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SOCIAL SCIENCE, COMMUNISM, AND THE DYNAMICS OF POLITICAL CHANGE

By ANDREW C. JANOS*

DURING the past two years events in the communist societies of Europe, Asia, and even Central America followed each other at a dramatic pace. Although it may be somewhat premature, and ultimately inaccurate, to speak of a "transition from socialism to capitalism," not to mention the "end of history" and the beginning of a liberal millennium, the restoration of multiparty systems in Eastern Europe, the floundering perestroika of the Soviet Union, and the prodemocracy movement in China and its violent repression all indicate that communist states have reached a critical juncture in their history. The confluence of these events raises a number of obvious questions about both the past and the future and more generally about the dynamics of change in the communist societies of the world. For the student of comparative politics it also raises questions about the record of the social sciences in the field of communist studies and about their ability to satisfy these curiosities.

This article sets out to answer some of these questions. It first reexamines some of the propositions of classical theory as they apply to the history of communism, then attempts to pull together different strands of social thought into a single, more comprehensive analytic scheme. To the extent that this enterprise is successful, the scheme will provide us with an opportunity to make more meaningful comparisons than heretofore, to find a better fit between theory and historical fact and, within the limitations of social theory, a way to anticipate future developments more accurately.

THE BEGINNINGS: FROM TOTALITARIANISM TO DERADICALIZATION

The entry of the social sciences into the field of communist studies was slow and hesitant. Prior to 1945 the subject of communist government

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was largely shunned by social scientists and allowed to remain almost exclusively within the domains of journalism and historiography.¹ It was only after World War II that social scientists, inspired by perceived similarities between Soviet communism and German national socialism, made their first attempt to formulate explanations that transcended the somewhat narrow empiricism of the early years. The result was the model, or more accurately models, of totalitarianism: the plural being justified by the fact that underneath the uniformly applied and very popular label, there were at least three variations on the central theme. The first, enshrined in Hannah Arendt's famous volume, explained totalitarianism as an existential response to the social and psychological damage inflicted upon the individual by modern industrialism.² The second, derived from Karl Wittfogel's study of "hydraulic" societies, related the phenomenon to the endemic scarcities of water and, by extension, of other necessities of life.³ A third theory, then, saw totalitarianism as the manifestation of cultural configurations—the traditions of German and Russian absolutism coming alive in the age of industrialism.⁴

Diverse as these explanations were, they shared two common themes: a highly asymmetrical and absolutistic view of political power and an epistemology that provided insights into the origins, but not into the dynamics, of political change. This formula may have been credible and intellectually appealing for dealing with the terror and highly centralized institutional arrangements of Stalinism, but it was found to be increasingly inadequate for explaining the obvious instances of political change in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe of the post-Stalin years. A few observers of the communist scene continued to cling to the view that these changes represented only temporary deviations from the earlier totalitarian norm; but others suggested new paradigms that henceforth would serve as the foundations for the new subdiscipline of comparative communism.

Perhaps the most influential of these paradigms was the one provided by the writings of Max Weber, to which students of communism were attracted for several reasons. One of these was Weber's theory of power, which at the highest level of abstraction presents a triangular relationship

¹ See Daniel Bell, "Ten Theories in Search of Reality: The Prediction of Soviet Behavior in the Social Sciences," *World Politics* 10 (April 1958), 327–65, reprinted in Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (New York: Collier, 1961), 315–54.

² Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt-Brace, 1951).

³ Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957).

⁴ See, e.g., Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-building and Citizenship* (New York: John Wiley, 1964).

of subordination and superordination among "chiefs," their "administrative staff," and the rest of the polis, or "corporate group," so defined by virtue of its ability to regulate its membership.⁵ The central figure in this relationship is the chief. This feature has been particularly appealing to students of communism, for unlike class and group theories of power, it does not downplay the role of individuals but recognizes them as actors in their own right with spheres of autonomy that follow from their position. At the same time, Weber's chiefs are not like Pareto's leaders or Nietzsche's heroes, whose unlimited powers over others derive from their presumed ability to assign meanings to social phenomena, thus shaping human expectations, wants, and needs, so to say, by brainwashing. Unlike these elite theorists whose ideas inform the various totalitarian models, Weber recognizes the autonomy of human needs: leaders can rule but only if they provide benefits, be they miracles or their subjects' daily bread. Whereas both class and elite theories of power emphasize (though in different ways) the fundamental asymmetry of the relationship between chiefs and subjects, Weber's theory of power rests on the notion of reciprocity. This notion inevitably leads away from the idea that political control can be total or absolute.

Weber's concept of an "administrative staff" also helps locate the party and its auxiliaries between the two polar extremes of pre-Weberian political theory: the staff is not a ruling class in the sense of the British aristocracy prior to the mid-nineteenth century; nor is it a herd of mindless servants or agents ready to execute every command of the chief. Rather, Weber's staff is a political class. This last designation, while not Weber's, appears to be appropriate. For like other classes, members of the staff have a set of common interests that derives from their common position in the division of labor. But unlike members of economic classes, such as the bourgeoisie or the aristocracy, they are also bound to obey the commands of the chief even if these run counter to their own material interests. Thus, to use the language of sociology, the staff is integrated both horizontally and vertically. Between interest and duty, between the two forms of integration, there will be inevitable tensions that are apt to provoke various forms of subterranean bickering and to threaten subversion of commands by feigned compliance—a *modus operandi* that T. H. Rigby aptly describes as "crypto-politics."⁶

⁵ Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 1:214–15; or Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, ed. Talcott Parsons (1947; reprint, New York: Free Press, 1964), 145–46.

⁶ Rigby, "Crypto-Politics," *Survey* 50 (January 1964), 183–94. For more about politics in

Students of comparative communism were also attracted by Weber's interest in charismatic salvationism, or authority based on the promise of a perfect universe, as articulated by prophetic leaders.⁷ The terminology used here refers to the religious origins of the concept, but for Weber the terms had both "this worldly and other worldly" connotations.⁸ So expanded, the category seemed to be directly applicable to both the theory and the practice of Marxism-Leninism. Lenin, Stalin, Mao, and even some of the lesser heroes in the communist pantheon were, after all, celebrated as geniuses of the first order with extraordinary insights into the laws of history. And Marx's *Manifesto* and *German Ideology* foresaw the movement leading ultimately to a world without scarcity or conflict and even without the boredom of functional specialization. Raised on these tenets, and sharing the boundless optimism of the nineteenth century concerning the human mastery of the environment, Lenin, Trotsky, and others easily envisaged the withering away of the state⁹ or the coming of a "red paradise" in which the average worker could easily reach the creative potential of a Marx, Michelangelo, or Aristotle.¹⁰ Moreover, this Marxist-Leninist salvationism was reflected not only in rhetoric but also in the very logic that defined the structure of authority in communist systems. It was in the name of this charismatic salvationism that communist leaders emancipated themselves from moral and legal restraints and felt free to impose immense sacrifices on their populations and to exact not only compliance with the law but also devotion to leaders and the cause. The same salvationism permitted the regimes to reject conventional probabilistic notions of organizational shortcomings and to reconceptualize them as treason or as the result of the penetration of the movement by hostile outsiders. Thus, while the scope of the purges may have been the result of personality and historical circumstance, their style and logic was inherent in organizational principle and may even be anticipated by reading Weber.

organizations, see Reinhard Bendix, *Work and Authority in Industry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), xl–xlvi.

⁷ More generally, Weber distinguishes between substantive and institutional-instrumental aspects of authority. The former refer to the material versus the "higher" interests of an actor (the prototype of which is interest in one's salvation), the latter to the familiar trio of charisma, tradition, and contract. Although Weber does not say so and in general is of little help in further elaborating the relationship, these two aspects of politics may be drawn into a single scheme. Certain types of legitimacy are well suited to articulating some purposes and not others. Charisma is most appropriate for articulating salvationist purposes.

⁸ Weber (fn. 5, 1978), 1:xc, 212–13; or Weber (fn. 5, 1964), 120–23, 324–25.

⁹ V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution," in Lenin, *Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), 2:283–376.

¹⁰ Leon Trotsky, quoted in "Kommunismus," in C. D. Kernig, ed., *Sowjetsystem und demokratische Gesellschaft* (Soviet system and democratic society) (Freiburg: Herder, 1969), 3:746.

