[9] He supported wholeheartedly Gorbachev's intention of setting up an economic reform committee attached to the Congress of Peoples' Deputies and the government, as a way of propelling the central economic bodies to take decisive action on reforms.[10] Bunich's treatment of the NEP legacy was similar, therefore, to Gorbachev's approach in November 1987. While he

---

[7] V. Liubitskii, interview with P. Bunich, "Pochemu reforma buksuet? Otvechaia na otkrytoe pis'mo," Pravda, June 5, 1989, p. 4, cols. 1 and 2.
[8] Ibid.
[9] With respect to the idea of leasing Gorbachev was very much in agreement with Bunich. In the late 1980s Gorbachev supported both leasing of agricultural land and free enterprise under the principle of "socialist management." See Archie Brown, The Gorbachev Factor (Oxford: 1996), pp. 144-147, passim.
[10] Liubitskii, loc. cit. Bunich later served on the State Committee on Economic Reform, which was affiliated with the new Supreme Soviet that was elected by the Congress of Peoples Deputies. He also became chairman of the USSR Union of Leaseholders and Entrepreneurs.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

appreciated what NEP ideas had accomplished in terms of the Chinese socialist experience as he understood it, what he was really lauding was the versatility of Soviet socialist thought.

Bunich was in many ways to Piiasheva as John Maynard Keynes was to Milton Friedman. Piiasheva advocated the repudiation of "socialism" and the "reign of the market," as it were, in order to allow people to be motivated by their true economic interests. Bunich promoted the lease in order to further the interests of both the individual and the state, which he viewed as interdependent. His appeal was more to the social interests of both. In promoting leasing Bunich raised the issue of individuals having a stake in the means of production. Obviously, this was also a key factor in Piiasheva's position, though ownership certainly goes further than leasing. In a sense, however, Bunich's concept of what motivated individuals was more humanistic than Piiasheva's. He seemed to think that more than just the possibility of monetary gain was needed to inspire production.[11] This set Bunich--and Gorbachev--apart from those whose views were similar to Piiasheva's. Ultimately, the leadership would adopt some variations on this theme, rejecting views similar to Piiasheva's as anarchistic. This was only natural. They could not be expected to deny themselves a role and surrender completely to "the market."

There were nevertheless problems inherent in this approach as well. In making the point that workers had a right to a stake in the means of production at all, the

---

[11] As much is apparent from the present interview, but see also Bunich's "Panorama perestroiki," Nauka i zhizn', 1987 (6, June).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

advocates of leasholding were making a significant concession. Though leased property is not owned, for the term of the lease it is under the control of the lessee. What Bunich was proposing, therefore, went beyond economics and into the sphere of politics. Within a year the concept of ownership would be developed significantly further and would become the crux of debates in economic policy. The notion of ownership ultimately would call into question the basic foundations of the Soviet regime.

The ideology was further discredited by reexaminations of the concept of khozraschet in 1990-1991. During 1990 a group of scholars led by N. Ia. Petrakov studied the relationship of NEP and khozraschet, and they arrived at a most disturbing conclusion from the standpoint of perestroika:

> The classical NEP has already sown seeds of doubt as to the effectiveness of an economic system based in industry. But it has also engendered illusions about the possibility of solving economic problems through organizational changes which do not touch the main entities of central administrative management. The very creation of a state-monopolist industrial sector of the system which gradually adapted instruments of money and credit to the requirements of management, in our opinion, deliberately determined the fate of the economy as a whole over the long term.[12]

This study argued persuasively that even during a time when Soviet socialism was not regarded as despotic its architects were already installing dictatorial controls in the economy. Thus, the notion of the Soviet system as having inherent potential for democratic development was seriously undermined. Moreover, this conclusion argued

[12] N. Ia. Petrakov, et. al., eds., Nep i khozraschet (Moskva: Ekonomika, 1991), p. 26.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

against any notion of retaining the current state apparatus in the development of a market economy, though Petrakov did not go so far as to say so.

Criticism of the economy, however, certainly did not stop at systemic shortcomings. Already by 1989 Leonid Abalkin was declaring the gravity of the Soviet economic crisis and enumerating some of the major reasons for it:

> To leave the stagnation of the past means to become free from firmly implanted mass illusions. First is the illusion that everything is OK, that it's enough merely to tighten the screws [to correct the situation]. Let's be honest with each other: everything is not OK. First of all, we've forgotten how to work. But what's even worse is that we do not realize it. We have not realized what a national tragedy it is... The gap in education, in culture is like a gap in generations. Physical acceleration will not repair this gap. It will take millions of entirely different workers....There is no class of masters, owners. There is no quality of the mass. I mean managers, economists, and financiers. Our journalists propose to make banks the nerve centers of the economy. But do we have even ten people in the country who really understand banking policy, for example?...It is necessary to train managers....This will take more than one decade.[13]

The regime was slow to respond to this urgent call, but finally in May 1990 a decision was taken to form a working group of the country's leading scholars and specialists. The agreement was reached between President Gorbachev and Yeltsin, as well as the heads of government of the USSR and the RSFSR, N. I. Ryzhkov and I. S. Silaev, respectively. The purpose of this group was to draw up a concerted concept of an all-union program to establish a market economy "in essence as the basis of the new Union treaty." The Commission's heads, Academician A. G. Aganbegian and Professor N. P. Shmelev, were shouldered with the burden of submitting criticisms and

---

[13] Abalkin, Komsomol'skaia pravda February 8, 1989, quoted in Boris Rumer, "The 'Abalkanization' of Soviet Economic Reform," Problems of Communism 1990 39(1, January-February):74-82; p. 75.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

recommendations to the government on its economic proposals by August 15; and by September 1 the Supreme Soviet was charged with submitting to the parliament a specific program for steps to be taken for the transition to a market economy.[14]

Even so, as much as the government program of May might have encouraged initiative, it would still be subject to ratification by the president's group, headed by Gorbachev and Yeltsin. N. I. Ryzhkov, at a joint meeting of the Presidential Council and the Council of the Federation, declared that the report to the Supreme Soviet should be characterized "not with numerous versions of a program of transition to the market--the Ryzhkov version, the Yeltsin version, the Nazarbaev version--I am speaking hypothetically--but with a single concerted action program."[15] Abalkin was confident, however, that the process of working out the program would not be dominated by centralist tendencies, both because of the fact that debate was still active in the Supreme Soviet and the Presidential Council, and that after being reworked by these bodies the program would be discussed nationally. Moreover, Abalkin pointed out, the moves toward sovereignty of several republics since discussion of the May program might be of even greater significance.[16] These movements would obviously have a strong impact on the Union treaty, of which the economic program was intended only as a basis. Rights

---

[14] Iu. Rytov, Interview with L. I. Abalkin, "Na puti k rynku: Kak budem zhit' zavtra?" Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik, 1990 (33, August):1, 3; p. 3, cols. 1 and 2.
[15] Ryzhkov, quoted in Rytov, op. cit., p. 3, col. 2.
[16] Ibid., col. 3. Abalkin could not have been more on the mark. Though the exact date of this interview is unknown, it was probably given in mid-July, when it was clear that movements toward autonomy were gaining momentum. Over the summer there were several steps taken toward freedom on the part of many groups. The RSFSR Supreme Soviet declared "sovereignty" on June 8, asserting that its laws superseded those of the USSR Supreme Soviet; a law on freedom of the press was passed on June 12. Ukraine declared its sovereignty on July 16; Belarus on July 27; Turkmenistan followed suit on August 22, and Tajikstan on August 25.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and responsibility, Abalkin noted, are indivisible. The extent to which the republics assumed rights vis à vis the all-union mechanism would determine the level of their respective responsibility for the corresponding range of problems.[17]

At the same time (May 1990) some members of the Council of Peoples' Deputies met informally to discuss their views concerning a regulated market economy. Taking part in the discussion were people who had made comparisons of perestroika to the NEP: Bunich, Gennadii Lisichkin, and Nikolai Shmelev, as well as Otto Latsis, Vasilii Seliunin and Aleksandr Tsipko.[18] This was only one of many such discussions going on at the time. What made this meeting significant were the participants in it, as well as the topics discussed. At issue was how serious the intentions of the government were and whether a transition to a regulated market economy was really feasible. It was noted that the old order was being preserved in defense, science and other areas. Denationalization (razgosudarstvlenie)[19] of the economy was not believed to be taking place at anywhere near an acceptable rate. The participants generally agreed that it was not clear how the market could be expected to flourish when there was no real basis for the establishment of free enterprise.[20] Seliunin asserted, "People are constantly emphasizing the growing independence of enterprises, when what we should be talking about are changed ownership relations."[21] Tsipko agreed; to violate the laws of the market would be to

[17] Ibid.
[18] V. Romaniuk, "Rynok: Medlenno ili nemedlenno," Izvestiia, May 18, 1990, p. 2.
[19] One scholar insists that this term is best translated as "privatization." Philip S. Hanson, "Property Rights in the New Phase of Reforms," Soviet Economy 1990 6(2, April-June):95-124; p. 97.
[20] Romaniuk, op. cit., p. 2, col. 1.
[21] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

move toward a totalitarian system.[22] Shmelev countered that one must not overlook the negative aspects of market economics, among them the ballooning in unemployment rates and the corresponding problems of social insurance.[23] But Bunich, in a refinement of the position he held in the middle of 1989, stated the matter most pointedly: "We have recognized the priority of universal human values in science, culture and the ecology; but in economics we do not wish to recognize it." Again, he promoted the idea of the lease as an effective device for the transfer of ownership of the means of production, which was essential, in his mind, to economic progress.[24]

Latsis noted that a large segment of the population was opposed to the transition to a market economy, so the problem in his mind was political rather than economic.[25] What, then was holding up the transition? As the Izvestiia correspondent put it:

> No one in our country has any experience in managing a market economy today, and the spirit of enterprise has also been eroded. The idea of absolute equality and the struggle against anyone's enrichment are undermining the roots of the market economy. Yet, it was noted at the forum, what is at issue today is not whether the government will be able to implement its program, nor whether measures of restructuring can be accelerated, but simply whether our state can be saved, as well as the fate of future generations. And here all ideological disguises and predilections must be cast off.[26]

Here was a significant consequence of the loosening of CPSU control over economic entities: people were abandoning notions of "socialism" for the most basic practical reasons.

---

[22] Ibid., col. 2.
[23] Ibid., col. 3.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., col. 1.
[26] Ibid., col. 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The participants in the forum were generally agreed that foreign aid would be necessary to make effective transformation possible. Moreover, they recognized the necessity of establishing the ruble as a realistic market currency if the incentives to privatize were ultimately to bear any fruit.

Monetary reform was a subject of intense discussion in the last years of the Soviet polity.[27] Doctor of Economic Sciences V. Shprygin expressed very plainly the urgency of the matter by the spring of 1990. Whereas shock therapy was an unrealistic option in 1990, he said, the transition to realistic pricing should have started in 1987 or 1988. The cost of the lost time was and would be enormous, he asserted: for every year the old pricing system was in operation, real indebtedness was increasing by R7-10 billion in industry and R5-7 billion in agriculture, according to his estimates.[28]

Although many predicted the eventual demise of the USSR, no one imagined in the middle of 1990 how soon the end would come. The government was confident that its measures would result in economic stability and growth. On June 1-3, Bunich got what he had been waiting for: the Congress of the USSR Union of Leaseholders and Entrepreneurs was held in Moscow. The Congress, with some 800 people attending, pledged to provide practical assistance for those desiring to engage in business. This

---

[27] It must suffice to illustrate this fact briefly here. Although the issue of the stability of the ruble was vital in the minds of economists, their practical formulations are not what concern us. Detailed treatment of monetary reform would take us too far afield. An excellent analysis of the fortunes of the ruble from the nineteenth century to the immediate post-Soviet period is N. P. Zimarina, ed., Russkii rubl': Dva veka istorii. XIX-XX vv. (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Progress-Akademiia, 1994). See pp. 272-314.

[28] M. Gurtovoi, interview with V. Shprygin, director of the Scientific Institute for Price Formation, "Ekonomicheskaia panorama: Tochka zreniia uchenogo: Chto budet c tsenami," Pravda, May 18, 1990, p. 2, col. 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

meant training in business practices, facilitation of contacts with Western business, and establishment of a special bank to extend credit to entrepreneurs. Bunich felt encouraged by both the commitment of those present at the Congress and the wide variety of proposals forwarded for adoption. He declared that "two to three weeks" would be needed to give all of these ideas their due consideration, but maintained that his main concern was that "this, the biggest free sector in the Soviet economy, becomes truly free."[29] The implementation of steps toward a market economy, however, turned out to be more difficult than most realized.

