NUMBER 200

The Militarization of Socialism in Russia, 1902-1946

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This paper, which is adapted from a broader study entitled *The Russian Revolution and Socialism*, served as the basis for a lecture presentation at the Kennan Institute on May 7, 1985.

Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies
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The point of departure of this study is the perennial question debated world-wide among political circles on the left, and answered without equivocation on the right. Is the Soviet Union socialist? And if so, is socialism essentially encompassed in its Soviet form?*

The immediacy of these questions is illustrated by a variety of recent statements issuing from non-Soviet Marxist quarters, official and unofficial. For example, three Hungarian dissident writers argue in *Dictatorship Over Needs* that Soviet society is neither capitalist nor socialist, nor even a transitional form, but a unique system based on class rule by a bureaucracy.[1] Official Yugoslav political theory describes the Soviet system not as socialism, but as "etatism."[2] "Socialism is *totally* incompatible with Stalinism, as it is with the totalitarian state and any other system of political oppression," writes the economist Branko Horvat.[3] Chinese thinking under Mao put down the Soviet model as the "capitalist road," and more recently China has attributed Soviet behavior to the expansionist interests of the bureaucratic class.[4] Adriano Guerra, a leading Italian communist party observer of the Soviet scene, recently said that "What has now faded away is the idea that the problems of the world can find their solution by following the example and the model of the Soviet Union and by identifying the struggle for world socialism with the policies of the Soviet state."[5] On the other hand, conservative thought in the West holds that experiments in socialism lead inexorably toward totalitarianism of the Soviet type.[6]

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*I am particularly indebted to Dorothea Hanson of the Kennan Institute for her research assistance on this project.

While such assertions help dramatize the question of whether the Soviet Union is socialist or not, none of them fully clarifies the issue. Scholastic hair-splitting over what is and what is not socialism cannot take the place of accurate definition and a readiness to describe the Soviet system. It is more fruitful to ask what type and degree of socialism has developed in the course of the Soviet experience and what historical circumstances might be invoked to explain its development.

The term socialism is employed in this paper as neutrally as possible--as a variable descriptive element of any society--but not the sole determinant of the character of the Soviet social system. Socialism in its essence can be defined as any idea or practice of public control over economic enterprise. Like the definition given by the great French sociologist Emile Durkheim, who said that "We denote as socialism every doctrine which demands the connection of all economic functions, or of certain among them ... to the directing and conscious centers of society,"[7] this definition is designedly loose.

Socialism as thus understood comes in various forms and degrees--total or partial, sudden or gradual, violent or peaceful, and dictatorial or democratic. It is often associated with state property and the nationalization of business, though this is not essential to the concept. Alternatives might include municipal enterprises, cooperative and communal organizations, worker participation in management, or forms of public planning and deregulation that vitiate the nominal power of private ownership.

Historically, socialism is a heavily value-laden term--either positive or

negative--and this makes its use risky in an analytic sense. Nonetheless, its prominence in world-wide political thought during the last 150 years makes it impossible to avoid. Fruitless debates occasioned by the unexamined use of the term are best set aside by addressing semantic issues at the outset.

The purpose of the book of which this paper is to form a part is to explain the type of socialism that has developed in the Soviet Union. It undertakes to analyze a series of historical influences that have contributed to the Soviet outcome. From this foundation, it goes on to consider international reactions to and misperceptions of Soviet socialism and to assess the impact of these responses on the evolution of politics around the world in this century.

The Soviet Union represents a form of socialism, but a form governed by Russia's particular historical traditions, its revolutionary experience, and the currents of social evolution that it has shared with the rest of the modern or modernizing world. Much less can Soviet socialism be explained by the specific ideology of Marxism with which it is officially associated. But foreign reactions, whether favorable or antagonistic, have tended to be based on ideological superficialities. Either the Soviet Union is endorsed because it appears to be socialist, or socialism is rejected because it appears to be Soviet.[8]

The ideological element in Soviet socialism is by no means excluded from analysis in this project. Socialism is addressed at the outset as the prevailing world ideology of change during the decades immediately preceding

and following the Russian revolution. Marxism in particular is analyzed as the utopian inspiration of the revolution and its ideological legitimization. As a process of social breakdown and reconstruction, the Russian revolution was to some extent independent of the individual will and ideological commitments of its makers. It is often assessed as the context and conditioner of the Soviet type of socialism, particularly regarding its violent and disrupting effect on the social fabric.