We should note here that this idea of communism as a chiliastic-salvationist movement is not far removed from earlier concepts of totalitarianism. Indeed, some writers well within the Weberian school have identified such salvationism as the essence of totalitarianism, thereby divorcing the concept from uniquely twentieth-century structures of industrialism and modernity.¹¹ What distinguishes Arendt and Weber is not so much their views of the subject matter as their explanations of the underlying dynamic. If Arendt saw totalitarianism as a fundamentally irrational, existential phenomenon, Weberian theory saw it as a matter of rational choice of persons who viewed the world through a particular cognitive prism. And where Arendt saw powerful psychological drives at work to reproduce the system, Weber taught his disciples lessons about its fragility and its losing battle against the ordinary and the routine. This being the case, Weberian ideas did not really replace the earlier models of totalitarianism. Instead, via the theory of routinization, they bridged the gap between the earlier model and the new realities of the post-Stalin years.

The point of departure for Weber's theory of routinization is what might be called the revolutionary dialectic: a conflict between the higher, salvationist aspirations of a movement and the mundane but stubbornly persistent material needs of its members. These needs manifest themselves in the

material interests of the members of the administrative staff, the disciples, the party workers, or others in continuing [to serve] in such a way that both from an ideal and material point of view their own position is put on a stable everyday basis. This means, above all, making it possible to participate in normal family relationships or at least to enjoy a secure social position in place of the kind of discipleship which is cut off from ordinary worldly connections, notably in the family and in economic relationships.¹²

This of course implies an element of "opportunism" that so vexed communist leaders like Trotsky, Stalin, and Mao and that led Milovan Djilas to formulate his theses concerning the rise of a "new class" in communist societies and the aristocratization of the party elite.¹³ But Weber's theory is more complex. Whereas disciples and party workers may act out of altruism for the "continuation and continual reactivation" of

¹¹ For this view of totalitarianism and revolutionary chiliasm, see Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 2d ed. (New York: Harper, 1961), esp. 307–19; and Barrington Moore, Jr., "Totalitarian Elements in Pre-Industrial Societies," in Moore, *Political Power and Social Theory* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 30–89.

¹² Weber (fn. 5, 1978), 1:246.

¹³ Djilas, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System* (New York: Praeger, 1957).

the revolutionary community,¹⁴ that very desire may require attention to some of the material needs of its members. Thus while the revolutionary movement, much like the charismatic sect, is initially held together by the promise of salvation, some of its members will still have to deal with such matters as the procurement of food, shelter, and other necessities. This in turn sets certain psychological forces in motion: those who devote themselves to providing mundane necessities have their attention diverted from the salvationist purpose, and they acquire, apparently by habituation, what Mao described many years after Weber as "role consciousness."¹⁵ It is the rise of this consciousness that causes major cleavages in both communist and other revolutionary societies. On the one side of this cleavage stands the revolutionary leader, yearning for "revolutionary immortality"¹⁶ and insulated from recalcitrant realities by his faith in the charismatic qualities of the movement. On the other side stand members of his staff, the line officers of the revolution, who are all too aware of the multitude of obstacles that stand between them and their image of a perfect world, yet who must attend to the whims of the leader. One can argue that this conceptualization anticipates Stalin's purges and Mao's cultural revolution, though there is nothing in it to suggest what many students of communism have assumed—that revolutionary leaders will always prevail by the logic of the system. Indeed, common sense would say that such conflicts between chiefs and staffs may well provoke successful palace revolutions or that regimes may simply lapse into chaos and become extinct early on in their existence.

If in the short run the outcome of conflicts between staff and leader is uncertain, in the long run the odds favor the devolution of salvationist regimes. This at least is Weber's hypothesis, and it is confirmed by the history of modern revolutions since the seventeenth century. Thus, the forces of change may be at work from the very inception of a revolutionary regime, but they become "conspicuously evident with the disappearance of the [original] charismatic leader."¹⁷ At this point, the salvationist objectives of the regime, though still referred to on ritual occasions, are replaced by a world view that grows out of the staff's practical experiences. As a corollary, the new chief assumes a more businesslike style even while professing to act in the name of the founder hero. Perhaps

¹⁴ Weber (fn. 5, 1978), 1:246.

¹⁵ Mao Zedong, "On Dialectics," U.S.D.C. Joint Publication Research Service, February 20, 1974; idem, "On Krushchev's Phoney Communism," *Peking Review*, July 17, 1964, pp. 7–28.

¹⁶ Robert J. Lifton, *Revolutionary Immortality: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1968).

¹⁷ Weber (fn. 5, 1978), 1:246.

inspired by Trotsky's classical thesis,¹⁸ many observers of communist systems construed these changes as "bureaucratization."¹⁹ But in fact, more practical thinking about priorities, or the substitution of ritual for personal magnetism, is not tantamount to the acceptance of the strict formal rules and procedures that the term bureaucracy implies. Other routines may develop more slowly by accumulated precedent, leaving ample room for arbitrary behavior.²⁰ So while bureaucracy was the dominant term of reference in the 1960s, in the 1970s students of Soviet government redesignated their subject as an example not of bureaucracy but of paternalism, patrimonialism, or neo-traditionalism.²¹

These elements of Weber's theory have provided us with convenient shorthands for describing change in communist societies, especially in the post-Stalin period, and they do so in a manner that takes us beyond historically unique configurations of events. Indeed, these shorthands were so useful that they guided research on change in both communist and noncommunist societies, thereby bridging the gap between the otherwise separate Second and Third World studies.²² But what about the capacity of Weber to explain the origins of communism? Here Weber is somewhat less helpful. As Talcott Parsons notes, he was more interested in the character and consequences of charismatic movements than in the conditions that favor their development.²³ Insofar as Weber concerns himself with these conditions, his remarks are ambiguous. In his words,

¹⁸ Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (New York: Pathfinder, 1970), esp. 86–114, 248–52.

¹⁹ See especially Alfred Meyer, "The Comparative Study of Communist Political Systems," *Slavic Review* 26 (March 1967), 3–12. For a critical view and a comprehensive survey of this literature on "bureaucratism," see Jan Pakulski, "Bureaucracy and the Soviet System," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 19 (Spring 1986), 3–24, esp. 6–8.

²⁰ Weber (fn. 5, 1964), 363–66.

²¹ Zygmunt Bauman, "The Party in the System-Management Phase: Change and Continuity," in Andrew C. Janos, ed., *Authoritarian Politics in Communist Europe* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1976), 81–108; Kenneth Jowitt, "Soviet Neo-Traditionalism: The Political Concept of a Leninist Regime," *Soviet Studies* 35 (July 1983), 275–97; Andrew Walder, *Communist Neo-Traditionalism: Work and Authority in Chinese Industry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

²² For communist studies, see Samuel P. Huntington, "Social and Institutional Dynamics of One Party Regimes," in Samuel P. Huntington and Clement H. Moore, eds., *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1971), 3–48; Robert C. Tucker, *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970), 172–214; Seweryn Bialer, *Stalin's Successors: Leadership, Stability and Change in the Soviet Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Lowell Dittmer, *China's Continuous Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). For the institutionalization of other postrevolutionary regimes, see John Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat: The Political Economy of Two Regimes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); and Raymond A. Hinnebusch, Jr., *Egyptian Politics under Sadat: The Post-populist Development of an Authoritarian-Modernizing State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985; rev. ed., Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1988).

²³ "Introduction" to Weber (fn. 5, 1964), 71.

"Charismatic rulership . . . always results from unusual, especially political and economic situations, or of extraordinary psychic, particularly religious states, or from both together."²⁴ "Unusual" and "extraordinary" being essentially subjective in nature, they do not readily provide the stuff from which good theory is made. To be sure, as Parsons suggests, the thrust of Weber's oeuvre points in the direction of cultural factors out of which emerge such explanatory variables as "relatively generalized and diffuse 'anomie' and insecurity" as well as "specifically structured sources of strain and frustration."²⁵ But if so, the problem becomes empirical. Whereas a number of followers of Weber and Durkheim, including Arendt and Norman Cohn,²⁶ attempt to relate the origins of totalitarianism and salvationism to cultural discontinuities, the existence of these discontinuities, especially in the case of Russia, has always been inferred from the very rudimentary commercialization of agrarian society or the beginnings of industrialism but never demonstrated conclusively. Indeed, the countless references to cultural continuity—to the "Russian" or "Orthodox" characteristics of Stalinism and of communism more generally—and the oft-reiterated proposition that Russian society had to be atomized by terror *after* the revolution seem to raise questions concerning the validity of this cultural hypothesis.

For different reasons, Weber's theories are also only moderately useful for anticipating the decline of communism and such recent developments as Gorbachev's reforms or the democratization of communist regimes. Weber, of course, writes about the "transformation of charisma in an anti-authoritarian direction" and still more extensively about the tensions that arise between bureaucratic and democratic principles, one based on freedom, the other on hierarchy.²⁷ But he fails to provide any clue as to the nature of the forces that push politics in one direction or another. To learn more about the probabilities of democratization and pluralization, therefore, social scientists have had to turn to other paradigms, most notably to the paradigms of modernization and industrialization, which had been an integral part of social thought even before the formulation of Weber's hypothesis on political change.