B. The Emergence of Property Rights and the Rule of Law

The repudiation of the abuses of Stalinism which had commenced with the rehabilitation of Bukharin led to a situation in which by 1990, in theory at least, the Soviet Union was committed to the general principles of human rights and genuine national self-determination.[30] During 1990 there were many important developments in the democratization of society and the breakdown of the Party. The most important of these were the reform of the Party Statutes in March 1990 resulting in the Party's loss of its monopoly on political power, and the XXVIII Congress in June 1990 which

---

[29] L. Khataevich and A. Ivanov, interview on "Vremia" newscast, Moscow television service in Russian, 1430 GMT, June 3, 1990; in FBIS SOV, June 12, 1990, p. 62.

[30] Already by November 1989 significant progress had been made in the area of national self-determination: in that month the Baltic republics were given a considerable degree of economic autonomy which it was not deemed feasible to generalize to the rest of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev felt that the Baltic states, because of their advanced stage of economic development, might be able to provide a "test case" for the further development of perestroika in the rest of the USSR. These countries moved quickly to change their socioeconomic and legal structures. By April 1990 the concept of secession from the Union was given real backing with new legislation devoid of the mechanisms which in the past had made this principle a dead letter. See F. J. M. Feldbrugge, Russian Law: The End of the Soviet System and the Role of Law, (Dodrecht, Boston, London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1993), pp. 126-127.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

represented a major defeat for conservatives.[31] These new principles of government would be violated several times before the end of 1991, of course;[32] but already there was an irreversible trend in progress toward greater individual rights, and the artificial federal system which had sustained Soviet power for decades was fundamentally compromised.

By the first months of 1990, as economic freedom was discussed, the institution of private property would assume center stage in the minds of most thinkers on economic issues, becoming an established institution in parts of the USSR. This would have simultaneous national, social and political consequences which were linked philosophically by more general views on the significance of ownership. The main impetus of these ideas came from newly autonomous republics.

In February 1990 the government of the Lithuanian SSR published the "Law of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic on the Fundamentals of Ownership."[33] This law, consisting of twenty articles, was heavily imbued with classical notions of property which combined motives of economic liberty, nationalism and individual freedom with specific limits placed on the state sector. Article 3 provided for state ownership but also for that of "any physical entity or collective of entities." Things that could be owned under Article 5 included,

---

[31] It was also at that Congress that Boris Yeltsin made key progress in his ascendancy, portraying himself as a balanced, reform-minded liberal. Ultimately, Russian nationalism, personified by Yeltsin, would also play a key role in the dismemberment of the USSR; but this is not part of our story.
[32] They had been violated in the recent past as well, the freshest atrocity having been the slaughter of demonstrators in Tbilisi by Soviet troops on April 8-9, 1989.
[33] Lithuanian SSR, "Law of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic on the Fundamentals of Ownership," Sovetskaia Litva, February 22, 1990, pp. 1, 3; translated in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report, Soviet Union (hereafter FBIS SOV), April 17, 1990, pp. 95-97.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> The land, its interior, waters, forests, other flora and fauna and natural resources, buildings, installations, equipment, economic and non-economic complexes, money, securities, items of personal consumption, and other property are objects of the right of ownership.[34]

Article 6 recognized the right of ownership of intellectual property, as well. To be sure, the law proscribed use of property that was at variance with state interests; but it also protected property owners against abuses by other entities, and, to some degree, against state encroachments. State actions against property owners had to be in accordance with court rulings. Theoretically, property owners thus had an opportunity to argue their position. Article 20 guaranteed the right of ownership of property abroad, but also, very significantly, the right of inheritance. This challenged the most fundamental socialist postulates.

Article 1 stipulated quite clearly that the aim of the legislation was to foster incentives to production and to restructure the economic system of Lithuania in order to increase economic effectiveness. A push toward genuine political democracy was not the stated purpose of the law, but democratic political development was concomitant to the economic transformations that it empowered.

In June 1990 Estonia followed the lead laid down by Lithuania in February. Privatization measures began to be worked out on the basis of the 1940 ownership right.[35] In this the Estonians presumably had the cooperation of Anatolii Sobchak, chairman of the Leningrad City Soviet, who in a telegram to Estonian Prime Minister

---

[34] Ibid., p. 96.
[35] Liia Hanni, speaking on Tallinn domestic service in Estonian, 1700 GMT, June 15, 1990; in FBIS SOV June 22, 1990, p. 74.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Edgar Savissar ten days earlier had declared "a readiness for cooperation on all issues without any mediators."[36] All-union authorities, however, were not keen on such sentiments. As the Russians became increasingly angry over what they perceived as rebellion in the Baltics, their disposition turned quite bitter, indeed. Soviet Army Colonel A. Iurkin denounced the Estonian nationalists as "Fascists."[37] Nevertheless, Russian authorities would continue to cooperate with the Baltic states in developing market reforms.

The Russians were forced to deal with the emerging consequences of what political decentralization had unleashed in Russia itself, just as they had to confront the effects of these factors in the other republics. On June 21 Pravda published an interview with economic law professor V. Martemianov and A. Masliaev, professor of civil law. The two lawyers examined the legalities of property distribution. They acknowledged the continuing impact and necessity of public property as it had existed in the USSR up to 1990. However, they regarded the March 1990 law "On Property in the USSR" as especially significant for a number of reasons. The rights of enterprises as legal entities, and the idea that the state could own shares in them, was a major change from previous Soviet practice. Moreover, the new law had given up preferences for the protection of state property. For example, if the state deemed its property to have been unlawfully appropriated, it had only one year to take action to recover it. Before, there had been no

---

[36] Anatolii Sobchak, telegram to Estonian Prime Minister Edgar Savissar, June 5, 1990; cited in Tallinn domestic service in Estonian, 1700 GMT, June 5, 1990; in FBIS SOV June 22, 1990, p. 74.
[37] A. Iurkin, "Iz Tallinna: Slet esesovtsev," Krasnaia zvezda, June 5, 1990, p. 3, col. 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

statute of limitations. All owners, including the CPSU, had "equal protection from now on."[38] The lawyers asserted that the CPSU was covered by this law despite the amendment to Article 6 of the Constitution curtailing its ubiquitous power.[39] Such equal protection was perhaps an indicator of the beginnings of a genuine Rechtstaat.

The Law On Property in the USSR did not go so far as the Lithuanian legislation of February; but it served to strengthen and to legitimize the social transformations, particularly the institution of the lease, that facilitated fundamental reorganization of Soviet society. Despite its continued unwillingness to adopt the notion of private property in the fullest sense, the concessions that Moscow in fact made in this law constituted significant limitations on the regime's prerogatives in domestic policy. The state still tried to maintain its fiat in some non-defense industries, as when it opposed leasing measures taken by the Baltic Steamship Company. One newscaster predicted that the government's months-long dispute with the maritime fleet would be a point of interest for historians of perestroika.[40] In any case, it does constitute an important illustration of the conflicts over changing property relations. Such measures on the part of the government would be met with increasingly less tolerance.

The demands for expansion of property rights intensified in direct opposition to socialist ideological prescriptions. Aleksandr Pavlovich Vladislavlev, a member of the

---

[38] Unattributed interview of V. Martem'ianov and A. Masliaev, "S tochki zreniia prava," Pravda, June 21, 1990, p. 3, col. 5.
[39] Ibid., col. 6.
[40] S. Dukhavin and A. Kuliakov, on "Vremia" newscast, Moscow television service in Russian, 0830 GMT, July 20, 1990, in FBIS SOV, July 25, 1990, p. 78.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Abalkin Commission"[41] and first secretary of the board of the Union of USSR Scientific and Engineering Societies,[42] made the observation that "the development of social science in society is very clearly and directly linked to the efficacy of democratic controls on power," and argued for "a genuinely democratic mechanism for controlling political power."[43] Vladislavlev stated flatly that private property and the institutions and ideas associated with it was "the only way to achieve the highest work productivity, and this is the task which now faces our society."[44] Vladislavlev called past Soviet institutional frameworks and their ideological justifications "meaningless fetishes, meaningless words, disinformation and double standards."[45]

Indeed, most had eschewed ideological constructs entirely by the middle of 1990. The Shatalin plan would be the culmination of efforts to secure private property as a legal, legitimate institution in the USSR as quickly as possible.[46] Mainly because of its

---

[41] In July 1989 Abalkin had been appointed chairman of the State Commission on Economic Reform. It is likely that the Commission took his name because of his charisma: shortly after his appointment references were made to the "Abalkanization" of Soviet economic reform. The adaptation here comes from "Balkanization." Abalkin was called in literally to clean up a Balkan-like situation in the Soviet economy. See Rumer, op. cit., p. 74.

[42] It is important to realize that innovations in reform came from all sorts of sources. The fact that Vladislavlev was an applied engineer did not mean that he could not think about such issues as he presents here, and indeed it was common for people in all fields to offer commentary on perestroika and its significance. This was especially true in 1990-1991, when the depth of the economic crisis was apparent to all and no one really worried excessively about state reprisals for speaking one's mind.

[43] Aleksandr Pavlovich Vladislavlev, Moscow domestic service in Russian, 1500 GMT, April 5, 1990, in FBIS SOV, April 19, 1990, p. 60.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Hanson, op. cit., offers a thorough discussion of the issue of property rights in late Soviet reforms.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

hasty timetable Gorbachev would reject it;[47] but by the autumn of 1990 Gorbachev was on the defensive politically.

Why was there such difficulty in implementing reforms that most in the country had long advocated and supported? The three major players, as it were, in the new Soviet market were the government, producers, and trade unions. As each of these vied for position there was resistance fueled by conflict of interest between these sectors as well as institutional inertia left over from the old system. The difficulties were a natural consequence of the dissolution of the ideological and institutional monism that had prevailed in the country before. Some saw this sort of conflict as a good thing, a way to keep from reverting to the past. It was generally believed to have resulted from the division of powers occasioned by the change in the status of the CPSU. Almost all supporters of reform wished to retain the current changes and continue their course:

> The division of powers, in my view, may be regarded not only as a principle for building civil society but also as the foundation of an effective economy.[48]

This author did not expect that the free expression of different interests in conflict with one another would create an effective market or a responsible democracy at first. But his conviction that such freedom was an essential condition of those developments was obvious.

---

[47] Another reason was that Gorbachev had trouble accepting the idea of private property until the end. He repeatedly asserted in the last months of 1990 that the lease was the only acceptable form of land tenure under socialism.

[48] A. Uliukaev, "Ekonomicheskaia panorama: Polemicheskie zametki: Pochemu stoit machta," Pravda, July 16, 1990, p. 2, col. 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

At any rate, the state was feeling the pressure to adapt. On August 9 Gorbachev published his decree, "On the State Property Fund [fond] of the USSR."[49] At the same time, the Council of Ministers legalized private ownership of businesses and the hiring of labor.[50] Gorbachev acknowledged that the transition to a market economy had important implications for property relations, and he wanted to make certain that state property would be protected as monopolies in production were broken up and the management and utilization of state property was delegated to other parties. The main goals of the decree were to implement the utilization of state property in joint-stock companies and to further measures for privatization. In praising Gorbachev's move Leonid I. Abalkin declared that the purpose of the fund was "to create a real market structure and to create a variety of forms of ownership, without which neither market, nor competitiveness, nor competition can exist and without which everything will be rigidly regimented."[51]

What Abalkin said here was an essential repudiation of one of the most basic postulates of Marxist economics, the idea of socialist competition, in favor of neo-capitalism. He did not come right out and say so, of course, but it is clear that by August 1990 the regime had abandoned most of what was ideologically important to the system before perestroika. But what is important to bear in mind is that Gorbachev retained his

[49] Strictly speaking, the Russian word "fond" as used here referred to a Soviet government organization for the distribution of state subsidies for a particular purpose. In this context, however, it approaches the meaning of the English word "foundation"; but in any case, "fund" is probably the better word to use.
[50] This was merely a legalization of what had been actual practice already for over two years. The May 1988 Law on Cooperatives had allowed these organizations to employ unlimited numbers of non-members under contract.
[51] Quoted in an unattributed telecast ("Vremia"?), Moscow television service in Russian, 1700 GMT, August 9, 1990, in FBIS SOV August 10, 1990, p. 33.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

socialist ideals. His concept of socialism was not grounded in the structure of institutions.