Other contributing elements addressed in the book are the prematurity of the Russian revolution in Marxist terms and the burden of developmental needs, the continuities of Russian political culture and political methods, the broad tendency of modern societies toward large hierarchical organizations, and the circumstances contributing to the distinctive form ultimately taken by socialism in Soviet Russia--namely militarized socialism.

With a deaf ear to ideological descriptions, if one observes the Soviet political, economic, and social system as it has developed over the past 40 or 50 years, one can see that its basic characteristics are military. This applies both to its structure and to its spirit and purposes. To review the essential features of Soviet totalitarianism--its centralized command structure, its ranks and hierarchies, the manner in which it mobilized resources, the discipline in thought and action enforced by police and censorship apparatuses, and the solidarity of the nation in facing its external enemies--is to recite the normal characteristics of a military organization. Soviet Russia is a garrison state where everyone, in effect, is in the army. The French ex-Marxist critic Cornelius Castoriadis has termed it

a "stratocracy," that is, a system ruled by military interests.[9] It is close to what the Marquis de Mirabeau (and perhaps Voltaire before him) said of Frederick the Great's Prussia. It is "not a country that has an army; it is an army that has a country.[10]

Such an outcome for a system dedicated to socialism is the ultimate paradox considering that socialism until 1914 was identified everywhere with anti-militarist, anti-imperialist, anti-nationalist, and anti-authoritarian views. In the Soviet experience, socialism was turned from the antitheses of militarism into an instrument of militarism--a method of economic organization whereby the resources of society were maximally geared to serving the needs and priorities of the military interest. The transformation that actually took place in the shape and purpose of Soviet socialism reflected formative historical forces (revolution and dogmatic ideology, backwardness and tradition, the bureaucratic direction of modern society). But there also existed a distinct history of choices and experiences that must be taken into account to understand the militarized system that finally prevailed in Russia.

The militarization of socialism in Russia obviously had its beginnings with Lenin. A military model of political organization and action was the core of Bolshevism as Lenin formulated it in his early writings and pursued it through his split with the Mensheviks. The Bolsheviks, in his view, should be "a regular army of tested fighters" stressing "organized preparation for battle."[11]

The writings of Marx and Engels, to be sure, bequeathed a certain

psychological climate of combat inherent in the philosophy of class struggle, going so far as to call Social Democratic voters "the international proletarian army."[12] But for Marx and Engels, the military model did not carry over into the organization of future socialist society. Indeed, pointing to the outcome of the French revolution of 1848 as military dictatorship, they were at pains to warn the working class against the danger of a bureaucratic power beyond its control.[13] They rarely if ever went so far as to use the term "class war"--a Soviet term that does not appear to have come into use until the Russian Civil War made it a reality.

Lenin's entrancement with military modes of thinking applied no only to his conception of revolutionary political organization, but to the methods required for political success, both internally and internationally. The experience of the 1905 revolution brought him to the view suggestive of Bismark that "major questions in the life of nations are settled only by force."[14] Hoping to follow up this first abortive assault on tsarism, he wrote that "We would be deceiving both ourselves and the people if we concealed from them the fact that the impending revolutionary action must take the from of a desperate, bloody war of extermination."[15] When war broke out in 1914, it was not enough for Lenin to oppose the war effort as did left-wing socialists all over Europe. He denounced "priestly-sentimental and stupid sighing" about "peace no matter what" and called instead for "the transformation of the present imperialist war into a civil war."[16]

Lenin had a habit of getting very excited over new ideas that he liked or disliked and immediately wove them into his Marxist world-view without

stopping to think that Marxism was any less immutable. Thus it was regarding his infatuation with the classic Prussian strategist von Clausewitz, whom he discovered and read in Switzerland in 1915. What he extracted from Clausewitz was little more than the familiar maxim that "War is the pursuit of politics by other means," which Lenin thereafter quoted at every opportunity.[17] This formula seemed to support his implicit conviction that politics had to be pursued by the most warlike means.