MODERNIZATION: TOWARD INDUSTRIALISM OR MILITANCY?

To many social scientists the terms industrialism and modernization are synonymous. To others who follow a well-established sociological tradi-

²⁴ Weber (fn. 5, 1978), 2:1121.

²⁵ Weber (fn. 5, 1964), 71.

²⁶ Cohn (fn. 11), 107–19.

²⁷ Weber (fn. 5, 1964), 386–92; Weber (fn. 5, 1978), 1:266–71 and 2:956–1002.

tion,²⁸ the terms acquire specific meanings in a causal relationship in which technologies of production (industrialism) are linked to political change through the intervening variables of culture, social structure, and scarce resources. It is in terms of these intervening variables that one can formulate specific theories of political "development" that form the backbone of the disciplines of political anthropology (culture studies), sociology, and economy.

The master concepts of these theories are rationalization, differentiation, and variations in the scarcity and abundance of material goods. As technological breakthroughs occur with respect to laborsaving devices and the uses of inanimate sources of energy—the quintessential elements of industrialism—people acquire a growing sense of choice and mastery vis-à-vis their physical and social environment; the division of labor becomes more specialized and the social structure more complex; and, finally, with the increasing use of inanimate implements and sources of energy, the volume of material resources available for distribution also increases. These changes in turn have an impact on the structure and scope of public authority: principles of divine right are replaced by the secular idea of popular sovereignty; structures of command and coordination have to be adjusted to the growing complexity of the "underlying" social structure; and the growing abundance of material goods diminishes social tensions, which permits ever greater numbers of people to participate in politics. So formulated, this three-tiered theory of industrialism predicts not just change but human progress as well. As such, it has been used to counter the voices of the doomsayers of modernization—Comte, Durkheim, Mannheim, and more recently Ortega and Arendt—who believed that the growing complexities of industrial life might eventually destroy individual freedoms and social autonomies.

Represented by the writings of Talcott Parsons and a host of other political sociologists and economists,²⁹ this optimistic view of modernization dominated American social science in the 1950s and in the 1960s entered the field of communist studies. According to this school of thought, prerevolutionary Russia, China, and Eastern Europe (as indeed Marxist-Leninist societies in the Third World) were underdeveloped areas, and communism nothing but a comprehensive design and an ideological mask for policies of development. In the words of Theodore von Laue, the Bolshevik revolution was in essence "a revolt against backwardness" that "established a new category, the revolution of underde-

²⁸ Bendix (fn. 4), 6–7.

²⁹ See Andrew C. Janos, *Politics and Paradigms: Changing Theories of Change in Social Science* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1986), 31–64.

veloped countries. . . . Underneath the travail of revolution and counter-revolution . . . terror and counter terror, [this] deeper necessity took its course. Not always clearly expressed . . . it aimed at the conversion of the Russian state and society to modern industrialism."³⁰

Much in the same vein, the concept of industrialization was used to explain changes in the structure of established communist governments. Political economists led the way, arguing that terror, propaganda, and personalized leadership were instruments for mobilizing the manpower and resources of an economically backward society and hypothesizing that the post-Stalin changes in effect reflected the success of these policies of mobilization. According to John Kautsky, as the task of primitive accumulation and development is accomplished, "a progressively decreasing proportion of the population needs to be subjected to terror and heavy handed regimentation."³¹ Or, in the words of Isaac Deutscher, it was the "phenomenal growth of Russian real income between 1930–1950" that made the "primitive magic" and "elaborate mythology" of Stalinism socially useless and counterproductive.³² Political sociologists likewise focused attention on the success of industrialization. They argued that the growing complexity of Soviet society had already compelled, or would eventually compel, changes in the centralized pattern of party rule and ideological conformity.³³ Some see the proposition vindicated by the rise of Gorbachev and by the current trend toward the pluralization of politics in the Soviet orbit.³⁴ Others, focusing on the psycho-cultural consequences of industrialization, suggest that the factory system itself served as a breeding ground for empathy, fellow feeling, broadening horizons, and a commitment to a "reasonably lawful world under human control"³⁵—qualities that appeared to be present, in communist societies as well, although with "some ambiguity, and at times fraught with considerable tension."³⁶ All these arguments carried to their

³⁰ Von Laue, *Why Lenin? Why Stalin?* (New York: Lippincott, 1971), 3, 208.

³¹ Kautsky, *The Political Consequences of Modernization* (New York: John Wiley, 1972), 196.

³² Deutscher, *Russia: What Next?* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953), 123–25.

³³ See, e.g., Leo Labedz, "Ideology: The Fourth Stage," *Problems of Communism* 7 (November–December 1959), 1–10; and Richard Lowenthal, "The Ruling Party in a Mature Society," in Mark G. Field, ed., *The Social Consequences of Modernization in Communist Societies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 81–120. For a review of the entire literature, see T. Anthony Jones, "Modernization Theory and Socialist Development," in Field (pp. 19–49).

³⁴ See Moshe Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), esp. 146; Lucian W. Pye, "Political Science and the Crisis of Authoritarianism," *American Political Science Review* 84 (March 1990), 3–19.

³⁵ Alex Inkeles and David Smith, *Becoming Modern: Individual Change in Six Developing Countries* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 17.

³⁶ Alex Inkeles, "The Modernization of Man in Socialist and Non-Socialist Countries," in Field (fn. 33), 53–54.

logical conclusion provide building blocks for a theory of convergence, which holds that in the long run, as a result of industrialization, communist countries are likely to develop political institutions similar to those of the highly advanced Western societies.

In the 1960s these theories of convergence enjoyed considerable popularity among students of comparative communism. There remained though some vexing problems for scholarship, the most conspicuous being the weakness of the link between the goal of industrialism and the ideology of early Bolshevism. To be sure, Lenin wrote on the subject, most notably on the industrialization of Russia.³⁷ He was also concerned with the phenomenon of uneven development, one of the catch phrases associated with his name. But Lenin and his associates explored the subject mainly to satisfy their curiosity about the origins of a revolutionary situation; they were not out to develop a blueprint for a future revolutionary government. His major work on the Bolshevik future, *The State and Revolution*, speaks of the abolition of administrative and coercive organs, rather than of the installation of factories; it is the prime example of a chiliastic prophecy of a world in harmony. Certainly, the years of the NEP created a flurry of argument about the market, as well as about public and private ownership. But the issues of development and industrialization did not become central to the Bolshevik agenda before the great debates of 1926–27.

This lack of “fit” between theory and history gave rise to a significant revisionist movement among students of communism, who attempted to resolve the dilemma by integrating the modernization hypothesis with elements of Weberian theory. Barrington Moore, Jr., was an early pioneer of such a synthesis. His first major work on Soviet politics laid the foundations for a new argument by pointing to conflicting strands in the politics of communist regimes.³⁸ One of these strands derived from the Marxist idea of building an egalitarian social order, the other from the imperatives of survival in a hostile environment, which pulled the egalitarian movement in the direction of industrialism. The theory that arises from Moore’s writings was elaborated further by Zbigniew Brzezinski,³⁹ Chalmers A. Johnson,⁴⁰ Richard Lowenthal,⁴¹ and Robert Tucker.⁴²

³⁷ Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964).

³⁸ Moore, *Soviet Politics: The Dilemma of Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950).

³⁹ Brzezinski, *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics* (New York: Praeger, 1964).

⁴⁰ Johnson, “Change in Communist Nations,” in Johnson, ed., *Change in Communist Systems* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1970), 1–33.

⁴¹ Lowenthal, “Development vs. Utopia in Communist Policy,” in Johnson (fn. 40), 33–117.

⁴² Tucker (fn. 22).

Their theories, like Moore's, have a distinctly dialectical quality: in making revolution, the Bolsheviks pursued chiliastic-salvationist goals, but in order to survive, indeed to realize their goals, they were forced to adopt a series of policies that subverted the tenets of the "ideology" (Brzezinski), "goal culture" (Johnson), and "utopia" (Lowenthal) and by requiring organization and discipline, set in motion the inexorable forces of "de-radicalization" (Tucker) in Leninist political regimes. Though not as optimistic as the "strict" developmentalists and convergence theorists, these writers of the revolutionary dialectic believed that history favored modernity over ideology.