Abalkin did not wish to undermine Gorbachev's government. He did not want to see state property "sold off and squandered for a song."[52] He saw state interests as representing those of the people in the long run. While he expected that there would be close collaboration between the government and its advisers, Abalkin counted on the executive power to exercise resolve in the implementation of decisions taken.[53]

Abalkin's position developed as a result of concrete political realities which, again, exhibited the interdependence of interests in the new order. During the first eight months of 1990 several republics, including Ukraine and the Baltic states, would declare autonomy. Lithuania, which had declared outright independence and whose February law on property was so reminiscent of classical liberal ideas, was nevertheless inclined, like Estonia, to work with the RSFSR on economic issues. Accordingly, the actual implementation of the decision for independence was suspended for the duration of current talks with Russia. V. Aliaskaitis, head of Lithuania's Economic Reform Department in the Lithuanian Ministry of Economics, worked closely with Yeltsin, then chair of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, on the transition to a market economy. It was clear that what made cooperation between the two possible was the acceptance of market economics.[54]

---

[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] M. Berger, "Vyrabatyvaetsia mekhanizm soglasiia," Izvestiia, August 7, 1990, p. 1, passim.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

S. Assekritov, deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers State Commission on Economic Reform, strongly implied that the RSFSR was genuinely moving in that direction and away from central control when he declared that recent legislation by the Council of Ministers and the Supreme Soviet had created optimal conditions for the development of a market economy and that "The fund is not a ministry or a state committee but a new structural formation which will effectively constitute a super-departmental [nadvedomstvennyi] organ of state management."[55] Although the first point of the decree stipulated that the fund's powers were to be determined by the USSR president in consultation with the Council of Ministers, the fund's place in the administrative structure was as yet uncertain. In any case it was clear that its architects wanted to avoid its incorporation into the regular Soviet bureaucracy, where its effectiveness would clearly be stultified.

C. The Implications of Property Rights for Soviet Socialism: John Locke Revisited

John Locke's Second Treatise on Government (1683) was perhaps the most important theoretical impetus to "bourgeois" political systems, beginning with the development of English society after the Glorious Revolution of 1688. In this book Locke developed the triad of individual rights that became the clarion call of Enlightenment political thought: life, liberty, and property. Thomas Jefferson would alter the formula somewhat, to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; but the principle was the same. By the end of 1989 the Soviet polity had made considerable progress with

[55] I. Demichenko, "Monopolist protiv monopolizma?" Izvestiia, August 10, 1990, p. 2, col. 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the first two aspects of the Lockean triad, and effective arguments could be made that this was in keeping with Leninism. But by then most Soviet reformers had abandoned strict ideological conformity in their search for "humane socialism." Philosophers, economists, historians, legal experts and publicists were increasingly calling on the Soviet leadership to accept officially the third Person of the Trinity of the Enlightenment, as it were. Soviet intellectuals recognized the political and social ramifications of property ownership. The most essential consequence of private property is that it sets limits on the prerogatives of government, and in this lay its chief attraction to its Soviet proponents. Moreover, Soviet reformers increasingly insisted that socialism could be reconciled to complete freedom for the individual. As the last two years of the USSR's existence unfolded, Gorbachev and the CPSU struggled for recognition against reformist currents that undermined their justifications for retaining power. What complicated matters for the regime was that its critics were not necessarily anti-Soviet. Nevertheless, most Communists recognized a need for relative freedom if people were to be motivated to produce. Economic necessity was the spur to institutional change.

Despite this, ideology remained paramount to Gorbachev. His fundamental position in economic policy during 1990-1991 remained what it had been up to that time. Everyone agreed that what was needed were significant increases in both production and the quality of goods produced, in order to satisfy domestic needs and make Soviet products competitive both at home and abroad. Disagreements between Gorbachev and his opponents were almost entirely in the ideological sphere. At issue was the question of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

what would really motivate people to produce. Whereas Gorbachev had been a believer in the power of the socialist spirit all along, most of those who split from him after 1989 were convinced that the strongest economic incentive was private ownership of the means of production. Obviously, these notions ran counter to Leninist prescriptions for socialist development. Yet, they represented a very important consequence of the revival of NEP ideology under the conditions of glasnost' and perestroika. Initial concessions had left the door wide open to major systemic changes.

By promoting the institution of private property, especially, the Soviet neo-socialists compromised the last vestiges of CPSU authority and control in all areas of society. Private property was increasingly seen in the Soviet Union as it had been in the West for centuries.[56] It came to be regarded as the key to true social, political and economic independence. Soviet nationalist movements were also bolstered considerably by changes in property relations, and nationalism was a major factor in the dissolution of the USSR.

But was it not true freedom and independence that Leninism, especially restructured Leninism, was supposed to offer? Moreover, did not Leninism assert most emphatically that it was precisely the institution of private property that was at the heart of all forms of social oppression? In the end people left the CPSU in droves, not only because they had lost faith in perestroika but also because they had real difficulty understanding what "socialism" had come to represent. Many, including Boris Yeltsin,

[56] Hanson, op. cit., p. 96, points out that while the myriad of statutes being promulgated at the time might not matter because not all would necessarily be enforced, the ideas behind them did indeed matter.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

recognized the political consequences of these developments and responded accordingly. Who needed Gorbachev? Indeed, who needed socialism?

D. A Program Found and Lost. The Incompatibility of Private Property With Socialism

On September 1 Gorbachev got what he had wanted since May. Academician S. S. Shatalin's economic program was published, right on a deadline that had been set in July. An initial draft had in fact been completed on August 21;[57] that which was presented on September 1, therefore, was presumably refined. It was to take effect beginning December 1, 1990. The Shatalin Group program was in direct accordance with the ideological formulations that had been developed by late 1990 by the Communists, and seemed in every respect to justify the transition to a market with the authors of perestroika at the helm. However, it was never implemented. Gorbachev's ultimate rejection of the plan suggested the urgency of his efforts to retain political control. Gorbachev was certain that the academics had misunderstood their role of maintaining the integrity of the union, and he increasingly took matters of economic policy into his own hands.

For the time being, however, Gorbachev staked everything on what the Shatalin program purported to represent:

> This program could only have appeared under the conditions of perestroika and is entirely in keeping with the policy initiated in 1985. M. S. Gorbachev and B. N. Yeltsin initiated its preparation, and it can only be implemented with their joint support.[58]

---

[57] See Jack F. Matlock, Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 407. The program, dated September 1, 1990, was completed and signed at the Arkhangel'skoe mansion just outside of Moscow.

[58] S. S. Shatalin, et. al., Perekhod k rynku: Kontseptsiia i programma (Moskva: Arkhangel'skoe, August 1990a), p. 3. The signatories of the Shatalin program were S. Shatalin, N. Petrakov, G. Iavlinskii, S.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Shatalin program was based on the principle of taking back from the state and giving back to the people. It also encouraged people to pursue their own economic interests, whatever those might be, engaging in whatever economic activity that might be necessary to realize them. Citizens were guaranteed the rights to freedom of economic activity, freedom of consumer choice and fair prices, and the right to increasing income and social guarantees. Enterprises were also given the right to freedom of economic activity. Republics had the right of economic sovereignty. The center was deemed to have whatever economic rights that were delegated to it by the sovereign republics. In theory there was to be voluntary mutual association with the center coordinating the reform in a way that corresponded most closely to the overall desires of the republics for their economic development. Effort was made to ensure that, where economic integration was necessary, it would be based on voluntary association rather than central fiat. Accordingly, it was proposed that the budgets for repressive organs, such as the defense ministry and the KGB, be reduced by 10% and 20%, respectively.[59] The program asserted the right of society to live better in the present rather than in some distant future. The establishment of a system of social guarantees was therefore promised in 500 days,[60]

Aleksashenko, A. Vavilov, L. Grigoriev, M. Zadornov, V. Martynov, V. Mashchits, A. Mikhailov, B. Fedorov, T. Iarygina and E. Iasin. The essential legal framework of the program was also published as Perekhod k rynku, chast 2: Proekty zakonodatel'nykh aktov (Moskva: Arkhangel'skoe, August 1990b). A synopsis of the program may be found in an unattributed article, "Chelovek, svoboda, rynok: O programme, razrabotannoi gruppoi pod rukovodstvom akademika S. S. Shatalina," Izvestiia, September 4, 1990, p. 3.

[59] Ibid., p. 87.

[60] Ibid., pp. 100-101.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

which was also the time limit for the program as a whole, hence the name "500 Days Program."

"Economic rights" meant the free purchase and sale of assets, as well as international trade by individual republics. That was easy enough to establish. But what was unclear was the nature of the republics' relationship to the center. The drafters of the program could only state that political questions were in the process of being worked out. Indeed, although the theoretical aspects of the program were impressive and well considered,[61] much was left "to be determined" at the republic and local levels, the latter measures being administered by the local soviets. Thus, the Shatalin "program" was to a significant degree more of a declaration of the direction reforms ought to take, rather than a carefully worked out plan of how this was to be accomplished. To some extent this was a logical consequence of the program's democratic character; but the ambiguities caused difficulty all the same. Nevertheless, important guidelines were set forth which stipulated conditions under which republics were to associate:

> A republic's membership in the Union requires that it take on the full range of obligations issuing from the Treaty on the creation of an Economic Union. A state which does not assume its full obligations may, on approval of all members of the Union, be granted the status of associate member, or observer. The members of the Union reserve the right of free withdrawal from it. States which violate the provisions of the Treaty may be excluded from the Union.[62]

---

[61] This was especially true in the areas of land reform and legal mechanisms for socio-economic interaction. An analysis of these issues, however, is beyond the scope of the present work.
[62] Ibid., p. 29.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In other words, the Shatalin-Iavlinskii[63] group was advocating the same principle of participation in the benefits of reform as Abalkin had, stressing the connection between rights and responsibility. Through this principle the program promoted free participation and free competition over central coercion. By this time the political and social structure of the USSR had radically changed, but it was still considered by Gorbachev to have been socialist. On September 11 Pravda published a paraphrase of a telegram that Gorbachev had addressed to the country's political leaders generally at the all-union level. In it Gorbachev made a declaration which revealed clearly how he regarded the recent reform:

> [P]erestroika has entered a decisive phase of qualitative changes in society. It has penetrated deep down and encompasses all spheres of life--economic, political and social. It touches on the fundamental interests of all social groups in the population and includes radical changes with regard to ownership, the institutions of power, and the structure of management.[64]

It will be recalled that the Shatalin program, endorsed by both Gorbachev and Yeltsin, declared itself to be in keeping with everything Gorbachev had done since 1985. Here, Gorbachev was talking about the qualitative changes in perestroika. What did this mean? I believe that this passage can be best understood if we take Gorbachev at his word. Here he is discussing perestroika. There is no mention here of the "vanguard," the "masses," or any other hackneyed ideological term, to be sure; and this has been taken to mean that Gorbachev was no longer a Communist by late 1990 even though he remained

---

[63] Grigorii Iavlinskii was in fact the initiator of the ideas enshrined in this program; Shatalin joined the process later and became its more prominent spokesman, as he was the senior economist.
[64] Unattributed TASS release, "Obrashchenie prezidenta SSSR," Pravda, September 11, 1990, p. 1, col. 1. The title of Gorbachev's telegram was "Ob ukreplenii zakonnosti i pravoporiadka." The date of the telegram was not given.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the General Secretary of the CPSU.[65] This assertion is mistaken, in my view. Gorbachev was simply streamlining the system according to his understanding of socialism.

The problem was that not all agreed with Gorbachev's assessent in the summer of 1990. Apart from practical criticisms of the Shatalin program, such as the absence of a tax structure, there were a variety of social and political interests at stake. The Party apparatchiki had not taken kindly to Gorbachev's diminution of their power in March, and those in the government apparatus also had vested interests. The alternative to the Shatalin program was the government program developed by the group headed by N. I. Ryzhkov. We will not consider it in great detail; it will suffice to contrast it to the Shatalin program. Shatalin sought to promote the natural development of all forms of ownership in the economy where they would be most effective. As we have seen, private property was not something to which the Shatalin group was averse. Another major issue was that there was no serious land reform of any kind in the government program. At the heart of this difference, I believe, was the question of private property and the impact that this would have on the idea of republican sovereignty. Finally, while the government sought to raise prices by decree, the Shatalin group insisted that this must be done using economic sense. First, the ruble must be stabilized, with price guarantees in place for

[65] This point is often made in Brown, op. cit., yet Brown also agrees that, as far as Gorbachev was concerned, the innovations of perestroika were not incompatible with the idea of socialism. In other words, Gorbachev's understanding of socialism held that it should not be defined in terms of its institutions.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

essential items. Then, when prices of other items had been in flux for a while, market forces could be allowed to affect all prices.[66]

Private property was indeed the issue. The government program did not allow for private ownership of land. Not only did the Shatalin program do so, but it also allowed urban dwellers to own private land, too. This was the death blow to the concept of the lease, which had been central to the ideas of Gorbachev and others, such as Bunich, from 1986 to 1990.