The thinness of Lenin's military study has not prevented present-day Soviet theorists from describing him as the fountainhead of Soviet military thought. According to the 1972 treatise by A. S. Milovidov and V. G. Kozolv, *The Philosophical Heritage of V.I. Lenin and Problems of Contemporary War*, "The brilliant theorist and architect of the new socialist world, V. I. Lenin, was also the most profound theorist in philosophical problems of modern war, armed forces and military science. With his name are associated the founding of the Soviet Armed Forces and their heroic history ... V. I. Lenin was the founder of Soviet military science."[18] Of course, it would be too much to expect Trotsky, who knew military matters from his experience as a correspondent during the Balkan Wars, to receive credit as the organizer of the Red Army. As for Trotsky's own view of Marxist military thought, he cautioned in a lecture in 1922 when he was still Commissar of War, "Even if one grants that 'military science' is a *science*, it is nevertheless impossible to grant that it can be built with the methods of Marxism; because historical materialism isn't at all a universal method for all sciences.... It is the greatest misconception to try to build in the special field of military matters by means of the method of Marxism."[19] This is probably the best commentary that

can be offered on the scientific level of official Soviet military philosophizing.

The fact remains that a military spirit, however sophomoric, marked Lenin's entire political career. Military modes of thought exude from almost everything he wrote. His vocabulary was replete with military metaphors--war, mobilization, offensive, strategy, and tactics. Force, arms, iron discipline, and the militant vanguard were always his ingredients for victory.

The revolutionary circumstances of 1917 turned out to be ironic in the sense that the open political atmosphere and the spontaneous surge of popular support for the Bolsheviks brought the party to the most unmilitary point in the history of its organizational development. So strong was the tide of ultra-democratic revolution that most of the Bolshevik leadership preferred to avoid a violent test of strength against the Provisional Government in the fall of 1917 and to wait for the Second Congress of Soviets to vote them into power. Lenin, by contrast, was obsessed with the opportunity of employing sympathetic army units and naval crews to effect a military coup against Kerensky's government. In the directives he sent to party headquarters from his hiding-place, he fulminated against the idea of delay. "History has made the *military* question now the fundamental *political* question."[20] A simple military action would decide the day. "We can launch a *sudden* attack.... We have thousands of armed workers and soldiers in Petrograd who can seize *at once* the Winter Palace, the General Staff building, the telephone exchange, and all the largest printing establishments.... Kerensky will be compelled to *surrender*."[21] Lenin was not bothered by the logical contradiction between his

conviction of the decisiveness of military action and the philosophy of historical materialism. As military thinkers must be, Lenin's implicit philosophy was not determinist but voluntarist. He was a believer in will and decision. The party, he thought, had a unique chance for victory by armed action that might never return if allowed to slip away. "To wait is a crime against the Revolution.... Delay truly means death."[22]

The actual course of the October Revolution as I have shown in *Red October: The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917*[23] was compounded of accidents and ironies. Lenin's lieutenants, including both Trotsky and Stalin, continued to resist the idea of an uprising prior to the Congress of Soviets. Though they voted *pro forma* with Lenin, they confined themselves to defensive preparations until a day and a half before the congress was to convene, when Kerensky's government feebly attempted a preemptive strike on the morning of October 24, 1917. The Bolshevik leadership, working through the Petrograd Soviet, called out their supporters among the garrison and the workers' Red Guards to do battle with the anticipated counterrevolution, and discovered to their own surprise that the whole city of Petrograd was falling into their hands with scarcely a shot. Later that night, Lenin came from his hideout to the Bolshevik headquarters in the Smolny Institute to discover that the uprising appeared to be in full-swing. From that moment on, the operation was represented as the implementation of his directives, though no documents of a plan or an unambiguous decision to act has ever been found.

The import of all this is that it caused the Congress of Soviets to split bitterly as it was confronted with just the sort of armed *fait accompli* that

Lenin had urged. Moderate Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries walked out to protest the violent deposing of the Kerensky government, and the stage was then set for civil war and one-party dictatorship. This is not to assert with any certainty that these outcomes could have been avoided, but the events of October 24-25 and the abortive but bloody uprising of anti-Bolshevik military units in Petrograd and Moscow that followed in fact committed both sides to an armed resolution of the revolutionary situation. Thus, by a chain of accidents, the new Soviet regime immediately found itself in the violently polarized circumstances of a civil war--a struggle shortly to be extended nation-wide.