Another notable attempt to wed the substantive issue of modernization to Weberian thinking about authority systems emerges from the work of Cyril Black,⁴³ Samuel Huntington,⁴⁴ and Kenneth Jowitt.⁴⁵ These three writers see communism not as a movement for modernization or for the building of a utopian order; rather, they see it as part of a worldwide drive to create viable political communities in response to the functional requisites of survival in an inhospitable environment. But whether the goal is "political modernization" (Black), "political development" (Huntington), or "nation-building" (Jowitt), it still requires the building of a modern economy and value system, for without them nation-states cannot operate in the contemporary world. Weber's notion of charisma then serves to link together economic and political—the intermediate and the ultimate—ends with a unique organizational and ideological device that justifies the ruthlessness required in "breaking through" (Jowitt) the structures of traditional society. Above all, the function of charisma and of the salvationist ideology is to encourage methods of military combat, not only in pursuing revolutionary struggle but also in performing the more mundane, though equally necessary, tasks of resource mobilization and economic development. In contrast to other revisionists, the members of this school eschew the dialectics of Weber's theory in favor of a more linear theory of stages (or, in Huntington's case, sequences) in which charisma is routinized as a matter of choice or functional necessity. Though initially quite optimistic about the prospects of this strategy, at least one member of the school realized that such

⁴³ Black, *The Dynamics of Modernization: A Study in Comparative History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

⁴⁴ Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

⁴⁵ See especially Jowitt, *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development: The Case of Romania, 1945–66* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); and idem, *The Leninist Response to National Dependency*, Research Monograph no. 37 (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1978).

breakthroughs would not always materialize and that the movement could regress and be corrupted into some form of “neo-traditionalism.”⁴⁶

All of these developmental schemes hark back in some way to nineteenth-century evolutionary theory, perhaps most directly to Herbert Spencer’s once-celebrated and influential writings about “industrial society” and modern industrialism.⁴⁷ Overall, Spencer saw societies in terms of organic analogies: they faced and responded to challenges emanating from their internal and external environment. In Spencer’s view, a society responded to these challenges principally and most generally by means of technological innovation, which in turn led to differentiation and growing complexity. But this response may be embedded in different organizational purposes and principles. It may indeed take place in the context of “industrialism” in that some societies—or their elites, if we want to shake off the theoretical encumbrances of Spencer’s functionalism—respond to the challenges of the environment by fostering “internal activities,” above all, by the “growth of agriculture, manufacture and commerce,”⁴⁸ so as to be able to satisfy the material needs of their citizens. However, in contemplating the range of possible responses to the challenges of the environment, Spencer was keenly aware that industrialism was only one option for organizing society and that throughout history people have frequently availed themselves of another option—militancy—in the pursuit of their welfare and objectives. According to Spencer, this second principle of organization orients actors not toward the peaceful development of their productive capacity but toward such “external activities” as plunder and conquest, to which we may add, in the Weberian vein, religious or political crusades designed to reshape the international environment. Although Spencer refers to this principle of organization as “military society,” he has in mind more than a society dominated by the military. Rather, he thinks in terms of one that is organized to fulfill the functional requisites of a garrison state and that is ruled by political classes, whether civilian or military, whose self-justification derives from the “external orientation” of a militant ideology.⁴⁹ To be sure, in modern times such external activities, much like their

⁴⁶ Jowitt (fn. 21), 275–97.

⁴⁷ Spencer, *On Social Evolution*, ed. J. D. Y. Peel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 41.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁴⁹ As a functionalist, Spencer is more concerned with society than with elites. Yet it is important to bear in mind that such orientations may sometimes reflect the interest—material or ideal—of only the elites, who may treat their own society as the means and not as the end of their policies. The modern world is full of such examples, from Hitler to Saddam Hussein, including many communist elites. Thus, what may appear to be “imperial altruism” to the functionalist will in reality only conceal the supreme selfishness of an elite.

internal counterparts, require an industrial base. But in these military societies, Spencer writes, the "industrial part of society continues to be essentially a permanent commissariat, existing solely to supply the needs of governmental-military structures, and having left over for itself enough merely for bare maintenance. Hence the political regulation of its activities."⁵⁰ In writing this, Spencer was aware that in any concrete case the structure of society may include different mixtures of militancy and industrialism, but he was also aware that the two principles were in fundamental conflict. The principles of militancy were apt to subvert the potential benevolence of a trading nation, whereas principles of industrialism were likely to hamper activities of an "external" and military nature.

The idea that the Soviet Union and other communist societies had military and expansionist characteristics has not been totally absent from historical and sociological analysis. For one thing, a number of historians have emphasized the external orientation and activities of Soviet politics.⁵¹ For another, a number of social scientists have noted the militaristic features of communist regimes. In this vein Oscar Lange observed the existence of parallels between the socialist economies of Eastern Europe and the war economy of imperial Germany,⁵² while William Odom,⁵³ Karl Spielmann,⁵⁴ and Victor Zaslavsky⁵⁵ called attention to the "militarization" of Soviet life and to the important role of the military-industrial complex in communist societies. More recently, there have also been occasional references to a "barracks economy" (*kazarmennaya ekonomiiia*) or "barracks society" (*kazarmennoe obshchestvo*) in the East European and the Soviet press.⁵⁶ But whatever the merits of these works and references, neither separately nor together do they amount to a full-fledged theoret-

⁵⁰ Spencer (fn. 47), 154.

⁵¹ Among them, Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Imperialist Revolutionaries* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1978); Adam Ulam, *Expansionism and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-73*, 2d ed. (New York: Praeger, 1974); Richard Pipes, *Survival Is Not Enough* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984); and "Z" [Martin Malia], "To the Stalin Mausoleum," *Daedalus* 119 (Winter 1990), 295-344.

⁵² Lange, *The Political Economy of Socialism* (The Hague: Van Keulen, 1967), 18; or idem, *Papers in Economics and Society* (New York: Pergamon, 1970), 102-3.

⁵³ Odom, "The 'Militarization' of Soviet Society," *Problems of Communism* 25 (September-October 1976), 34-51.

⁵⁴ Spielmann, "Defense Industrialists in the USSR," *Problems of Communism* 25 (September-October 1976), 52-69.

⁵⁵ See especially Zaslavsky, "Soviet Transition to a Market Economy: State Dependent Workers, Populism and Nationalism," in Stanislaw Gomulka and Cyril Lin, eds., *Limits to the Transformation of Soviet-type Systems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁵⁶ I thank my colleagues Gregory Grossman and George Breslauer for calling my attention to these. For a reference to these references, see Stephen Kotkin, "Perestroika in the Soviet Rustbelt," *Harriman Institute Forum* 4 (February 1991), 1-16, at 5.

ical alternative to the popular hypothesis of the industrial society. On the whole, the Spencerian ideas of a military society and garrison state have remained alien to the mainstream of Western social science of recent decades. To some observers this may be a reflection of the politics of academe—its wishful thinking about the ultimately benevolent nature of Soviet society or its desire to be unduly fair to regimes that for a brief period had been maligned as totalitarian. In this respect, critics will recall Reinhold Niebuhr's characterization of communists as the "misguided children of the light" (in contradistinction to fascists, who were simply the "children of darkness").⁵⁷ But then social scientists also had trouble with fascism, conceptualizing it varyingly as an instrument of modernization,⁵⁸ as an alternative road to industrialism,⁵⁹ as a reaction to modernization,⁶⁰ or as an aberration on the road toward a more rational modern world.⁶¹ This being the case, the bias seems to have been less political than epistemological, and rooted in some of the "pernicious postulates"⁶² of neoclassical sociology, according to which both causes and effects of social change are to be sought within the structures of autonomous and self-sustaining social systems.

And yet, nothing would seem to be more obvious than the external orientation and activities of communist states. To begin with, much of the Russian Marxist discourse and the entire debate between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks centered on whether the forthcoming revolution would have a Russian or a global character. The Mensheviks argued in terms of the orthodox epistemology of a theory of stages—socialism in a less developed country meant less chance for freedom; the Bolsheviks were early pioneers of a world system paradigm, arguing that the Russian Revolution was meaningful only as a part of the process of global revolution that would result in an international system without markets and states. This point, too well known to be belabored here, is echoed in the works of Trotsky, Lenin and Stalin, and Bukharin.⁶³ The Bolsheviks

⁵⁷ Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness: A Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of Its Traditional Defense* (New York: Scribner's, 1944).

⁵⁸ A. James Gregor, *Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974).

⁵⁹ Barrington Moore, Jr., *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 433–52.

⁶⁰ Kautsky (fn. 31), 208–17.

⁶¹ Talcott Parsons, "Some Sociological Aspects of Fascist Movements," in Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1954), 124–41.

⁶² Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984), 11–12.

⁶³ Lenin, "Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism," in Lenin, *Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), 1: 667–768; Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution: Results and Prospects*, trans. J. G. Wright and B. Pierce (New York: Merit, 1969), esp. 31, 133; I. V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism" (1924), in Bruce Franklin, ed., *The Essential Stalin: Major*

subsequently demonstrated that this was not empty rhetoric or mobilizational propaganda, by founding the Comintern to coordinate external activities and to foment revolutions across the European continent.