However, just as it would have been pointless for the Party to try to reassert the power that it had wielded before March 1990, for the Party to withhold private ownership in the face of what had become of the Soviet Union by the fall of 1990 would have been absurd. At an international conference held in Moscow on September 11, 1990 titled, "The Way to Freedom: New Soviet Potential" Abel Aganbegian put it this way: "The government program for the transition to a market economy does not have a single chance in a thousand to be approved by the USSR Supreme Soviet because it is not consistent with the country's present social, economic and political realities and the confidence of Soviet people in the government has declined dramatically."[67] Cato Institute President Edward Crane, also in attendance at the conference, stated that the transition to a market economy was impossible without the institution of private property and individual freedom of citizens. He charged that Gorbachev and his advisers were seeking to evade

---

[66] V. Rastorguev, interview with Academician S. S. Shatalin, "Akademik Shatalin: Chto den' griadushchii nam gotovit: vopros dnia," Komsomol'skaia pravda, September 11, 1990, p. 1. Shatalin here offers an excellent contrast of the two programs, from which my generalization is abstracted.

[67] Georg Mikhailin, TASS correspondent, Moscow TASS in English, 2110 GMT, September 11, 1990, in FBIS SOV, September 13, 1990, p. 60.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

these words, which was "nothing short of attempts to evade reality." "The time is ripe for sober radicalism, for an immediate and full rupture with the absurd social strategy of the past."[68]

Meanwhile, Abalkin had been pressing on, convinced that his gradualist approach was the only sane way to accomplish this end. However, by the end of August he had clearly become worried that nationalism might undermine the all-union program as republic economies opted for local development at the expense of the union. At a meeting of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions in Moscow on August 25, Abalkin called for an "eighteen-month economic armistice." He declared that at least this much time would be needed to secure the transition to a market economy, and only when this difficult task was complete could work commence on the complex process of developing a Union treaty. Abalkin stated that the ultimate goal was to minimize the functions of the center. In his formulation the central government would be responsible for the maintenance of the Army, the execution of intra-government agreements, and setting up centralized material reserves. In addition, he said, the center was prepared to take upon itself the material support of the development of technology for the agro-industrial complex, as well as the administration of "fuel and other resources." Abalkin emphasized that "[i]n other matters the republics would be free to act as they see fit, to

[68] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

rely on their own potential or to ask the center for assistance in tackling whatever tasks."[69]

This would prove, however, to be a difficult state of affairs to attain. While everyone seemed to support the idea of a controlled market economy in general, few if any were willing to assume a very great risk in the transition. V. P. Shcherbakov, deputy chairman of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, declared flatly:

> Under no circumstances must the transition to the market be achieved at the expense of the working people. If we see that it is going to result in improvements for the people and improvements for the whole of our national economy, then we will support this position and will generally discuss it with the working people so that there will be a broad exchange of opinion at all levels. Once it gains the support of the people and the support of the working people, [sic] then the government can count on its programs being implemented for sure.[70]

Shcherbakov's statement could be read as a warning that foreshadowed the difficulties that the regime would face in economic policy in its final months, but the political leadership seemed optimistic. On September 4 Gorbachev met in the Kremlin with premiers of the republics to discuss the transition to a market economy, where he urged the promotion of the all-union reform process and acceleration of progress on preparations for further and closer cooperation in 1991. The meeting was imbued with the sense that a clear consensus had indeed been achieved with respect to the direction

---

[69] Vladimir Enorov, TASS correspondent, Moscow TASS international service in Russian, 1456 GMT, August 25, 1990, in FBIS SOV, August 27, 1990, p. 63. The theme of the conference was, "The Position of the Trade Unions in Connection with the Transition to a Regulated Market Economy."
[70] V. Bakarinov, Interview with L. I. Abalkin and V. P. Shcherbakov, on "Vremia" newscast, 1700 GMT, August 25, 1990, in FBIS SOV, August 27, 1990, p. 63.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and form that the market transition would take.[71] It is very hard to imagine, however, what unity could be expected in the long term. By this point every all-union institution had been undermined, or at least significantly compromised.

Nevertheless, the hapless Aganbegian was shouldered by Gorbachev with the task of somehow reconciling the Ryzhkov and Shatalin programs. That they were incompatible was obvious to their respective authors, Shatalin and Abalkin, despite the agreement of these two economists on many issues. The difficulty stemmed from the refusal of the Iavlinskii-Shatalin group and the Council of Ministers to cooperate in July 1990,[72] reflected in the institutional differences in the two programs that I have cited above. Again, Gorbachev was trying to obtain the best of two worlds. The Ryzhkov program, naturally, would seek to safeguard state interests, including the preservation of the Soviet Union. This was Gorbachev's goal as well, and in addition he hoped to secure the economic viability that the Shatalin measures seemed to promise. But Gorbachev could not have things both ways. Something had to give.

E. Gorbachev: The Savior of Soviet Socialism?

Gorbachev, however, did not want to accept this. Since March 1990, when Article 6 of the Constitution was supposed to have been repealed, Gorbachev had in fact

[71] TASS correspondents Lev Aksenov and Boris Zverev, Moscow TASS in English, 1510 GMT, September 4, 1990, in FBIS SOV, September 5, 1990, p. 69; also an unattributed TASS broadcast, 1822 GMT, September 4, 1990, in FBIS SOV, ibid.

[72] It was initially intended that the progam be a joint one between the government and the Supreme Soviet elected by the Council of Deputies. But the government, which represented the ministries who had deeply vested interests in the staus quo, was not willing to accept this. Abalkin discusses the sources of disagreement and attempts at resolution in his memoirs, Neispol'zovannyi shans: poltora goda v pravitel'stve (Moskva: Politizdat, 1991), 213-225.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

been trying to strengthen the Party apparatus against the growing chaos. On March 12 the Secretariat issued a decree calling for an end to apathy and disorganization and for ideological conformity to Gorbachev's program all the way down to the local level, declaring that this was important to "the fate of both the country and the Party."[73]

Alarm was being raised in September 1990 by the socioeconomic sector of the CPSU over the serious shortcomings of the economy in various localities around the USSR, particularly the high levels of unemployment thus generated, and the danger that this posed both to the Party and to the stability of the country.[74] The Party, in turn, promised that those "who did not follow central Party directives [in local administration] will be held strictly accountable..."[75]

We see, then, that the Party apparatus was trying to maintain stability from the top down, as it were; and this was in perfect harmony with what Gorbachev was doing publicly.

By forcing the "amalgamation" of the Shatalin and Ryzhkov programs Gorbachev chose the option of attempting to maintain political stability, as against the unpredictable consequences of political freedom via social and economic change. As a result, from late September 1990 through the spring of 1991 there was a backlash against reform

---

[73] Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza, Sekretariat Ts K, "Ob orientirovke partiinym komitetam po voprosu usileniia organizatorskoi raboty po stabilizatsii politicheskoi i ekonomicheskoi obstanovki v sootvetstvii s Programmoi General'nogo sekretaria Ts K KPSS, Prezidenta SSSR," March 12, 1990, Tsentr khraneniia sovremennoi dokumentatsii (TsKhSD), fond 89, opis 20, delo 13, p. 2.
[74] Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza, Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskii otdel Ts K, "O ser'eznykh nedostatkakh v obespechenii ustoichivoi raboty narodnogo khoziaistva v osenne-zimnii period 1990/91 g.g." September 19, 1990, TsKhSD fond 89, opis 20, delo 8, pp. 1-6.
[75] Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza, Otdel sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi politiki TsK, "O khode zakliucheniia khoziaistvennykh dogovorov na postavku produktsii v 1991 godu," October 22, 1990, TsKhSD fond 89, opis 21, delo 41, pp. 1-3; p. 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

generally, and many of his most capable advisers quit his administration before the end of 1990, the best of these being the economist N. Ia. Petrakov and the statesman Eduard Shevardnadze.

This was a major setback for Gorbachev. Petrakov was a vital supporter of the compatibility of socialism with the market, and had a deep understanding of the principles of economic reforms in Eastern Europe that Gorbachev had long admired, particularly the Hungarian New Economic Mechanism and the ideas of some participants in the Czechoslovak reform movement. Shevardnadze had worked with Gorbachev for years and was the architect of New Thinking in practice. This had allowed Gorbachev to translate into reality the principle of changing the Soviet economy from a "war economy," to a "market socialist" one. "New Thinking" was necessary to restore relative international peace, which was also important to economic development.

In the fall of 1990 Gorbachev unwittingly came to the point where Lenin had been just before he died. Gorbachev had hoped to avoid Lenin's quandary, but he could not. He wanted to see the amalgamation of the two economic programs because he was convinced that this was the only way of preserving the union. Gorbachev succumbed to the temptation to assume control: ironically, the Supreme Soviet on September 24 granted him the power to rule by decree for 500 days to effect the transition to a market economy. Though Gorbachev has tried to shoulder Abalkin with most of the blame for the economic program impasse in his memoirs,[76] Gorbachev's own culpability is borne

---

[76] Mikhail Gorbachev, Memoirs, (New York: Doubleday, 1996), p. 383.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

out by subsequent developments, even though it was true that Abalkin strongly supported Ryzhkov.[77]

It was Shatalin, in fact, who perhaps tried the hardest to shore up Gorbachev's credibility as the latter opted for pushing through economic reform by fiat. Shatalin tried to assure foreign observers in late September that the measures taken by Gorbachev were not usurpation, that they would be constrained by law, and that, above all, what was happening was not a reversion to the old system of command economy.[78]

Shatalin's defense of Gorbachev was rewarded with ignominy. By February 1991 Shatalin was beleaguered by Communists from all quarters and blamed for the state of affairs that the leadership found itself in, even though it could easily be argued that his views represented the most balanced affirmation of the Party's highest principles.[79] The Central Committee had officially repudiated the 500 Days program, and Gorbachev breathed a little easier. But Gorbachev had still not made headway in solving any economic problems. It seemed that he was in a weak enough position, so the maximalists launced their coup attempt on August 19, 1991.

---

[77] Condemnation of Abalkin was not restricted to politicians. In the course of a general discussion I had with some academics in the Institute of Economics in the summer of 1996 about economic reform in the Gorbachev era, Abalkin was mentioned by one person. I thought that this would be a good opportunity to discuss the impasse over the 500 Days Program. Abalkin had, after all, been a major figure in the Kronrod circle started in 1965, and many of these ideas were espoused by Petrakov and others who were key theorists in the economics of perestroika. When someone else declared that Abalkin had been a scientist who had sold out science for politics, the assent of the others was indicated by the grim looks on their faces. The atmosphere was quite tense, and I thought it wiser not to pursue the matter.

[78] Unattributed Moscow TASS broadcast in English, 1925 GMT, September 28, 1990, in FBIS SOV, October 1, 1990, p. 52.

[79] For a thought-provoking discussion of the Shatalin tragedy and the meaning of his contribution, see Aleksey Ulyukayev, "Shatalin's Views All-Important for CPSU CC" Moscow News No. 7, February 17-24 1991, p. 6, in FBIS SOV, March 15, 1991, p. 31.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Nodari Simoniia, upon hearing of the coup, immediately contacted Progress publishers and had them dedicate his new book, What We Have Built, to the General Secretary before the printing operation began.[80] The book was in many ways an attempt to argue that the legacy of the "democratic" aspect of the NEP had been vindicated. But by September 1991 the USSR was already irreversibly on its way to becoming something else.

---

[80] Nodari Simoniia, Chto my postroili (Moskva: Progress, 1991). Simoniia related this story with pride; I heard it first in 1994 from his colleague, Igor A. Zevelev. Simoniia also renounced his Party membership on the day of the coup. Chto my postroili is an effort to argue that in fact perestroika succeeded in solving the dilemma of the NEP that we discussed in Chapter II, resurrecting the nascent democratization started by Lenin in the 1920s, overcoming the Stalinist distortion and rebuilding socialism on genuinely democratic ground. But Simoniia and others who had hope in perestroika were in a minority by August 1991, and Gorbachev would not recover.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CONCLUSION

This investigation has focused on a narrow but important aspect of Gorbachev's reforms which helps to explain Gorbachev's policies throughout his tenure. If one could say anything at all about Gorbachev's career it is that he was devoted to socialism all the way through it. He remains so. There is, in my view, no better reason why Gorbachev consistently held that Soviet socialism had failed to learn the socio-economic and moral "lessons" of capitalism, and that this was the reason why by 1985 the Soviet Union was in so much trouble. No, Gorbachev never abandoned socialism.