A great deal has been written about the impact of the Civil War on the early Soviet regime.[24] This vicious two and a half year struggle has rightly been credited with the militarization of the Soviet communist party, with inuring the new regime to terror and cruelty, and with the formation of a new "culture of War Communism."[25] It is difficult to conceive of any of the enduring political essentials of the Soviet system without reference to the Civil War experience.

There is no reason suppose, as some have suggested, that civil war as it developed in Russia was anticipated or envisaged by Lenin. His call to "turn the imperialist war into a civil war" was a rhetorical flourish against non-revolutionary pacifism, and at most meant using World War I to support the revolutionary struggle. The actual conquest of power came much more easily than anyone including Lenin could have supposed, though Lenin's dissident lieutenants Zinoviev and Kamenev warned of the risk of provoking civil war

when they opposed the idea of an armed uprising. Once in power, however, confronted with armed resistance by elements of the old army, Lenin was ready for the worst. "Every great revolution, and socialist revolution in particular, even if there were no external war, is inconceivable without internal war, i.e., civil war, which is even more devastating than external war...."[26]

For the first six months of Soviet rule, Lenin's policies in the economic realm (in contrast to the political) were relatively moderate and in line with the old Marxist assumption that Russia was unready for ambitious schemes of socialization. Agriculture, of course, was in a state of anarchy with the culmination of the land seizure movement, which lead to a food supply crisis and the institution of requisitioning. Acts of nationalization were confined mainly to the financial system, though private ownership of many enterprises was being rendered somewhat fictional by the spread of workers' control on the one hand on the government's ban on dividend payments on the other. Calling his policy "one foot in socialism," Lenin argued against excesses of "democratization" in industry, defended the retention of bourgeois experts and managerial authority, and made clear his attachment to the principal of top-down authority. "The revolution has only just smashed the oldest, strongest and heaviest fetters to which the masses submitted under duress. That was yesterday. But today the same revolution demands--precisely in the interests of its development and consolidation, precisely in the interests of socialism--that the masses *unquestioningly obey the single will* of the leaders of the labor process."[27]

Civil war on a broad scale did not actually break out until the uprising of the Czech Legion in May 1918 and the allied intervention that immediately followed. These crises abruptly radicalized the Soviet regime, both in its politics and economics. In June and July, with a few provincial exceptions, all noncommunist political activity was outlawed as a one-party system became a reality. At the same time, on the pretext of saving Russian property from foreign claims, a program of sweeping nationalization was launched that by the end of the year extended to every craft and trade establishment larger than a family shop.

These quick steps, prompted if not required by military exigencies, contributed to the ultimate form of Soviet socialism more than the entire year of 1917 and all the decades of ideological preparation that preceded it. As he did on other occasions, Lenin seized on the most readily applicable theoretical rationale ("Truth is not in systems," he wrote in his notes on Clausewitz),[28] which in this case happened to be German "War Socialism"--an example that intrigued him during his exile in Zurich.[29] For the time being, he made this example of bureaucratic economic mobilization obligatory doctrine for party members even though a few left-wing purists continued to protest the trend. Conceding that Russia so far enjoyed only "state capitalism," he asked the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets in April 1918, "What is state capitalism under Soviet power? ... we have the example of state capitalism in Germany ... state capitalism *is our salvation*," he said.[30] The following month he wrote, "Germany. Here we have the 'last word' in contemporary large-scale capitalist technology and planned organization, *subordinate to junker-bourgeois imperialism*. Strike out the underlined words, put in place

of the military, junker, bourgeois, imperialist state, a state, but a state of the socialist type, of class content, a soviet state, i.e., proletarian, and you realize the *total* sum of conditions which yield socialism."[31] In other words, put leaders in charge who enjoyed the requisite state of ideological grace, and the German bureaucratic model would do as the framework of Russian socialism.

Meanwhile, in a life-or-death struggle around the entire periphery of the country, communist leaders turned themselves into a military staff with military expediency and effectiveness as their primary criteria of policy. Trotsky began to build the new Red Army on traditional lines of command and discipline, much to the disgust of purists who advocated self-governing guerilla units in the spirit of 1917. The Cheka was unleashed to pursue Red terror in earnest after the attempt on Lenin's life in August 1918. Newly nationalized industries were placed under the direction of the Supreme Economic Council and its various "chief administrations" (*glavki*) in Moscow in order to redirect the economy in the service of the war effort so far as it was performing at all. Finally, the communist party itself underwent a major transformation as its organization and membership was enlisted to further the cause of victory.