In his rise to the top, Stalin both changed and consolidated the external orientation of the Leninist system. On the one hand, he abandoned the earlier insurrectionist tactics of the Comintern and eventually liquidated the leaders of the organization. On the other hand, he strove to build an externally powerful Soviet state that could carry the torch of world revolution further forward—to be sure, an endeavor masked by the slogan of building socialism in one country. But it is clear from Stalin's own pronouncements on international might and right and on the replacement of the capitalist encirclement of socialism with the socialist encirclement of capitalism⁶⁴ that the domestic transformation of the Soviet Union was not an end in itself but rather was part of a larger international design. This was acknowledged even by Trotsky, Stalin's arch-enemy, and by then a relentless critic of the Soviet Thermidor, when writing about the two-faced character of the Soviet regime: reactionary toward the Russian masses but progressive in waging the international class struggle against the global bourgeoisie.⁶⁵ Isaac Deutscher, one of Trotsky's disciples, was even more emphatic about the external orientation of Stalinism: yes, Stalin was creating new institutions in Russia, but these were not in the service of socialism in one country; they were, rather, in the service of a new worldwide civilization that would supersede the existing capitalist world system.⁶⁶ Once again, this external orientation did not remain empty rhetoric. While ever cautious tactically, Stalin acted upon the principle by annexing territories to the Soviet Union in 1939, by laying down the foundations of the Soviet bloc between 1945 and 1948, and, less successfully, by initiating or sanctioning the Korean War in 1950.

This thesis concerning the continued external orientation of communism seems to be contradicted by the Stalinist drive to industrialize Rus-

Theoretical Writings, 1905–1952 (New York: Doubleday, 1972), esp. 90–98. For Bukharin's views on the struggle between the "world city and the world countryside," with an emphasis on the future role of the peasantry in the world revolution, see Stephen E. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography, 1888–1938* (New York: Random House, 1973), 168.

⁶⁴ See Stalin, "Report to the Seventeenth Congress" (1934) and "Report to the Eighteenth Congress" (1939), in Stalin (fn. 63), 281, 387.

⁶⁵ Perry Anderson, "The Trotskyist Interpretation of Stalin," in Tariq Ali, ed., *The Stalinist Legacy: Its Impact on Twentieth-Century World Politics* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1984), 120.

⁶⁶ Deutscher, "Socialism in One Country," in Ali (fn. 65), 104. On the same theme, see Ken Jowitt, "Moscow Centre," in *Eastern European Politics and Societies* 1 (Fall 1987), 296–348.

sia, which subsequently became a centerpiece of modernization literature in the field of communist studies. True, this drive was a key ambition and accomplishment of Stalinism, aimed at building a new system of production in the country. But the character of the process and its accomplishments were distinctly different from what they were in the Western historical experience: not only was the process driven by the state, but it was also designed to benefit the state. This is to say that Stalinist industrialization contributed little to popular welfare. Indeed, the very opposite was the case: millions were sacrificed to enforce mobilization campaigns and famines. Nor did this drive bring about "self-sustaining" (that is, noncoercive) growth or international economic competitiveness, the hallmarks of Western economic development. Stalin created a perfect example of Spencer's model of militancy—a powerful military state in which the "industrial part of society" remained a "mere commissariat existing solely to supply the needs of governmental-military structures of an externally powerful state."⁶⁷ The term *garrison state* is therefore not an inappropriate description of the Stalinist political system. It is worth noting that this designation was recently resuscitated not only by detractors but also by one of the erstwhile champions of Stalinism.⁶⁸

The relevance of the garrison state model becomes still more obvious in the context of the broader sociocultural aspects of Soviet Marxism or state socialism. Today, of course, the very terms are seen by many as oxymorons, and it has become fashionable to assert that Stalinism had little to do with genuine Marxism or socialism. Yet Stalin's thinking was deeply steeped in the ideas of nineteenth-century Marxism, except that as a practical matter these ideas were carefully filtered through the functional requisites of maintaining a powerful and effective state. Some elements of Marxist orthodoxy passed etatist muster and were retained for formulating public policy. Thus, Stalin unhesitatingly carried out the Marxist mandate to abolish private property, because this "socialization" of the means of production was really etatization leading to a form of ownership that gave the state direct access to society's manpower and resources. Similarly, and much like Bismarck, who had little love for socialism, Stalin embraced some of the welfare aspects of classical socialism—improvements in public health and education and even some access to high culture—because these old socialist objectives converged with the interests of the state in assembling a literate and physically fit cohort of recruits for army and industry. At the same time, the Stalinist

⁶⁷ Spencer (fn. 47), 154.

⁶⁸ See interview with Edward Ochab in Teresa Toranska, "*Them*": *Stalin's Polish Puppets*, trans. A. Kolakowska (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 37.

state, again much like its Prussian counterpart, had no use for feminism, sexual license, or challenges to the traditional family, so these elements of classical Marxism were dropped from the socialist agenda in the 1930s, together with the idea of strict egalitarianism in both army and industry. Indeed, such egalitarianism was contemptuously dismissed as *uravnilovka* (a game of equalizing) and replaced by the symbols and realities of hierarchy and discipline. The restoration of military ranks, braids, and decorations was only one conspicuous case in point. The result was a web of social relationships more reminiscent of historic Austria, Prussia, or the Byzantine world than of the class structure associated with the modern industrial societies of the West.

The post-Stalin period witnessed the decline of charismatic salvationism but not the end of militancy and externally oriented public policy. The period may have seen "the withering away of the concept of utopia and utopianism in the thought and practices of the political elite,"⁶⁹ but the conviction that there was a "historical trend toward the inevitable victory of socialism over capitalism" survived.⁷⁰ During the Khrushchev years this conviction was articulated publicly in a new doctrine that combined talk of "peaceful coexistence" with bluster about "burying" capitalism. The Brezhnev years were those of détente, and the rhetoric became less shrill. Nonetheless, it was accompanied by an unprecedented effort to build up the military strength of the Soviet Union; the rate of growth of the military sector was maintained at a steady 4 percent per annum⁷¹ until it reached, by recent calculations, between one-fourth and one-fifth of the Soviet national product.⁷² Just as significantly, the buildup and the policy of détente were linked to the support of national liberation movements in the Third World, an effort that required the massive mobilization of the resources of the Soviet state.

In view of Gorbachev's habit of dismissing the Brezhnev years as a period of stagnation, it is important to reiterate Bialer's view that in their own terms these Soviet policies represented a major success.⁷³ It was during these years that the Soviet Union emerged as a full-fledged global power by acquiring nuclear parity with the U.S., reaching and maintaining conventional military superiority in Europe, and developing a naval capability to project its military might to faraway corners of the world. But despite these military and political advances, the Soviet Union re-

⁶⁹ Seweryn Bialer, *The Soviet Paradox* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 54.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁷² John Eckhaus, "How Life in the USSR Compares with the U.S." *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 18, 1990, p. A6.

⁷³ Bialer (fn. 69), 46.

mained an economically backward country with a relatively low per capita GNP and with a still lower level of per capita consumption.⁷⁴ Bialer describes this as the "Soviet paradox."⁷⁵ But like all paradoxes, this one is only apparent; in reality it reflects the logic of a military society that pursues external objectives at the expense of the welfare of its citizens.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the vulnerabilities of Soviet society have been those of militancy and not of industrialism. And what are these? To begin with, we are dealing here with a "barracks economy" to which the metaphor of growth has only limited applicability, for the bulk of investment capital is used for economically unproductive purposes. Indeed, for each quantity of surplus that increases military power, the civilian sector becomes weaker, or at least does not become stronger. There are, then, definite limits to the extent that a garrison state can increase its power by drawing on the manpower and resources of its domestic base. Historically, leaders of such states resorted to a three-step grand strategy to overcome these limits, a strategy that reflected the logic of their ends, means, and potential vulnerabilities. First, they engaged in a burst of mobilization to gain temporary strategic advantage over their adversaries; then they executed a coup de main against an area within the heartland of the rival domain; finally, they consolidated their gains by replenishing their resources, by paying off their populations, and by preparing for the next round of confrontation. In essence, this was the strategy followed by Germany in the first half of this century. Neither one of the two world wars broke out accidentally: Germany initiated them at a time when its military had acquired a strategic edge that its leaders felt would slip away if war were further delayed. The same conventional strategy of militancy was followed by Stalin in 1939–40 and again in 1944–49. In both instances the Soviet state acquired more advanced economies and manpower to provide resources for the reconstruction of its military machine. In so doing, the Soviet leadership was already preparing for the next stage; the Berlin blockade, the creation of an East German state, and the inclusion of the French and Italian parties in the Cominform are then easy to construe as preparations for a European coup de main.