By the time of the XIX Party Conference Gorbachev had completed the process as a result of which the old system would be dismantled. Mary McAuley has observed that what Gorbachev had done by 1988 would result in the collapse of the USSR and that Gorbachev did not want this to happen.[1] But this should not be taken to mean that Gorbachev was not aware of the political mainstays of the old system and the function that they served. Archie Brown has argued that everything that Gorbachev had done since 1985 was preparatory, though not necessarily deliberately so, to the dramatic democratic changes that ran their course during 1990,[2] and that Gorbachev hoped that the Soviet Union would be held together by "persuasion, rather than old-style Soviet coercion."[3] But it does not necessarily follow from this that Gorbachev was fully committed to democratic principles. Gorbachev was convinced that the union would stay

---

[1] Mary McAuley, Soviet Politics, 1917-1991, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 89.
[2] Archie Brown, The Gorbachev Factor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 160-161.
[3] Ibid., caption of illustration 18, facing page 77.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

together as a matter of course under the Shatalin program, with the precautions offered by supporters of the Ryzhkov program. When it did not, the Shatalin program was abandoned and Gorbachev once again tried to find levers of control to hold the union together. He could not accept that the true democracy that he had unleashed was not working the way he thought that it should, so he resorted to control through local Party organs. He was, therefore, no democrat in the strict sense of that term, however much he might deserve credit for humanistic values.[4]

Gorbachev was, however, true to the word that he had proclaimed in March 1985 and subsequently. When Gorbachev came to office, and as he reiterated in 1987, his aim was to rid socialism of features that were not characteristic of social progress, that is, in the context of the 1980s. He proposed to overcome the characteristics of "stagnation" bequeathed to the Soviet system by the Brezhnev era. While it is certainly true that there was a profound qualitative difference in Gorbachev's policies from 1985 to 1987, and that there were major changes in 1990, his devotion to the cause of Soviet socialism was unswerving, and he even obliquely defended the Stalinist transformation in August 1991 using the same reasoning that he had in 1987. In the "Crimea Speech," given "a few days before the coup," Gorbachev stated that the people of the 1920s had "gone to the limits" and sensed that the country would have to go through a difficult stage for the sake of the "bright future," but they had no experience and were marching toward social objectives

[4] A. S. Cherniaev, of course, would give Gorbachev such credit; but there were others who would not. A noteworthy example of such a person was A. A. Korobeinikov, whose Gorbachev: drugoe litso (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo "Respublika," 1996), offers a revealing look at Gorbachev's darker side.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

they never reached.[5] Stalin, of course, initiated that "difficult stage." Gorbachev encouraged his listeners to stay the course:

> [We need] faith in the cause we have initiated.
>
> For that it is important not to lose our bearings, remain devoted to the socialist perspective and to advance...At the same time we must remember that at the very center of perestroika is the most reliable social safety net. Perestroika will provide people with the opportunity to work and display initiative, will generate powerful incentives for good work. There lies the main basis for real social protection of the individual.[6]

For Gorbachev it is clear that such expressions as "real social protection" or "free development" of the individual were not just Marxist stock phrases. He was profoundly devoted to these ideas. In September 1991 he declared, "I repeat: throughout these years [1990-1991] my goal was to preserve and save the political course of perestroika."[7] When we recall that perestroika applies to Soviet socialism, that can only mean that Gorbachev's goal was to restructure socialism in the USSR, to discard what hindered its development and to infuse it with a new opportunity to develop as it should have all along. Gorbachev, in other words, had tried to solve Lenin's dilemma. The policies that he pursued in 1986 and later were meant not to destroy socialism but to give it new vitality by transforming first the economic and later the political framework under which socialism operated in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev's expectation that he would succeed endured to the very end. When he gave his resignation speech on December 25, 1991, he stressed that he was stepping down because of the political dismantling of the USSR,

---

[5] Mikhail Gorbachev, The August Coup: The Truth and the Lessons (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), pp. 97-98.
[6] Ibid., p. 127.
[7] Ibid., p. 15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

which he felt should have been preserved, or, at the very least, dissolved more democratically than it was. He then enumerated the gains that he felt he had helped to bring about during his tenure. But when he spoke of ideology, he never even implied that socialism as such was the problem. Gorbachev clearly attacked "ideology" in this context as the corrupt system of thinking that had helped to preserve the old socioeconomic and political order.[8] The idea that this was what Gorbachev had in mind is reinforced by a declaration he made nearly five years after his fall from power:

> As far as ideology is concerned, to equate communist and fascist ideology is stupid and absurd. Communist ideology in its pure form is akin to Christianity. Its main ideas are the brotherhood of all peoples irrespective of their nationality, justice and equality, peace, and an end to all hostility between peoples. It is true that communism was used to camouflage a totalitarian regime. But in its essence communism is a humanist ideology, and it never had anything in common with the misanthropic ideology of fascism.[9]

Expressions such as this can only be understood in terms of some consistency of thought. Matlock's recounting of the days immediately after the failed coup attempt depicts a tired, confused and disoriented Gorbachev. Matlock expresses his own dissatisfaction with Gorbachev in that the latter reiterated his devotion to a reformed and proper CPSU at such a politically volatile moment, when he had just been rescued by Yeltsin and others who had no devotion whatsoever to the Party by that time.[10] Matlock's disappointment stemmed from what he regarded as a missed opportunity to

---

[8] Mikhail Gorbachev, Memoirs (New York: Doubleday, 1996), pp. xxvi-xxix, passim.
[9] Ibid., p. 680. Gorbachev completed this work in June 1996.
[10] Jack F. Matlock, Jr., Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union, (New York: Random House, 1995), pp. 595-596.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

preserve the union; he implied that Gorbachev, in his desperation and confusion, was disposed to act stupidly and irresponsibly.

Granted, Gorbachev's state of mind was not optimal. But if we consider the circumstances in a different light, Gorbachev's statements in those critical moments attest to something quite different. I submit that even in the moment of his most severe political crisis, Gorbachev remained true to what mattered to him most of all: socialism. This had been consistently true up to that point as well, even during the period of the most tumultuous political changes after the XIX Party Conference and XXVIII Party Congress.

For decades most defined Soviet socialism in terms of its institutions and concomitant political features. For Gorbachev these characteristics had been important only to the extent that they had been "progressive." Once any socialist institution had outlived its usefulness, it needed to be restructured or replaced. What really mattered to Gorbachev was that socialist practice should be geared to the contemporary needs of socialist progress.

Like Vasilii Seliunin in "Roots," Gorbachev looked to the NEP as an example of a dynamic period in the history of socialism. He drew inspiration from this as well as from his reading of Lenin's last works. But Gorbachev did not advocate a resurrection, as it were, of the 1920s. However, like Lenin he sincerely believed that the system had what it needed to survive and thrive. He recognized Lenin's dilemma and tried to solve it.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Although his effort was a valiant one, it ended in failure: the Soviet polity fell apart. The real lesson of the dilemma of Leninism is that it is insoluble.

The NEP continues to hold an attraction for scholars in Russia, as they try to help their country out of its current difficulties. Since the collapse of the USSR the NEP has been analyzed by economists seeking to facilitate the economic development of Russia today; they recognize that one cannot eschew history.[11] Others have drawn sociological parallels between the NEP and perestroika.[12] Perhaps they will remember the philosophical roots of Lenin's dilemma as well.

[11] S. N. Lapina, et. al., Nep: opyt razgosudarstvleniia ekonomiki i perekhoda k rynku (Moskva: Mezhvedomstvennyi nauchnyi sovet AN SSSR i GK SSSR po narodnomu obrazovaniiu po istorii narodnogo khoziaistva i ekonomicheskoi mysli, 1992).

[12] One such effort is D. Kh. Ibragimova, Nep i perestroika: massovoe soznanie sel'skogo naseleniia v usloviiakh perekhoda k rynku (Moskva: Pamiatniki istoricheskoi mysli, 1997). Ibragimova's study proceeds from the recognition of both the NEP and perestroika as periods in Soviet history when a change of social paradigm was taking place which took into account the agrarian question and its significance for Russia as a whole.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Abalkin, L. I. "Razvitoi sotsializm i formirovanie sovremennogo ekonomicheskogo myshleniia," Kommunist. 1984; 18(December):61-71.

2. Abalkin, Leonid. Neispol'zovannyi shans. Poltora goda v pravitel'stve. Moskva: Politizdat; 1991.

3. Acton, H. B., The Illusion of the Epoch: Marxism-Leninism as a Philosophical Creed. London: Cohen and West; 1962.

4. Afanas'ev, Iu. "S pozitsii pravdy i realizma," [Under rubric "My rodom iz oktiabria"]. Sovetskaia kul'tura. 1987 Mar 21: 3.

5. Afanas'ev, Iu. N., ed. Inogo ne dano. Sud'by perestroiki. Vgliadyvaias' v proshloe. Vozvrashchenie k budushchemu. Moskva: Progress; 1988.

6. Afanas'ev, Iurii. "The Energy of Historical Knowledge," Moscow News. 1987; 2(January 18-25):8-9.

7. Aganbegian, Abel G. "Na novom etape ekonomicheskogo stroitel'stva," Ekonomika i organizatsiia promyshlennogo proizvodstva: EKO. 1985; 16(8, August):3-24.

8. Aksenov, Lev and Boris Zverev. "Moscow TASS in English, 1510 GMT, September 4, 1990," FBIS SOV. 1990 Sep 5; 69.

9. Ambartsumov, E. A. "Analiz V. I. Leninym prichin krizisa 1921 goda i putei vykhoda iz nego," Voprosy istorii. 1984; (4, April):15-29.

10. ---. "Nep i sovremennost," Voprosy istorii. 1988; (9, September):35-38.

11. Andreeva, Nina. "Ne mogu postupat'sia printsipami," Sovetskaia Rossiia. 1988 Mar 13.

12. Aslund, Anders, Gorbachev's Struggle for Economic Reform. Updated and Expanded ed. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press; 1991.

13. Avenarius, Richard, Der menschliche Weltbegriff. Leipzig: Reisland; 1891.

14. ---, Kritik der reinen Erfahrung, Vols. I and II. Leipzig: Reisland; 1888-1890; reprinted 1907-1908.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

15. Avtorkhanov, Abdurakhman. Lenin v sudbakh Rossii: Razmyshleniia istorika. Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Federal Republic of Germany: Prometheus-Verlag; 1990.

16. Bailes, Kendall. "Science, Philosophy and Politics in Soviet History," Russian Review. 1981; (40):278-299.

17. ---. "Soviet Science in the Stalin Period," Slavic Review. 1986; (45):20-37.

18. Bakarinov, V. "Moscow television service in Russian, 1700 GMT, August 25, 1990," FBIS SOV. 1990 Aug 27; (Interview with L. I. Abalkin and V. P. Shcherbakov on 'Vremia' newscast):63.

19. Ball, Alan M. Russia's Last Capitalists: The Nepmen, 1921-1929. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press; 1987.

20. Barford, N. et al., eds. The Challenge of an Open World. Copenhagen: Munksgaard; 1989.

21. Baron, Samuel H., Plekhanov in Russian History and Soviet Historiography. Pittsburgh and London: University of Pittsburgh Press; 1995.

22. ---, Plekhanov: The Father of Russian Marxism. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; 1963.

23. Batkin, Leonid Mikhailovich. "Vozobnovlenie istorii," Afanas'ev, Iu. N., ed. Inogo ne dano. Sud'by perestroiki. Vgliadyvaias' v proshloe. Vozvrashchenie k budushchemu. Moskva: Progress; 1988; pp. 154-191.

24. ---, Vozobnovlenie istorii: razmyshleniia o politike i kul'ture. Moskva: Moskovskii rabochii; 1991.

25. Bazarov, V.; A. Bogdanov; A. Lunacharskii; Ia. Berman; O. Helfond; P. Iushkevich, and S. Suvorov, Ocherki po filosofii marksizma. Sankt Peterburg: 1908.

26. Bazarova, G. B. Finansovyi mekhanizm upravleniia promyshlennost'iu. Predpriiatie--samostoiatel'nost' i otvetstvennost'. Moskva: Finansy i statistika; 1986.

27. Berger, M. "Vyrabatyvaetsia mekhanizm soglasiia," Izvestiia. 1990 Aug 7: 1.

28. Berlin, Isaiah, Historical Inevitability. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 1954. (August Comte Memorial Trust Lectures; 1).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

29. Berman, Ia., Dialektika v svete sovremennoi teorii poznaniia. Moskva: 1908.

30. Bogdanov, A., Empiriomonizm, kniga III. Sankt Peterburg: 1906.

31. Boldin, Valery, Ten Years That Shook the World: The Gorbachev Era as Witnessed by His Chief of Staff. Rossiter, Evelyn, trans. New York: Basic Books; 1994.