In 1917, with its burgeoning membership and the eclipse of discipline by enthusiasm, the party approximated the democratic model represented by its rules and its jargon more closely than at any point in its history. In the early months of the Soviet regime as Lenin and his colleagues settled into their government posts, it was not clear that the party as an institution

would become anything other than an opinion-mobilizing and propagandizing body, even if an exclusive one. But with the onset of serious civil war, the party was quickly forged into the country's main institution of power, even more so than the government.

In its new mission of mobilizing Red-ruled Russia for victory in the Civil War, the party turned back more concretely than ever to Lenin's organizational vision of 1902. Power shifted from the institutions of government--from the central and local soviets--to the party. Within the party, power gravitated from the membership to the apparatus, from the local level to the center, and from committees to appointed bureaucrats at all levels. These trends were made into official doctrine at the Eighth Party Congress in March 1919. The congress formally created the Politburo and the Secretariat as the organs of policy and organizational command, and proclaimed that "The party finds itself in a position where the strictest centralism and the most rigorous discipline are absolutely necessary. All decision of higher jurisdiction are absolutely binding from lower ones.... Outright military discipline is essential for the party at the present time."[32]

Pursuant to its new military mode of organization, the party leadership appointed and transferred personnel as needed, broke up nodules of democratic opposition, and converted nominally elected local party officials into the appointed agents of the center. The apparatus of full-time party officials, euphemistically known as "secretaries," not only became the decisive element in the party in distinction to ordinary members who held other jobs and took orders from party officials; it in fact turned into a new government standing

within and behind the nominal government of the soviets. This development, capped by the designation of Stalin as General Secretary in 1922, remains the foundation of the Soviet political structure to the present day. Since Lenin's day, it has survived a turbulent history of succession struggles, purges, and war.

The militarizing spirit of War Communism was carried to its peak by none other than Trotsky--not only during the course of the Civil War, but even after the communists had won. "The problem of revolution, as of war," he wrote in his apology for terrorism, "consists in breaking the will of the foe, forcing him to capitulate."[33] With the enemy collapsing and the economy in ruins, Trotsky wanted to turn the Red Army and its principles of organization to the task of reconstructing transportation and industry. He openly called for the "militarization of labor," "compulsory labor service," and "labor armies." He further said that "We can have no way to socialism except by the authoritative regulation of the economic forces and resources of the country, and the centralized distribution of labor-power in harmony with the general state plan."[34] As a prophet of the command economy, Trotsky was truly the first Stalinist.

At the time, little came of Trotsky's schemes. Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) of 1921 cut radically across the War Communism debates between the militarizers and the democratizers with its call for a return to the old-fashioned cash nexus as the principle for the organization of labor. With its "strategic retreat" to the capitalistic methods of market socialism and the concomitant effort to normalize Russia's diplomatic and commercial relations

with the outside world, NEP represented a major deviation away from the trend toward militarization in the Soviet economy. The issue is still unsettled as to whether the NEP model might have persisted under sympathetic leadership, or whether it suffered from an inherent incompatibility with communist principles of government.

In some respects, militarization not only persisted under NEP but even advanced. Industry, though less subject to orders from the center, settled into more conventionally bureaucratic patterns of administration within enterprises in accordance with the principle of individual authority (*edinonachalie*). Under the influence of the flamboyant Civil War leader Tukhachevsky, the Red Army moved away from the territorial militia idea toward strict professionalism. But the key development of these years was the emergence of the communist party apparatus as the dominant political force in the Soviet Union. Restaffed and manipulated by Stalin in the course of the succession struggle that began in 1923, the apparatus became a near-perfect embodiment of Lenin's original idea of the party as a corps of disciplined professional revolutionaries operating with a military-style chain of command. Stalin, undertaking his first theoretical pronouncement about the party shortly after Lenin died, echoed Lenin's military metaphors. The party, he said, was "the vanguard detachment of the working class," and the "General Staff" was leading the proletariat to seize and hold power through its "solidarity and iron discipline" and its "unity of will."[35] Battling Trotsky's "Left Opposition" and then Bukharin's "Right Opposition," Stalin's apparatus put these principles into practice to perfect the monolithic organization capable of conducting a new phase of class struggle.