⁷⁴ Eckhaus (fn. 72) puts Soviet per capita GNP at 34.3 percent of U.S. figures and per capita consumption at 28.2 percent of the latter. Other sources see Soviet income as either stagnant or declining in relation to the economies of the U.S. or the European Defense Community. Earlier estimates put these figures at 42 percent and 37 percent, respectively. See Herbert Block, *The Planetary Product*, Special Report no. 58 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 1979), 6–12; and Paul Marer, *Dollar GNP's of the USSR and Eastern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

⁷⁵ Bialer (fn. 69), 191.

This strategic concept took on a different coloration with the dawning of the nuclear age—the risks of militancy were infinitely higher than those faced by the leaders of Germany and Japan when they launched World War II. Slowly, therefore, Stalin and certainly his successors assimilated the idea of mutually assured destruction and steered their strategy away from the objective of a coup de main. True, there were some probings of Western resolve in Cuba and Berlin, but in the interim the Cominform with its Franco-Italian orientation was dissolved. A Euro-centered global strategy gave way to the doctrine of peaceful coexistence, in which the control of nuclear weapons combined with the promise of aggressive support for wars of “national liberation” in the Third World. But this policy had its own dialectic: it was successful in establishing a number of revolutionary governments, but these impoverished countries yielded no economic assets, only liabilities. If in the short run these liabilities could be covered from unexpected energy windfalls and Western loans to the satellite governments, in the long run they were the source of endemic shortages.

However obvious these dilemmas may appear in retrospect, they were not well articulated in Soviet policy debate. Major decisions were postponed by an aging and ailing leadership whose hesitation also reflected the inability of the political class to come to terms with a harsh reality. Even Gorbachev seems to have arrived on the scene with a mandate to make the old system work rather than to take extremely bold and risky initiatives, and there is every reason to believe him (and Shevardnadze) that he became fully aware of the magnitude of the dilemma only after becoming first secretary. Certainly, his first measures in office were corrective if not palliative, a throwback to the “incrementalism” of earlier days. But then he proceeded quickly, moving from the ridiculous to the sublime, from the rationing of vodka to a “new thinking” that “subordinated foreign policy to domestic reform”⁷⁶ for the first time in Soviet history. With that, Gorbachev abandoned the political notion of an international class struggle for the ideas of economic competition and competitiveness.⁷⁷ Translated into Spencer’s language, this was nothing less than a genuine shift from the principles of militancy to true industrialism.

Further examination of Gorbachev’s new thinking reveals two closely

⁷⁶ Vendulka Kubalkova and Albert Anderson Cruickshank, *Thinking New about Soviet “New Thinking”* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1989), 3.

⁷⁷ Ibid. See also Jack Snyder, “The Gorbachev Revolution: The Waning of Soviet Expansionism?” *International Security* 12 (Winter 1987–88), 93–131.

related aspects. One is the famous perestroika, the restructuring of the economy to make it internationally competitive. The other is the creation of a "common European home" stretching from the Urals to the Atlantic. Though taken by some as a piece of propaganda, this slogan is in fact rooted in the very logic of perestroika: the Soviet economy cannot successfully adjust to the international market without some measure of cooperation from the most advanced states. In this respect history is repeating itself. The idea harks back not only to the dreams of nineteenth-century "Westernizers" but also to the prerevolutionary Bolsheviks who had hoped to solve the problem of "primitive accumulation" by establishing a single continentwide socialist economy. Then as now the advanced countries were expected to share their wealth out of a deeper impulse of fellow feeling.

While this design of perestroika cum Europe stands up to the test of logic, its elements have their own dialectic. First, perestroika required glasnost, the free flow of information that is a prerequisite for successful adjustment to the international market. But such an open stream of economic information can easily spill over into politics, to permit the massive mobilization of popular sentiment, perhaps even against perestroika itself. Meanwhile, the "common home" strategy also had its price: to win the acceptance of the West, the Soviet Union had to abandon Eastern Europe, as well as its long-standing support for wars of liberation. In some quarters this had the smell of treason, the sacrifice of high principle for rank economic benefit. The policy thus may have had its enthusiasts in the streets of Germany and Britain but certainly not among Soviet conservatives or among radicals of the global periphery. Perhaps still more significantly, cooperation with the West required that the Soviet Union put a Western democratic veneer on its institutions, to win the approval of the club of bourgeois nations of the Continent. This democracy, rudimentary though it is, threatens not only the stability of the government but the very integrity of the state by giving rise and legitimacy to the centrifugal forces that Gorbachev is currently trying to tame.

It has been argued here that the Soviet Union was a military society under Stalin, remained a military society under Stalin's successors, and is currently in the throes of devolution from Spencerian militancy to competitive industrialism. But what about the rest of the communist world? To begin with Eastern Europe: its countries were closely integrated with the Soviet Union into a single large imperial unit within which little diversity was tolerated; yet within only a few years of Stalin's death, the member states of the bloc began to drift in different directions. Whereas the literature customarily distinguishes between the "soft" and

the “hard” regimes, it makes sense from the vantage point of this essay to speak of “domesticists” and “internationalists,” because these terms roughly correspond to the Spencerian categories of militancy and industrialism. The domesticists comprised four countries—Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania—whose elites more or less conspicuously disengaged themselves from the external designs of Soviet geopolitics and tried to create new identities for themselves as “developers” who focused on the economic welfare of their own peoples. The first three of these countries experimented with new property relations, simulated markets, and softer political controls to permit the more efficient flow of information to their production units. By contrast, the fourth country, Romania, set out to apply the classical Stalinist framework of military mobilization to obtain such non-Stalinist objectives, the building of a prosperous, internationally competitive, and “multilaterally developed” industrial economy. Neither model worked, though. Reflecting the logic of political rationality, even the reforms of the “liberal” economies could not surmount some of the structural constraints of garrison economies, bureaucratic meddling, centralized indicators, and regulated prices. As Janos Kornai recently observed, these policies faltered not because managers in the social sector were corrupt or incompetent but because they were forced to operate in an institutional context and culture that had not prepared them—because it could not prepare them—to behave like economically rational entrepreneurs.⁷⁸ This economic failure ultimately destroyed not only popular confidence in the regimes but the self-confidence of the political classes of these countries as well.

Unlike the domesticists, four East European countries—Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Albania—remained good internationalists to the very end. One of them, Albania, went its own quirky revolutionary way. Whether by choice or necessity, the elites of the other three remained part of the bloc, eager promoters of the grand design of Soviet geopolitics. They lent credence to their tough anti-imperialist rhetoric with their large military budgets and their active support for revolutionary movements of the Third World. Their ultimate failure was brought about not by economic crisis but by the grand transformation of Soviet politics that left them bereft of their very *raison d'être*.

Being a huge country, the Chinese People's Republic could strike out on its own and fashion its own institutions. China's leaders accepted the Leninist logic of militancy but applied it to the conditions of the 1950s, that is, to the conditions of the nuclear age, the technology of which

⁷⁸ See the review of Kornai, *The Road to a Free Economy*, in *Socialist Economies in Transition* 1 (June 1990), 3.

China acquired early. In Mao's own thinking these weapons could in the short term serve as an umbrella; in the long term, even as an instrument of the world revolution. This at least is the conclusion one can draw from his statement of 1957, that in a nuclear war socialism would suffer only demographic losses, easily replenished, while capitalism would lose its very last war.⁷⁹ Strategic principles were revised, and Mao returned to the concept of a worldwide guerrilla war, à la Bukharin, in which the global countryside would surround and destroy the global metropole.⁸⁰ But throughout these years the concept of a nuclear umbrella obviated the need for "mainline" mobilizational strategies that so much characterized Soviet society during the previous decades. If in the 1930s military might demanded the building and maintenance of vast armies of tanks, airplanes, and artillery that required broad-based industrialization in depth, the era of nuclear arms required only narrow sectoral and functionally specific infrastructural development. Whatever the validity of this reasoning, it permitted Mao and other Third World revolutionaries to indulge in their own "populist" priorities and to pursue more egalitarian and consensual politics. These policies may have raised revolutionary morale, but they did not promote economic efficiency: China, Vietnam, Cuba, Cambodia, North Korea, and Nicaragua could all boast victories on the battlefield, all of them against larger and better equipped enemies. Yet their respective labor forces could not perform such simple production tasks as the harvesting of rice and sugar cane. The communist regimes of this century will be remembered then for their military prowess and not for their successes in social engineering.