32. Boserup, A.; L. Christensen, and O. Natan, eds. The Challenge of Nuclear Armaments. Copenhagen: Rodos; 1986.

33. Brown, Archie, The Gorbachev Factor. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 1996.

34. Bukharin, N. I., Ataka: sbornik teoreticheskikh statei. Moskva: 1924.

35. ---, Historical Materialism: A System of Marxist Sociology. New York: International Publishers; 1925.

36. ---, Teoriia istoricheskogo materializma. Populiarnyi uchebnik marksistskoi sotsiologii. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo Ukrainy; 1923.

37. Bunich, P. "Panorama perestroiki," Nauka i zhizn'. 1987; (6).

38. Bunich, Pavel G. "Novye usloviia khoziastvovaniia: dostizheniia, problemy, perspektyvy," Ekonomika i organizatsiia promyshlennogo proizvodstva: EKO. 1986; 17(5, May):3-20.

39. Carr, E. H., A History of Soviet Russia: The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923, Vol. II. New York: Macmillan; 1952.

40. Carrère d'Encausse, Hélène, The End of the Soviet Empire: The Triumph of the Nations. Philip, Franklin, trans. New York: Basic Books; 1993.

41. Cherniaev, A. S., Shest' let s Gorbachevym: po dnevnikovym zapisam. Moskva: Izdatel'skaia gruppa 'Progress' : 'Kul'tura'; 1993.

42. Cohen, Stephen F., Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography, 1888-1938. Revised ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 1980.

43. ---. "Bukharin, NEP, and the Idea of an Alternative to Stalinism," Cohen, Stephen F., Rethinking the Soviet Experience: Politics and Government Since 1917. New York: Oxford University Press; 1985; pp. 71-92.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

44. Conrad, Joseph, Heart of Darkness: Complete Authoritative Text With Biographical and Historical Contexts, Critical History, and Essays From Five Contemporary Critical Perspectives. 2nd ed. Murfin, Ross C., ed. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press; 1996.

45. Crampton, R. J. Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century. New York: Routledge; 1994.

46. Cynkin, Thomas M. "Glasnost, Perestroika, and Eastern Europe," Survival. 1988; 30(4, July-August):310-331.

47. Danilov, V. P. "Derevnia: put' k sotsializmu. Istoki i uroki kollektivizatsii," Pravda. 1987 Aug 9: 2.

48. ---. "Nep i bor'ba al'ternativ," Voprosy istorii. 1988; (9, September):3-13.

49. ---. "Tret'ia volna," Voprosy istorii. 1988; (3, March):21-24.

50. Danilov, V. P. and S. A. Krasil'nikov. "Opponent 'velikogo pereloma'," Ekonomika i organizatsiia promyshlennogo proizvodstva: EKO. 1988; (3):45-54.

51. Davies, Norman, God's Playground: A History of Poland. Volume I: The Origins to 1795. New York; Oxford: Columbia University Press; Oxford University Press; 1982-1983.

52. ---, God's Playground: A History of Poland. Volume II: 1795 to the Present. New York; Oxford: Columbia University Press; Oxford University Press; 1982-1983.

53. Davies, Paul C. W. God and the New Physics. New York: Simon and Schuster; 1983.

54. Davies, R. W. "Soviet Economic Reform in Historical Perspective," Merridale, Catherine and Chris Ward, eds. Perestroika: The Historical Perspective. London, New York: Edward Arnold; 1991; pp. 117-137.

55. Dawisha, Karen, Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and Reform: The Great Challenge. New York: 1988.

56. DeBardeleben, Joan, The Environment and Marxism-Leninism: The Soviet and East German Experience. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 1985.

57. Demichenko, I. "Monopolist protiv monopolizma?," Izvestiia. 1990 Aug 10: 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

58. Dovring, Folke, Leninism: Political Economy as Pseudoscience. Westport, CT, London: Praeger; 1996.

59. Duhem, Pierre, La théorie physique, son objet et sa structure. Paris: Chevalier et Riviere; 1906.

60. Dukhavin, S. and A. Kuliakov. "Moscow television service in Russian," FBIS SOV. 1990 Jul 25; ('Vremia' newscast 0830 GMT, July 20, 1990):78.

61. Einstein, Albert. "Ernst Mach," Physikalische Zeitschrift. 1916; (17):101-104.

62. Ellison, Herbert J. "Gorbachev and Reform: An Introduction," Lerner, Lawrence W. and Donald W. Treadgold, eds. Gorbachev and the Soviet Future. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 1988; pp. 1-20.

63. ---. "Perestroika and the New Economic Policy," Gurtov, Mel, ed. The Transformation of Socialism. Perestroika and Reform in the Soviet Union and China. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 1990; pp. 21-35.

64. ---. "Russian Agrarian Theory in the 1920s: Climax of a Great Tradition," Ulmen, G. L., ed. Society and History: Essays in Honor of Karl August Wittfogel. The Hague, Paris and New York: Mouton Publishers; 1978; pp. 471-482.

65. Engels, Friedrich. Anti-Dühring: Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science. Peking: Foreign Languages Press; 1976.

66. Enorov, Vladimir. "Moscow TASS international service in Russian, 1456 GMT, August 25, 1990," FBIS SOV. 1990 Aug 27; 63.

67. Fain, L. E. "Gluboko osmyslit' leninskuiu kontseptsiiu kooperatsii," Voprosy istorii. 1988; (9, September):41-44.

68. Fedorenko, Nikolai P. and Vilen L. Perlamutrov. "Khozraschetnye otnosheniia--dinamika i perspektivy," Voprosy filosofii. 1987; 41(2, February):3-16.

69. Feldbrugge, F. J. M. Russian Law: The End of the Soviet System and the Role of Law. Dodrecht, Boston, London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers; 1993.

70. Feuer, Lewis. "Between Fantasy and Reality: Lenin as a Philosopher and a Social Scientist," Eissenstat, Bernard W., ed. Lenin and Leninism: State, Law and Society. Lexington, MA, Toronto and London: Lexington Books; 1971; pp. 59-79.

71. Gabrisch, Hubert, ed. Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 1989.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

72. Galkin, I. S. "Ob effektivnosti nauchnogo potentsiala vuzovskikh istorikov," Novaia i noveishaia istoriia. 1988; (5, September-October):205-207.

73. Garton Ash, Timothy, The Polish Revolution: Solidarity. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; 1984. c.1983 by Timothy Garton Ash.

74. Gati, Charles. "Gorbachev and Eastern Europe," Foreign Affairs. 1987; 65(5, Summer):958-975.

75. Gefter, M. "Rossiia i Marks," Kommunist. 1988; (18, December):93-104.

76. Gluckstein, Donny, The Tragedy of Bukharin. London; Boulder, CO: Pluto Press; 1994.

77. Goldman, Marshall I. "Gorbachev and Economic Reform," Foreign Affairs. 1985; 64(1, Fall):56-73.

78. ---, What Went Wrong With Perestroika. New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company; 1991.

79. Gorbachev, M. S. "Moguchii uskoritel'," Don. 1974; (2, February):3-8.

80. ---. "Oktiabr' i perestroika: revoliutsiia prodolzhaetsia," Kommunist. 1987; (17, November):3-40.

81. ---, Perestroika i novoe myshlenie dlia nashei strany i dlia vsego mira. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury; 1987.

82. ---. "Sel'skii trudovoi kollektiv: puti sotsial'nogo razvitiia," Kommunist. 1976; (2, January):29-38.

83. Gorbachev, Mikhail, The August Coup: The Truth and the Lessons. New York: HarperCollins Publishers; 1991.

84. ---, Memoirs. New York: Doubleday; 1996.

85. Gorinov, M. M. "Al'ternativy krizisy v period nepa (K voprosu o sotsial'no-ekonomicheskikh problemakh vnutripartiinoi bor'by v 20-e gody)," Voprosy istorii. 1990; (1, January):3-18.

86. Graham, Loren R., ed. Science and the Soviet Social Order. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press; 1990.

87. ---, The Soviet Academy of Sciences and the Communist Party, 1927-1932. Princeton: Princeton University Press; 1967.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

88. Grosser, Ilse. "Economic Reforms in Bulgaria," Gabrisch, Hubert, Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 1989; pp. 99-109.

89. Gurtov, Mel, ed. The Transformation of Socialism. Perestroika and Reform in the Soviet Union and China. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 1990.

90. Gurtovoi, M., interviewer. "Ekonomicheskaia panorama: tochka zreniia uchenogo: chto budet s tsenami," [Interview with V. Shprygin, director of the Scientific Institute for Price Formation]. Pravda. 1990 May 18: 2.

91. Haeckel, Ernst, Die Welträsel . Bonn: 1899.

92. Hanni, Liia. "Tallinn domestic service in Estonian, 1700 GMT, June 15, 1990," FBIS SOV. 1990 Jun 22; 74.

93. Hanson, Philip S. "Property Rights in the New Phase of Reforms," Soviet Economy. 1990; 6(2):95-124.

94. Hanson, Stephen E. "Gorbachev: The Last True Leninist Believer?," Chirot, Daniel, ed. The Crisis of Leninism and the Decline of the Left: The Revolutions of 1989. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press; 1991.

95. ---, Time and Revolution: Marxism and the Design of Soviet Institutions. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press; 1997.

96. Harding, Neil, Leninism. Durham, NC: Duke University Press; 1996.

97. Hawking, Stephen. A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes. New York: Bantam Books; 1988.

98. Hazan, Baruch A., Gorbachev and His Enemies: The Struggle for Perestroika. Boulder, CO, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press; 1990.

99. Hewett, Ed A. "The 19th Party Conference and Economic Reform," AAASS Newsletter. 1988; 28(4, September):1-2.

100. Hobson, John Atkinson, Imperialism: A Study. New York: J. Pott and Co; 1902.

101. Holton, Gerald. "Ernst Mach and the Fortunes of Positivism in America," ISIS. 1992; (83):27-60.

102. Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment. Cumming, John, trans. New York: Continuum; 1990.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

103. Hough, Jerry F. "The Politics of Successful Economic Reform," Soviet Economy. 1989; 5(1):3-46.

104. ---. "The Politics of the 19th Party Conference," Soviet Economy. 1988; 4(2, April-June):137-143.

105. Hruby, Peter, Fools and Heroes: The Changing Role of Communist Intellectuals in Czechoslovakia. 1st ed. Oxford, New York, etc.: Pergamon Press; 1980.

106. Hughes, H. Stuart. Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930. New York: Alfred A. Knopf; 1958.

107. Ibragimova, D. Kh., Nep i perestroika: massovoe soznanie sel'skogo naselenie v usloviiakh perekhoda k rynku. Moskva: Pamiatniki istoricheskoi mysli; 1997.

108. Iurkin, A. "Iz Tallinna: slet esesovtsev," Krasnaia zvezda. 1990 Jun 5: 3.

109. Iushkevich, P., Materializm i kriticheskii realizm. Sankt Peterburg: 1908.

110. Iustuzov, V. E. "V. I. Lenin o perekhode k novoi ekonomicheskoi politike" [Thesis, Kandidat istoricheskikh nauk]. Leningrad: Leningradskoe gosudarstvennyi universitet; 1972.

111. Joravsky, David, Soviet Marxism and Natural Science, 1917-1932. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; 1961.

112. Josephson, Paul R., Physics and Politics in Revolutionary Russia. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press; 1991.

113. Kabanov, V. V. "Leninskii kooperativnyi plan," Voprosy istorii. 1988; (9):53-57.

114. Kalmykov, Iu. Kh. "Leninskoe nasledie i sovremennost'," Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo. 1987; 4(April):22-28.

115. Kalmykov, Iu. P. Finansy khoziaistvennykh kompleksov. Moskva: Finansy i statistika; 1986.

116. Kaminski, Bartlomiej. The Collapse of State Socialism: The Case of Poland. Princeton: Princeton University Press; 1991.

117. Kern, Stephen, The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; 1983.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

118. Khachaturov, Tigran. "Perestroika v sfere kapitalnykh vlozhenii," Voprosy ekonomiki. 1988; 63(1, January):3-11.

119. Khataevich, L. and A. Ivanov. "Interview on 'Vremia' newscast, 1700 GMT June 3, 1990," FBIS SOV. 1990 Jun 12; 62.

120. Kolakowski, Leszek, Main Currents of Marxism: Its Rise, Growth and Dissolution. Falla, P. S., trans. Oxford: Clarendon Press; 1978. 3 vols.