In 1929, the era of post-revolutionary retrenchment ended with Stalin's assertion of unchallenged personal power and the ostensibly new revolutionary drive represented by the collectivization of the peasantry and the First Five-Year Plan of intensive industrialization. Controversy still goes on among outside observers as to whether Stalin was the continuator or betrayer of Lenin's revolution. In fact, there were elements both of continuity and betrayal in Stalin's regime, which is not surprising in the historical perspective of revolutions. Stalin's role was not revolutionary, but post-revolutionary--the typical work of the opportunist dictator who combines elements of revolution and the previous regime in whatever manner that he thinks will serve his purpose of personal domination and the power of the state. As Adriano Guerra asserted in *After Brezhnev: Is Soviet Socialism Reformable?* (1983), "The old autocratic state was in fact Stalin's inevitable reference point. The weight of backwardness thus acquired a new value in determining the present.... The past tended to reproduce itself, and along with an advance in the economic sectors, caused a retrogression in the area of social and political liberties not only in comparison with the last years of tsarism, to the extent of reviving a conception of the state, that of the tsarist autocracy, that was the negation of the Bolshevik conception."[36] Under Stalin, socialism as the public control of economic enterprise began to play an essentially instrumental role as a system for mobilizing resources to overcome national backwardness and maximize the civilian base of military power. Hence the stress on heavy industry that became a fixed star for the system was set against an appalling neglect for the actual human values that socialism was officially supposed to serve.

Stalin deliberately cultivated a military spirit, appealing to the traditions of War Communism as he embarked on his campaign to transform the country. In terms of propaganda, the period saw a return to themes of class war and political and cultural struggle against alleged bourgeois remnants. In the countryside, there was often literal class war to compel the peasants to accept collectivization and to resettle or liquidate those who resisted too vigorously as prisoners or casualties of war. Military terminology was introduced everywhere--"shock workers" in industry, "brigades" in agriculture, and "class war on the historical front"--as bourgeois culture came under assault. "There are no fortresses which Bolsheviks cannot capture," Stalin declared, taking a line from the radical economist Strumilin.[37]

The institutions of the new era represented militarization with a vengeance. In the political realm, the military mode was rounded out as Stalin emerged as the supreme "chief" (*vozhd*) and became the subject of shameless adulation even though he held no formal government post until 1941. Collectivization of agriculture in the form it took was protested by the Bukharin opposition group as a system of "military-feudal exploitation of the peasantry" harking back to the days of serfdom.[38] In the urban-industrial sector, the practices of centralized War Communism familiar from the Civil War period came back as the plan supplanted the market, small business was renationalized, and trade unions were consigned to the function once envisaged by Trotsky of enforcing labor discipline and rewarding productivity. Direction of labor culminated in the State Labor Reserves set up shortly before World War II--in effect, labor conscription. A further step in the militarization of socialism was the Soviet state's outright consumption of

human capital in the nefarious enterprises of the Gulag.

As recent studies of economists such as Holland Hunter have shown, even the planned economy became less oriented toward scientific assessments, less balanced, and more the object of essentially military commands.[39] In fact, the First Five-Year Plan was drastically though unavowedly revised when shortages of everything made its targets unrealizable. When sacrifices had to be made, it was light industry and consumer needs that had to give way, while heavy industries and the energy infrastructure were supported in their spectacular gains. Later, the priority on the heavy industrial sector was openly and steadfastly acknowledged, not only by Stalin but by his successors. (Violation of this principle was one of the reason for the ouster of Khrushchev's rival Malenkov in 1955.) "Building socialism," as the Soviet regime has described its mission for half a century, has lost all real content of progress in social values. "Absolute power," says Branko Horvat, "turned out to be just as counterrevolutionary as successful bourgeois counter-revolutions."[40] Official Soviet history, as Dusko Doder has said, "reads like the annual reports of a construction company."[41]