It is not entirely clear to the outside observer whether China's post-Mao reforms were motivated by these failures of social engineering or by the weakness of China's army in a conventional encounter with its Vietnamese communist neighbor. Like their Soviet counterparts, China's leaders understood that effective markets require a free flow of goods, people, and information. And like the Soviets, they, too, saw their own version of glasnost spill over into the political sphere as a demand for political participation. Like many in the Soviet Union, the majority of the Chinese political class perceived these demands not only as a threat to the markets but also as a threat to the existence of the state. Herein lie the similarities. But lacking an economically prosperous "home" to which they could return, Deng and Li were far less restrained than their Soviet counterparts had been. They drowned the movement in blood,

⁷⁹ See Stuart Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, rev. ed. (New York: Praeger, 1974), 128.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 128–32.

ironically in hopes of creating a "softer" authoritarian regime that could balance freedom and efficiency in the interest of development. There is some precedent for the success of such a strategy in the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising of 1956, though the long-term success of the strategy remains questionable.

INDUSTRIALISM: FROM SOCIETY TO WORLD SYSTEM

Does the above discussion of revolutionary militancy imply that the concept of industrialism is irrelevant to the study of seventy years of communism in the Soviet Union, and to forty-some years of the same in China and Eastern Europe? The answer is negative. On the contrary one can argue quite convincingly that technological innovation, including its impact on beliefs, structures, and social goods, represents the only logical point of departure for the study of both communism and the dynamics of political change across the wider landscape of the modern world. But this requires dropping some of the postulates of the classical paradigm that saw societies as analytically self-contained units and that depicted social processes like industrialization as repeating themselves from society to society "plucked from all space and time."⁸¹ Instead, some recent contributions to world systems theories suggest, first, an examination of the modernizing experience of the innovative "core" societies as a whole and then an examination of the impact of this experience on the societies themselves, as well as on social, economic, and political outcomes in the global peripheries and semiperipheries. The finding will be that economic processes are interdependent and that while the progress of one sector may become the source of a beneficial "spread" effect, it can also cause a more deleterious backwash, creating stagnation and decay, even as it reproduces and magnifies existing patterns of international income inequality.

Marxist scholars were the original proponents of this concept. They argued that this backwash was the result of exploitation: one version of the theory considers this exploitation a matter of coercion, pure and simple; another version derives from the controversial Marxist theories of surplus value and unequal exchange. These theories hold that when economies at different levels of sophistication trade with each other, surplus value is transferred from the less to the more developed economy.⁸²

⁸¹ Robert A. Nisbet, *Social Change and History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 303.

⁸² See, e.g., James D. Cockcroft, André Gunder Frank, and Dale L. Johnson, *Dependence and Underdevelopment* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972); or see Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

In some versions of the theory, these exchanges presume a strict division of labor and distribution of power among three sectors of the world economy—the core, the periphery, and the semiperiphery.⁸³

Especially popular in the context of Third World studies, these theories of surplus transfer also entered the field of comparative communism and have stirred a lively debate as to whether Soviet-type economies should be regarded as underdeveloped, developed, or developing. Theorists of the world economy generally argued that the more recent economic stagnation of communist societies was largely the result of their reentry into the capitalist world market, and that in this market communist societies occupied a semiperipheral position as both exploited and exploiters. Victims of the capitalist core, they were also victimizers of the still weaker peripheral economies.⁸⁴

Another, perhaps less controversial explanation of the backwash is presented by what may be referred to as neo-liberal theory.⁸⁵ Like classical liberal thinkers, these theorists regard markets as the realm of rational choice in the pursuit of private gain. But unlike Smith and other classical liberals, they do not see these private choices producing equilibrium or adding up to public benefit. When a computer scientist leaves New Delhi for California, his private gain will translate into public loss for his country and thereby contribute to the disequilibrium that already prevails in the world economy. The same can be said about the flight of peripheral capital in search of a better ratio between risk and return. These flows of capital and talent are endemic and are believed to result in the development of still more underdevelopment on the global peripheries.

While never very popular among students of communist societies, the phenomenon is of considerable relevance to communist political behavior. In general, less developed countries confronting such potential for drain must choose between two unpalatable alternatives: either they allow the wages for skilled labor to rise to world market levels, thus contributing to domestic income inequality, or they prevent the free move-

⁸³ Wallerstein (fn. 82), esp. 15, 60–63.

⁸⁴ For this argument, see Timothy W. Luke and Carl Boggs, "Soviet Subimperialism and the Crisis of Bureaucratic Centralism," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 15 (Spring–Summer 1982), 95–124; and Timothy W. Luke, "On the Nature of Soviet Society," *Telos* 63 (Spring 1985), 178–87. For a vigorous counterargument, see Victor Zaslavsky, "Soviet Society and World System Analysis," *Telos* 62 (Winter 1984), 155–68; and Andrew Arato, "Between Reductionism and Relativism: Soviet Society as a World System," *Telos* 63 (Spring 1985), 178–87.

⁸⁵ Gunnar Myrdal, *Rich Lands and Poor* (New York: Harper, 1958), esp. 28–38; Albert Hirschman, *The Strategy of Economic Development* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 183–98.

ment of labor to the high-wage areas of the world economy. Communist governments tended to adopt the latter strategy. The iron and bamboo curtains, the Berlin Wall, and the recurrent attempts by these governments to put price tags on emigrants are explained at least in part by these countries' peripheral position in the world economy.

A third set of explanations grows out of modernization theory itself. Whether or not the core may develop at the expense of the periphery, the success of the process itself may have an additional relativizing and deleterious impact on the outsiders. First, technological breakthroughs have historically changed human consciousness by creating an awareness of choice. Born out of particular social configurations, this new consciousness knows no physical boundaries and will be diffused globally at a faster rate than the diffusion of production technologies. Together with the spread of new images of consumption, the spread of new expectations creates a sense of relative deprivation⁸⁶ and accounts for what neoclassical writers perceived as the "reversal of historical sequences"⁸⁷ or the chronic "gap" between "mobilization" and "development."⁸⁸ As a corollary, the successful industrialization of the core societies, with their complex institutions and military capabilities, creates a more complex international system in which the less advanced societies must upgrade their own administrative, military, and political institutions if they want to interact effectively with the leading societies of the world. This makes further demands on scarce resources and impedes savings for investment.

While these hypotheses were first developed in the context of Third World studies, the concepts underlying them are relevant to communist history as well. First, the paradigm offers a new perspective on the origins of communism. Looking through the prism of the world system, one would still be inclined to locate these origins in modern industrialism, much as do the works of Hannah Arendt or Adam Ulam.⁸⁹ However, this term will no longer refer to the industrialization of Russia (or China); it will refer instead to the industrial revolutions of England, Western Europe, and the U.S., with all their adverse consequences for the countries of the periphery. If Russia and China were troubled lands before their respective communist revolutions, it was not because their societies were changing too rapidly. Rather, it was because the industri-

⁸⁶ See Ted R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), esp. 92-122; and Nicholas Xenos, *Scarcity and Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

⁸⁷ See Lucian W. Pye, *Aspects of Political Development* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), esp. 188-200.

⁸⁸ See Huntington (fn. 44), 54-56.

⁸⁹ See Arendt (fn. 2); and Adam B. Ulam, *The Unfinished Revolution: Marxism and Communism in the Modern World*, 2d rev. ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1979).

alization of the core countries had created a new international system that put immense pressures upon them to mobilize their resources. Further, it fostered widespread aspirations that the economic and social systems could not possibly fulfill. If the peasants suffered absolute deprivation under the burden of taxation for purposes of state building, the workers suffered from a deep sense of relative deprivation as their rising wages continued to lag far behind those of the workers of the advanced societies. The radical intelligentsia that arose toward the end of the nineteenth century was a political class that sought to establish its own status and identity by organizing these popular frustrations into coherent political programs.

The concept of a world system also takes us a step closer to understanding the roots of Bolshevik utopianism and charismatic salvationism. Durkheim, Arendt, and, more ambiguously, Weber related these phenomena to discontinuities in the cultural systems of particular societies, which, as noted, raised the problem of empirical referents. The new paradigm offers a way out of this dilemma by focusing not on the crisis of Russian or Chinese culture but on the crisis of the broader, liberal world culture, or *zeitgeist*, of the nineteenth century. A key element of this culture was the belief, widely held, institutionalized, and enforced, that the virtues of hard work, "self-command," and sacrifice would enable the societies of the periphery to catch up with the nations of the core—a belief that was shattered by the invisible forces of the market by the beginning of this century.⁹⁰ Marxist salvationism was a response both to this anomie and to the cognitive vacuum created by the failure of the developmental promises of liberalism.