121. Komitet zashchiti rabochikh. "Zaiavlenie, Varshava, 26 sentiabria 1977," Malyshev, Vladimir, comp. Pol'sha 1980: "Solidarnosti" god pervyi. London: Overseas Publications Ltd.; 1981.

122. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza. Materialy XXVII s"ezda KPSS. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury; 1986.

123. ---. "Zasedanie politburo TsK KPSS, 28 iulia 1988 goda," Tsentr khraneniia sovremennoi dokumentatsii, Moskva (TsKhSD). 1988 Jul 28; fond 89, opis 42, delo 21, pp. 1-2.

124. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza, otdel sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi politiki TsK. "O khode zakliucheniia khoziaistvennykh dogovorov na postavku produktsii v 1991 godu," Tsentr khraneniia sovremennoi dokumentatsii, Moskva (TsKhSD). 1990 Oct 22; fond 89, opis 21, delo 41, pp. 1-3.

125. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza, Sekretariat TsK. "Ob orientirovke partiinym komitetam po voprosu usileniia organizatorskoi raboty po stabilizatsii politicheskoi i ekonomicheskoi obstanovki v sootvetstvii s Programmoi General'nogo sekretaria TsK KPSS, Prezidenta SSSR," Tsentr khraneniia sovremennoi dokumentatsii, Moskva (TsKhSD). 1990 Mar 12; fond 89, opis 20, delo 13, p. 2.

126. Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza, sotsial'no-ekonomicheskii otdel TsK. "O ser'eznykh nedostatkakh v obespechenii ustoichivoi raboty narodnogo khoziaistva v osenne-zimnii period 1990/91 g.g.," Tsentr khraneniia sovremennoi dokumentatsii, Moskva (TsKhSD). 1990 Sep 19; fond 89, opis 20, delo 8, pp. 1-6.

127. Kontorovich, Vladimir. "Discipline and Growth in the Soviet Economy," Problems of Communism. 1985; 34(6, November-December):18-31.

128. Korobeinikov, Anatolii Antonovich, Gorbachev: drugoe litso. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo 'Respublika'; 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

129. Kozlov, V. A. "Istorik i perestroika," Voprosy istorii. 1987; (5, May):110-122.

130. Krivomazov, N.; A. Cherniak, and G. Iastrebtsov. "Zavtra nachinaetsia segodnia. Prebyvanie M. S. Gorbacheva v Krasnoiarskom Krae," Pravda. 1988 Sep 14: 1-2.

131. Kudriavtsev, V. V., comp. Nep: vzgliad so storony. Moskva: Moskovskii rabochii; 1991.

132. Kurashvili, Boris P. "Kontury vozmozhnoi perestroiki," Ekonomika i organizatsiia promyshlennogo proizvodstva: EKO. 1985; 16(5, May):59-79.

133. Kuron, Jacek and Karol Modzelewski. "Open Letter to Party Members, 1965," partial reprint: Persky, Stan and Henry Flam, eds. The Solidarity Sourcebook. Vancouver, BC: New Star Books, Ltd.; 1982.

134. Kusin, Vladimir V., The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring: The Development of Reformist Ideas in Czechoslovakia 1956-1967. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press; 1971.

135. ---, Political Grouping in the Czechoslovak Reform Movement. New York: Columbia University Press; 1972.

136. Lapina, S. N.; N. D. Leliukhina, and E. S. Fedorovskaia, Nep: opyt razgosudarstvleniia ekonomiki i perekhoda k rynku. Moskva: Mezhvedomstvennyi nauchnyi sovet AN SSSR i GK SSSR po narodnomu obrazovaniiu po istorii narodnogo khoziaistva i ekonomicheskoi mysli; 1992. (Preprint doklada. Dlia obsuzhdeniia na Nauchnom sovete 1992 g.).

137. Larina, Anna Mikhailovna. "On khotel peredelat' zhizn', potomu chto ee liubil," Ogonek. 1987 Nov 28-1987 Dec 5; (48):26-31.

138. Lenin, V. I., The Lenin Anthology. Tucker, Robert C., ed. New York: W. W. Norton and Co; 1975.

139. ---, Materialism and Empirio-Criticism: Critical Comments on a Reactionary Philosophy. New York: Progress Publishers; 1927.

140. ---, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii . 5th ed. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury; 1958-1965. 55 vols.

141. Lerner, Lawrence W. and Donald W. Treadgold, eds. Gorbachev and the Soviet Future. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 1988.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

142. Levikov, Aleksandr I. "Remeslo," Novyi mir. 1986; 62(4, April):180-198.

143. Levine, Herbert S., Chairman. "The 19th Conference of the CPSU: A Soviet Economy Roundtable," Soviet Economy. 1988; 4(2, April-June):103-136.

144. ---, chairman. "The Aftermath of the 19th Conference of the CPSU: A Soviet Economy Roundtable," Soviet Economy. 1988; 4(3, July-September):181-222.

145. Ligachev, Egor K. "Chelovecheskii faktor khozraschet i perestroika v agropromyshlennom komplekse," Kommunist. 1987; 64(4, March):28-42.

146. Lisichkin, Gennadii S. "Za vedomstvennym bar'erom," Novyi mir. 1985; 61(10, October):167-190.

147. Lithuanian SSR. "Law of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic on theFundamentals of Ownership," FBIS SOV. 1990 Apr 17; Sovetskaia Litva, 22 February 1990, pp. 1, 3:95-97.

148. Liubitskii, V. "Pochemu reforma buksuet? Otvechaia na otkrytoe pis'mo," [Interview with P. Bunich]. Pravda. 1989 Jun 5: 4.

149. Lukacs, Gyorgy, History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics. Livingstone, Rodney, trans. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; 1986. Translation copyright the Merlin Press, Ltd., 1971. Tenth printing.

150. Mach, Ernst, Die Mechanik in ihrer Entwicklung historisch-kritisch dargestellt. 3rd ed. Leipzig: 1897.

151. MacShane, Denis. Solidarity: Poland's Independent Trade Union. Nottingham, England: Spokesman Press; 1981.

152. Malia, Martin, The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1921. New York: The Free Press; 1994.

153. Malyshev, Vladimir, comp. Pol'sha 1980: "Solidarnosti" god pervyi. London: Overseas Publications Ltd.; 1981.

154. Martem'ianov, V. and A. Masliaev. "S tochki zreniia prava," [Interview with unattributed interviewer]. Pravda. 1990 Jun 21: 3.

155. Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Selected Works. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House; 1958. 2 vols.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

156. Matlock, Jack F., Jr., Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union. New York: Random House; 1995.

157. Mawdsley, Evan. The Russian Civil War. Boston: Allen and Unwin; 1987.

158. McAuley, Mary. Soviet Politics, 1917-1991. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 1992.

159. McCauley, Martin, ed. Gorbachev and Perestroika. London: 1990.

160. Mehring, Franz. "Die Welträsel," Neue Zeit. 1899-1900; I.

161. Merridale, Catherine and Chris Ward, eds. Perestroika: The Historical Perspective. London, New York: Edward Arnold; 1991.

162. Meyer, Alfred G. Leninism. New York: Frederick A. Praeger; 1957.

163. Michnik, Adam. Letters From Prison and Other Essays. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press; 1985; first paperback edition, 1987.

164. ---. "The New Evolutionism," from Survey, vol. 22, nos. 3-4 (issues 100-101), Summer/Autumn 1976: Michnik, Adam, Letters From Prison and Other Essays. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press; 1985; first paperback edition, 1987.

165. ---. "What We Want to Do and What We Can Do," lecture given on November 14, 1980; reprinted in Telos, No. 47, Spring 1981. Translated by Douglas Collins and reprinted in: Persky, Stan and Henry Flam, eds. The Solidarity Sourcebook. Vancouver, BC: New Star Books, Ltd.; 1982.

166. Mikhailin, Georg. "Moscow TASS in English, 2110 GMT September 11, 1990," FBIS SOV. 1990 Sep 13; 60.

167. Miller, John. Mikhail Gorbachev and the End of Soviet Power. New York: St. Martin's Press; 1993.

168. Mints, I. I., chairman. "Osnovnye etapy razvitiia sovetskogo obshchestva: 'kruglyi stol' zhurnala 'Kommunist'," Kommunist. 1987; (12, August):66-79.

169. Mlynar, Zdenek, Can Gorbachev Change the Soviet Union? The International Dimensions of Political Reform. Sling, Marian and Ruth Tosek, trans. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 1990.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

170. Moliakov, D. S. Teoriia finansov sotsialisticheskikh predpriiatii i otraslei narodnogo khoziaistva. Moskva: Finansy i statistika; 1986.

171. Morozov, L. F. "Istoricheskaia nauka otstaet ot protsessov perestroiki," Voprosy istorii. 1988; (9, September):25-28.

172. Moskalenko, V. P. "Khozraschetnaia zainteresovannost' v vysokikh konechnykh rezul'tatakh," Ekonomika i organizatsiia promyshlennogo proizvodstva: EKO. 1986; 17(3, March):99-118.

173. Myslivchenko, A. G. and A. P. Sheptulina, eds. Dialekticheskii i istoricheskii materializm. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury; 1988.

174. Nove, Alec, Glasnost' in Action: Cultural Renaissance in Russia. Boston: Unwin Hyman; 1989.

175. Ouimet, Matthew J. "All That Custom Has Divided: National Interest and the Secret Demise of the Brezhnev Doctrine, 1968-1981" [Thesis, Ph. D.]: University of Washington; 1997.

176. Pais, Abraham, Niels Bohr's Times: In Physics, Philosophy and Polity. Oxford: Clarendon Press; 1991.

177. Persky, Stan and Henry Flam, eds. The Solidarity Sourcebook. Vancouver, BC: New Star Books, Ltd.; 1982.

178. Petrakov, N. Ia. et al., eds. Nep i khozraschet. Tsentral'nyi ekonomiko-matematicheskii institut AN SSSR, Moskva: 1991.

179. Pipes, Richard, ed. The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive. New Haven and London: Yale University Press; 1996.

180. Platonov, A. P. Izbrannoe. Platonova, M. A., comp. Shekhanova, T. S., intro. Moskva: Moskovskii rabochii; 1988.

181. Platonov, Andrei, Chevengur. Alcott, Anthony, trans. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis; 1978.

182. Popkova, L. "Iz redaksionnoi pochty: gde pyshnee pirogi?," Novyi mir. 1987; 63(5, May):239-241.

183. Prokhonov, A. M., chief ed. Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia. 3rd. ed. Moskva: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia; 1970-1978. 30 vols.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

184. Radaev, V. V. Sovershenstvovanie khozraschetnykh otnoshenii razvitogo sotsializma. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta; 1986.

185. Ramet, Sabrina P. Social Currents in Eastern Europe: the Sources and Meaning of the Great Transformation. Durham and London: Duke University Press; 1991.

186. Rastorguev, V. "Akademik Shatalin: chto den' griadushchii nam gotovit: vopros dnia," [Interview with Academician S. S. Shatalin]. Komsomol'skaia pravda. 1990 Sep 11: 1.

187. Reshetar, John S., Jr., The Soviet Polity: Government and Politics in the USSR. Third ed. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc.; 1989.

188. Rigby, T. H., The Changing Soviet System: Mono-organisational Socialism From its Origins to Gorbachev's Restructuring. Aldershot, Hants, England: Edward Elgar; 1990.

189. ---. Lenin's Government: Sovnarkom, 1917-1922. New York: Cambridge University Press; 1979.

190. Robinson, Neil. Ideology and the Collapse of the Soviet System: A Critical History of Soviet Ideological Discourse. Brookfield, VT: Edward Elgar Publishing Company; 1995.

191. Romaniuk, V. "Rynok: medlenno ili nemedlenno," Izvestiia. 1990 May 18: 2.

192. Rumer, Boris. "The 'Abalkinization' of Soviet Economic Reform," Problems of Communism. 1990; 39(1, January-February):74-82.

193. Rytov, Iu. "Na puti k rynku: kak budem zhit' zavtra? " Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik. 1990 Aug: 1, 3 (33).

194. Sanford, George, ed. and trans. The Solidarity Congress, 1981: The Great Debate. London: Macmillan; 1990.

195. Sawka, Richard, Gorbachev and His Reforms, 1985-1990. New York: Prentice-Hall; 1991.

196. Schiebel, Joseph. "Aziatchina: The Controversy Concerning the Nature of Russian Society and the Organization of the Bolshevik Party" [Thesis, Ph.D.]. Seattle: University of Washington; 1972; c1972.