As Stalin's great industrialization and collectivization drive got under way, he began to justify it in terms that would have sounded familiar to the tsar he most admired, Peter the Great. In 1928, he called for putting an end to "the age-old backwardness of our country,"[42] and in 1931 he delivered his famous speech on how Russia had been beaten by one foreign power after another "because of her backwardness." "To slacken the tempo," he warned, "would mean falling behind. And those who fall behind get beaten. But we do not want to

be beaten." With a nod to Marxist orthodoxy, Stalin went on to say that "In the past we had no fatherland, nor could we have one. But now that we have overthrown capitalism and power is in our hands, in the hands of the people, we have a fatherland, and we will defend its independence."[43] It should be noted that this was before the Manchurian incident of September 1931 began to raise the specter of aggression by right-wing imperialist enemies.

By the mid-1930s (not merely during World War II), the virtue of patriotism and the rehabilitation of the military glories of pre-revolutionary regimes became priority themes for Soviet domestic propaganda as illustrated, for example, by the famous Eisenstein film epic *Alexander Nevsky*. "The defense of the fatherland is the supreme law of life," a *Pravda* editorial proclaimed in 1934 on the occasion of the reinstitution of the death penalty and collective family guilt for treason or defection.[44] The restoration of formal ranks, insignia, and medals in the armed forces (even medals named after tsarist generals) completed the symbolic synthesis of the traditional and the revolutionary in the miliary realm.

The militarization of socialism in Russia did not take place in a vacuum. It was deeply and permanently influenced by the international environment of hostile powers in which the Soviet regime has found itself from its beginning--an environment to which it has contributed significantly itself. Outside studies of the development of the Soviet system usually stress historical, ideological, or personal factors, and tend to represent the militarization of socialism as largely internally determined. But one cannot arrive at a full understanding of how and why the Soviet model of socialism

took such a highly militarized form without taking into account the traumas and threats--real or imagined--that the Soviet state has experienced since 1917.

The possibility that the nature of socialism was conditioned by a hostile environment could not have existed according to the Marxist premises that underlay the Bolshevik seizure of power, for the Russian revolution was supposed to inspire world revolution. The failure of this millenarian expectation to materialize created a great quandary about "socialism in one country." How could one country, still relatively backward in terms of capitalist industrialization, simultaneously institute socialism, develop its economic resources, and hold off capitalist powers who had already shown that they were inclined to respond to the challenge of revolutionary socialism when they intervened against the Soviet state shortly after its birth?

The resolution of this problem was intimately bound up with the political triumph of Stalin and his drive for rapid industrialization. Stalin in fact unused "socialism in one country" as the test case in forging the bonds of political control and manipulation in the discussion of Marxist philosophy, and simply affirmed that backwardness was no bar to the establishment and survival of a socialist system. Industrialization, rather than a prerequisite of socialism, became a post-requisite--a program to be pursued by means of socialist organization of national resources with the goal of building the country's economic and military ability to defy "capitalist encirclement."

The deep impact of the Western intervention and Russian Civil War in the

early militarization of the Soviet system is widely acknowledged. The years of the NEP offered a relative respite from outside pressures as the Soviet government sought security through diplomatic normalization and alliances with such diverse and temporary partners as Weimar Germany and the Chinese nationalists. Anxiety about a renewal of imperialist intervention was less genuine than politically inflated in the course of the Stalin-Trotsky succession struggle (notably on the occasion of the 1927 war scare vis-à-vis Great Britain) and in the successful effort aimed at imposing firm Soviet control over most foreign communist parties ("Bolshevizing the Comintern").

Contrary to most retrospective assessments, no great change in the international environment was behind Stalin's rejection of Lenin's NEP or his decisive "revolution from above." These steps were primarily a response to Russia's internal economic problems and to the politics of the succession struggle, at this point between Stalin and Bukharin. To be sure, Stalin conjured up rhetoric of a new world revolutionary crisis with the object of discrediting Bukharin and his more moderate sympathizers among foreign communist parties. But all of this so-called line of the "Third Period" was undertaken before the Depression came to validate it, just as Stalin's call in 1931 for a massive industrial effort to forestall foreign invasion came before the shadow of Japanese militarism arose to validate it. Despite Moscow's class war propaganda, trade relations with the outside world during the First Five-Year Plan became more important than in any other era of Soviet history. In short, the most fundamental changes in the direction of militarized socialism were undertaken independently of specific foreign threats and indeed in defiance of elementary considerations of national morale, especially as

regards collectivization. Stalin's revolution must be explained instead as the confluence of diverse factors--post-revolutionary politics, economic hurdles, traditions of centralism, and personal ambitions.