To move one step further, this globalized version of modernization theory permits of a fuller appreciation of the pressures that had to be borne by the economies of the Soviet Union and other communist countries. While the systems by their very nature and objectives manufactured shortages, these shortages were aggravated by their position in the international economy. The Soviet Union, much like Germany in the first half of the century, was not just a military challenger of the status quo but was also a challenger coming from a position of relative economic inferiority. Yet such a military-political challenge requires a parity or superiority in real expenditures. By all available evidence, in the Soviet case at least, these expenditures were indeed appropriated, but from a society in which per capita GNP was only a fraction of the American

⁹⁰ For an excellent discussion of this crisis, see Robert W. Tucker, *The Inequality of Nations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 21–24.

figure.⁹¹ Worse still from the Soviet point of view, given its own position in the world economy as a leading producer and potential borrower, the United States was in a position to raise levels of spending and thus to accelerate the pace of the arms race. When this happened after 1979, the Soviet leaders were not only squeezed, but they also faced Hitler's make-or-break dilemma of 1938, whether to use their temporary advantage then or to change their overall geopolitical concept.

Related to this are the social and political consequences of relativized scarcity and deprivation generated by the international demonstration effect of the more advanced Western societies. In the interwar period the Soviets neutralized this demonstration effect by building physical barriers and by banning travel to and from the Soviet Union. After 1945 China and Eastern Europe followed that example: their iron and bamboo curtains were designed to keep people in as well as to keep ideas out. Still more drastically, after World War II millions of Soviet soldiers and prisoners who had been exposed to the substantially higher living standards of Central Europe were consigned to concentration and reeducation camps. The logic of this brutal policy became evident during the Brezhnev years, when some of the existing barriers were taken down, and people and images from the West and from certain Third World countries began to penetrate the various curtains. Once this happened, the communist political classes responded like the political classes of other backward countries: they began to use their official powers to expropriate, whether by legal or corrupt means, goods from the rest of the population. Thus, like most other peripheral states, the communist states began to act as instruments of income equalization—but not so much among the different strata of the citizenry as between the communist political class and the elites of the advanced industrial societies. The populations meanwhile suffered a twofold effect of relative deprivation: one by comparison between their own living standard and that of their counterparts in the West, the other by comparison between themselves and the elites of their ostensibly egalitarian societies. Directly or indirectly then, the international demonstration effect was the single most important destabilizer of communist states. The sense of relative deprivation and cries of corruption went together to delegitimize communist regimes.

Finally, the perspective of the larger modern world system should permit us to adjudicate the debate on whether communist societies ought to be treated as developed, developing, or underdeveloped. On the one

⁹¹ See Eckhaus (fn. 72); Block (fn. 74); and Marer (fn. 74).

hand, adherents of the convergence school rightly point out that over the past forty to seventy years communist societies have become more complex and differentiated (even though one should still examine more closely the orders and kinds of complexity encountered in military societies). On the other hand, one can also agree with those observers who point out that over the same period communist societies underwent a quantum change, whether measured by domestic product or by indicators of health, education, and welfare. But while this record may be impressive in its own terms, or in comparison with a Third World society, it was relativized by the experience of the West, the only yardstick by which the citizens of communist societies measured material progress. The case of China is as illustrative here as are the cases of Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and East Germany.⁹² Soviet-type societies are characterized by complexity cum scarcity, a combination that sets them apart from both First and Third World countries and especially from the historical experience of Western Europe and the United States. In the latter, the growth of complexity and material abundance went hand in hand and together were responsible for the rise of liberal democracy and political pluralism. This historical contrast has on the whole been ignored in the sociological treatment of the countries of the Soviet bloc, yet it is precisely this contrast that vitiates the seemingly powerful logic of convergence theory. For while the logic of complexity may well be the logic of decentralization, this logic is challenged by the hard realities of relative and absolute scarcities that the leaders of these societies had to contend with. Gorbachevism may well have stemmed from the realization that a more complex society cannot be effectively managed from a single center of economic and political authority. But this logic alone does not predict democracy or successful pluralism.

CONCLUSIONS

The triple agenda of this essay was to identify competing theories of political change, to examine their relevance to communist studies, and to pull these theories into a single, more comprehensive intellectual scheme. The most relevant constructs identified were Weber's theories of routinization and salvationism, Spencer's models of militancy and industrialism, and finally, the notion of a "modern world system," originally identified with Marxist scholarship but easily accommodated within other schools of thought as well. For while one may not want to accept the

⁹² For this problem of relativization and the "power of corruption," see Chinese officials Shen Beijang and Wang Daohan in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 1, 1989, p. A24.

proposition that the "core" of the world system had arisen by sucking away the lifeblood of the peripheries, it is hard to refute the argument that the historical fact of economic development in the global metropole has created a plethora of adverse, confining, and debilitating conditions that peripheral actors are trying to overcome or escape. Spencer's grand dichotomy enters the picture because it provides two alternative routes, or ideal models, for the escape from these conditions. Meanwhile, Weber's idea of salvationism is relevant as a particular way of conceptualizing the art of the possible and as a response to crises of consciousness at critical historical junctures. Change under communism has accordingly been a two-track affair: first, the rationalization of salvationism, second, the transformation of militancy into some form of industrialism. Although both of these processes have an internal logic, it would be a gross mistake to ignore the influence of external conditions upon actual outcomes.

Pursuing these themes one by one the article attempted to develop a better view of the past and show how certain pieces of the communist puzzle may fit this more comprehensive scheme. It also tried to show how communism fits into a larger family of political movements and regimes. The question that remains is how this broader paradigm can help us to map out the future of communism and, more generally, of revolutionary militancy in the modern world.

Clearly, in the last few years a number of communist regimes simply melted away. In others communist elites claim to have abandoned the path of revolutionary militancy in favor of developmental strategies, in some cases combined with the quest for democracy. In some cases at least doubts will linger concerning the sincerity of this choice. But even where it seems certain that such a choice has in fact been made, outcomes will be beset by contradictions, as policymakers confront "confining conditions" that only few nations have been able to overcome on their own in modern history. The most successful cases on record are those of European and Far Eastern nations in the aftermath of World War II. They seem to suggest that success is most likely when development is undertaken in the context of a larger cooperative design sponsored by the more advanced nations of the world. This is a perception that Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and so many East European leaders subscribe to by conjuring up images of a common market or, more loftily, of a common home shared with the richer nations, as preferable to images of autochthonous development. Indeed, just as this article was being prepared for press, one Soviet leader was in Tokyo, the other in Strasbourg, painting bleak pictures of the Soviet future and pleading for economic generosity and po-

litical sympathy. The impulse to respond to such dire warnings may not be absent; in fact it may be quite strong. But questions remain as to the capacity of Westerners to absorb such sacrifice and, in the last analysis, as to how large that common edifice can be. The sheer volume of demand for resources is staggering and may vastly exceed available supply in funds, opportunities, and technical expertise. While some of the lesser nations of Europe may find admittance into a common home, the major nations of the former communist world may simply be too big to salvage and for solutions other than their own. Under these circumstances in many of these countries democracy may well remain a dream, or mere facade, and regression into militancy a perennial temptation. The political classes of big nations in particular may be tempted to believe that it is easier to adjust the world market than to adjust themselves to its rules.

For a while, especially during the heady winter months of 1989–90, the view was widely held that Leninism, together with other revolutionary movements, had exhausted itself and that the future belonged to liberal elites with rational designs of economic markets and political pluralism. This argument rested on fragile foundations, however, and overlooked some of the harsh realities of our modern world. Most significantly, it overlooked the fact that the global inequalities that had produced Leninism in Russia are more salient now than then and are being reproduced at a much faster rate than in the early modern age. Thus, even if old cleavages between East and West were closed and the conflicts of the cold war era contained, other cleavages, most notably between North and South, are likely to deepen further, with billions remaining on the wrong side of the economic fence. Thus while Leninism as we have known it for decades may not replicate itself in exact detail, other forms of revolutionary militancy are likely to arise and have mass appeal. Curiously, just as we were spinning our dreams about the “end of history,” a revolutionary war was in the making, to display within a few months all the features that we associate with the behavior of Spencer’s military societies and states: the marshaling of resources for investment in the military sector; an expedition of plunder tied to higher geopolitical purposes; a challenge to the structure of the existing world system, together with a revolutionary challenge to basic norms of international conduct that, while of “core” origin, have been universalized in the past century. The major peril now is that such movements of righteous militancy may have access to vastly more destructive technologies than heretofore and that with their highly instrumental view of their own society, they may be willing to take risks that will make the Leninist regimes of the past appear as models of moderation and responsibility.

To prevent this from happening must be the first priority of international cooperation in what has rhetorically been designated as a “new” order of the world. Should such cooperation fail, not only those who occupy the few niches of global privilege, but the entire human race, will find themselves in jeopardy.