197. Schroeder, Gertrude E. "Anatomy of Gorbachev's Economic Reform," Soviet Economy. 1987; 3(3, July-September):219-241.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

198. Seliunin, Vasilii. "Eksperiment," Novyi mir. 1985; 61(8, August):173-194.

199. ---. "Istoki," Novyi mir. 1988; 64(5, May):162-189.

200. Shatalin, S. S. et al., Perekhod k rynku. Kontseptsiia i programma. Moskva: 1990a Aug.

201. ---, Perekhod k rynku. Proekty zakonodatel'nykh aktov. Moskva: 1990b Aug. (Chast' 2).

202. Shevardnadze, Eduard. "Vospityvat' molodezh' lichnym primerom," Kommunist. 1984; 18(December):24-36.

203. Shmelev, Nikolai. "Avansy i dolgi," Novyi mir. 1987; 63(6, June):142-158.

204. Silber, Irwin, Socialism: What Went Wrong? An Inquiry into the Theoretical and Historical Sources of the Socialist Crisis. London; Boulder, CO : Pluto Press; 1994.

205. Simoniia, N. A., Chto my postroili. Moskva: Progress; 1991.

206. Sliun'kov, Nikolai N. "Perestroika i partiinoe rukovodstvo ekonomikoi," Kommunist. 1988; 65(1, January):11-26.

207. Smith, Norman. "Avenarius' Philosophy of Pure Existence," Mind. 1906.

208. Sobchak, Anatolii. "Tallinn domestic service in Estonian, 1700 GMT, June 5, 1990," FBIS SOV. 1990 Jun 22; (Citation of Telegram to Estonian Prime Minister Edgar Savissar):74.

209. Staar, Richard F. Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press; 1991.

210. Stallo, J. B., The Concepts and Theories of Modern Physics. New York: D. Appleton & Co.; 1882. (International Scientific Series; Vol. XXXVIII).

211. Stefancic, David R., Robotnik: A Short History of the Struggle for Worker Self-Management and Free Trade Unions in Poland, 1944-1981. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs; 1992. Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York.

212. Sulek, Antoni. "Farewell to the Party," Wedel, Janine R., ed. The Unplanned Society: Poland During and After Communism. New York: Columbia University Press; 1992.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

213. Svinarenko, I., interviewer. "Ekonomist Larisa Piiasheva: Obeshchaniami syt ne budesh'...kontseptsii svetlogo budushchego net mesta v ser'eznoi nauke," Komsomol'skaia pravda. 1989 May 25: 2.

214. Tatu, Michel, Mikhail Gorbachev: The Origins of Perestroika. Bradley, A. P. M., trans. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs; 1991. Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York.

215. Taubman, William and Jane Taubman, Moscow Spring. New York: Summit Books, Simon and Schuster; 1989.

216. Thompson, Terry L. Ideology and Policy: The Political Uses of Doctrine in the Soviet Union. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 1989.

217. Thornton, Judith. "The Perils of Perestroika," Gurtov, Mel, ed. The Transformation of Socialism. Perestroika and Reform in the Soviet Union and China. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 1990; pp. 203-218.

218. Timberlake, Charles E., ed. Religious and Secular Forces in Late Tsarist Russia: Essays in Honor of Donald W. Treadgold. Seattle: University of Washington Press; 1992.

219. Timmerman, Heinz. "Is Gorbachev a Bukharinist? Moscow's Reappraisal of the NEP Period," The Journal of Communist Studies. 1989; 5(1, March):1-17.

220. Timofeyev, Lev. "How Stephen Cohen Re-Thinks the Soviet Experience," Survey. 1989; 30(4, June):189-195.

221. Treadgold, Donald W. "Soviet Historians' Views of the Asiatic Mode of Production," Acta Slavica Iaponica. 1987; (Tomus V):1-20.

222. Tsipko, Alexander S., Is Stalinism Really Dead? The Future of Perestroika as a Moral Revolution. Tichina, E. A. and S. V. Nikheev, trans. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco; 1990.

223. Uliukaev, A. "Ekonomicheskaia panorama: politicheskie zametki: pochemu stoit machta," Pravda. 1990 Jul 16: 2.

224. Ulmen, G. L. The Science of Society: Toward an Understanding of the Life and Work of Karl August Wittfogel. The Hague: Mouton; 1978.

225. ---, ed. Society and History: Essays in Honor of Karl August Wittfogel. The Hague, Paris and New York: Mouton Publishers; 1978.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

226. Ulyukaev, Aleksey. "Shatalin's Views All-Important for CPSU CC," FBIS SOV. 1991 Mar 15; (Moscow News No. 7, February 17-24 1991, p. 6.):31.

227. Unattributed. "Chelovek, svoboda, rynok: O programme, razrabotannoi gruppoi pod rukovodstvom akademika S. S. Shatalina," Izvestiia. 1990 Sep 4: 3.

228. ---. "Moscow TASS in English, 1925 GMT, September 28, 1990," FBIS SOV. 1990 Oct 1; 52.

229. ---. "Moscow television service in Russian, 1700 GMT," FBIS SOV. 1990 Aug 10; ('Vremia' newscast?):33.

230. ---. "Obrashchenie prezidenta SSSR," Pravda. 1990 Sep 11: 1.

231. Valentinov, V., Filosofskie postroeniia marksizma. Moskva: 1908.

232. Van Atta, Don. "Theorists of Agrarian Perestroika," Soviet Economy. 1989; (1, January-March):70-99.

233. Vladislavlev, Aleksandr Pavlovich. "Moscow domestic service in Russian, 1500 GMT, April 5, 1990," FBIS SOV. 1990 Apr 19; 60.

234. Voeikov, M. I. et al., eds. Ia. A. Kronrod: lichnost' uchenogo, politicheskaia situatsiia, ekonomicheskaia teoriia. Moskva: RAN Institut ekonomiki. Tsentr problem sotsializma i demokratii; 1996.

235. Voeikov, M. I. and A. V. Gusev, eds. Ideinoe nasledie L. D. Trotskogo: istoriia i sovremennost'. Moskva: Ekonomicheskaia demokratiia; 1996.

236. Voprosy istorii KPSS, Editorial Board. "K itogam obsuzhdeniia problem novoi ekonomicheskoi politiki," Voprosy istorii KPSS. 1968; (12, December):81-91.

237. Wandycz, Piotr S., Czechoslovak-Polish Confederation and the Great Powers, 1940-43. Bloomington: Indiana University Press; 1956. (Indiana University Publications Slavic and East European Series; Vol. 3).

238. ---. The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe From the Middle ages to the Present. London: Routledge; 1992.

239. Wat, Aleksander. My Century: The Odyssey of a Polish Intellectual. [An abridgment and translation of Moj wiek, London; Book Fund, 1977]. Lourie, Richard, ed. and trans. Milosz, Czeslaw, intro. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press; 1988.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

240. Wedel, Janine R., ed. The Unplanned Society: Poland During and After Communism. New York: Columbia University Press; 1992.

241. White, Stephen, ed. New Directions in Soviet History. Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press; 1992. (World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies; 4th Congress, 1990, Harrogate, England).

242. Williams, Robert C. The Other Bolsheviks: Lenin and his Critics, 1904-1914. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; 1986.

243. Wittfogel, Karl A. Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power. New Haven: Yale University Press; 1957.

244. Woodby, Sylvia and Alfred B. Evans, Jr., eds. Restructuring Soviet Ideology: Gorbachev's New Thinking. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 1990.

245. Zimarina, N. P., ed. Bokarev, Iu. P. et al., Russkii rubl': dva veka istorii, XIX-XX vv. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Progress-Akademiia; 1994.

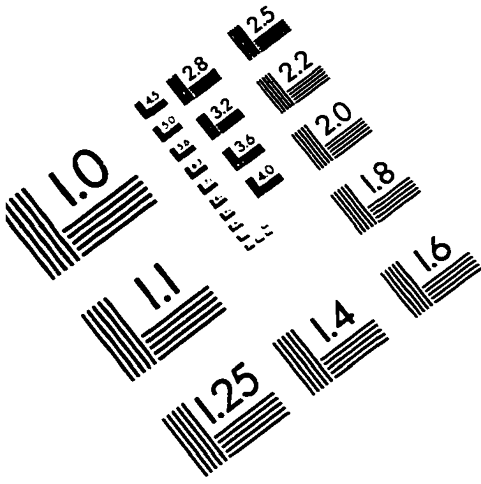
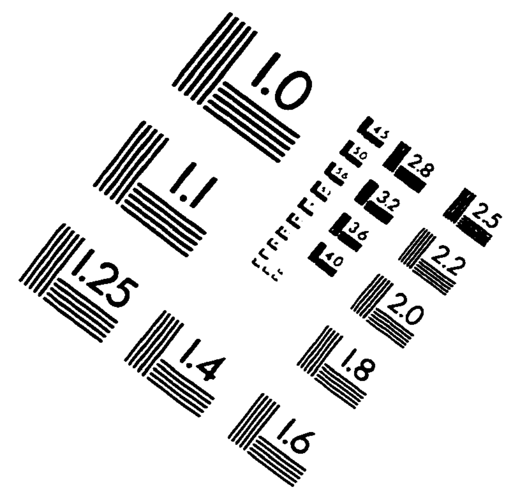
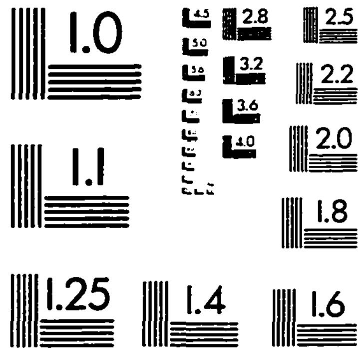
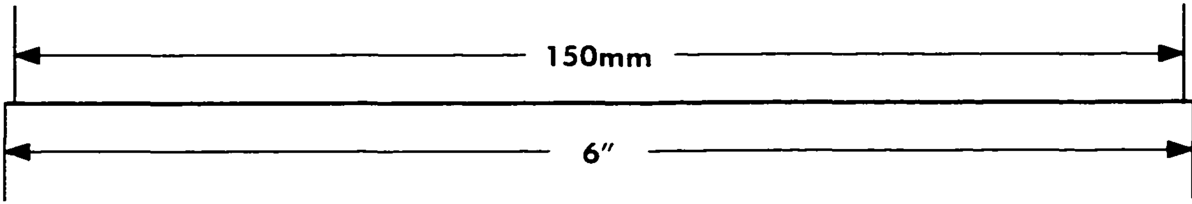
Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

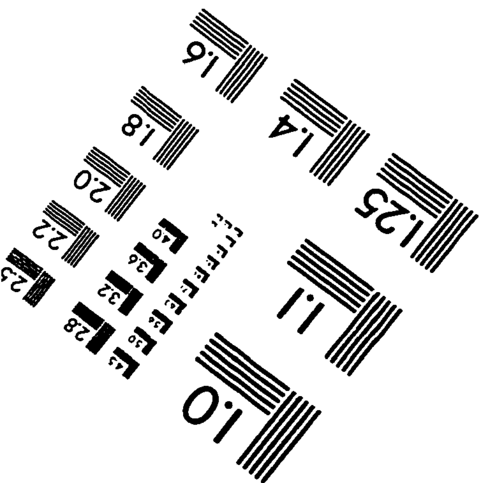
VITA

Oscar J. Bandelin was born on August 31, 1964 in Yakima, Washington to Douglas and Marielos Bandelin. He received his Ph.D. in History in 1998 from the University of Washington; his Master of Arts in International Studies in 1990 from the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington; and his Bachelor of Arts in Slavic Languages and Literature in 1986 from the University of Washington.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

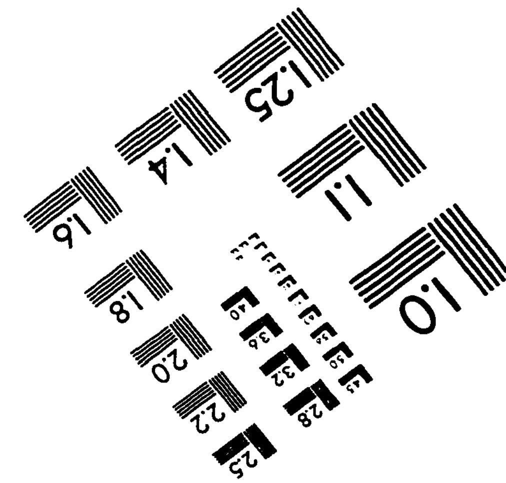
IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



APPLIED IMAGE . Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved



Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.