Once Stalin's revolution was in place, with the command economy enlisting every last peasant and store-keeper as a private in the army of socialism, the foreign threats that could validate its necessity in fact materialized. In the purge era, the capitalist menace became inextricably woven into Stalin's system of political legitimization as the pretext for liquidating his political opponents and as the theoretical excuse for the failure of the state to wither away. The challenge of the Axis powers and the actual life-and-death struggle of the Great Patriotic War did not substantially alter the new Stalinist model of socialism but only reaffirmed it, justified it, and cast it in concrete for the indefinite future. This was exactly the conclusion that Stalin drew in his famous election campaign speech of February 1946. "Our victory means ... that the Soviet social order has successfully passed the ordeal in the fire of war and has proved its unquestionable vitality." Specifically, Stalin cited this collectivization policy and the priority given to heavy industry over light industry as the two keys to victory and the foundation of the future economic growth he projected. "Only under such conditions can we consider that our homeland will be guaranteed against all possible accidents."[45]

Stalin relied to such an extent on militant confrontation with outside enemies that one is tempted to wonder whether his system could do without international conflict. Would Stalin have had to create the menace of the

infidels if it did not already exist? As it happened, the menace did not need to be invented. As Stalin perceived it, it was unveiled by Winston Churchill in his "iron curtain" speech scarcely a month later. Denouncing Churchill's "racial theory" of Anglo-Saxon cooperation, Stalin asserted in his rejoinder published in *Pravda*, "There is no doubt that the set-up of Mr. Churchill is a set-up for war, a call to war with the Soviet Union."[46] Thus Stalin sounded the keynote for the entire era of Soviet-Western relations from 1946 to the present. The constant alarm of "imperialist" threats legitimized the structure and priorities of militarized socialism.

In its congealed from, which has persisted ever since World War II, Soviet socialism represents a militarized system of societal and economic relations both in its organizational structure and its operational values and priorities. "Owing to the advantages of its economic and political system," according to the 1968 textbook *Marxism-Leninism On War and the Army*, "The socialist community can use the resources needed to satisfy its defense needs according to a plan, that is, much more efficiently than the capitalist states."[47] In fact, the system confronts its own population as much as the outside world with a siege mentality where all personal interests and relationships must fit the dictates of military-style social discipline. Milovidov and Kozlov assert, "The economic relations of socialism to a substantial degree enhance the military-economic capabilities of the socialist state above those of the capitalist state which is based on private ownership. The advantages of socialism, as Lenin emphasized, derive from the unity of the people's goals to strengthen the nation's defensive capability, goals which express the interests of all of society, all its groups.... The socialist

economic system ensures a higher concentration and specialization of production."[48]

Apart from familiar notions of political dictatorship, the term "totalitarianism" is often applied to the Soviet system without a detailed specification of its content. In the economic and social spheres, the term "militarized socialism" describes the operation and the criteria of Soviet totalitarianism in a somewhat more concrete manner. Indeed, it suggests that Soviet totalitarianism has gone to further excesses than any other instance of the genus. It is more militarized than any other communist state with a modicum of independence and more socialist than any totalitarian regime on the right.

It is not of great importance to argue how much the military interest influences leadership policy in the Soviet Union, though various bureaucracies might have different tactical and even strategic preferences. In the tangible matter of representation in the party leadership, uniformed services displaced the trade unions after World War II as the third largest category. In 1981, marshals, generals, and admirals held 40 seats out of a total of 545 in the Central Committee and the Central Auditing Commission; representatives of the full-time party apparatus held 211; and central and republic-level civil government officials held 179. But all indications are that the political leadership controls the military so well on the one hand, and shares its attitudes so fully on the other, that no room is left for differences other than those of a very pragmatic nature. According to Milovidov and Kozlov, "The principle of the Party approach means that the very method of organizing

the defense of a socialist state must coincide with the nature of socialism; that it must be directed at maximum utilization of the capabilities and superiority of the socialist system. It is indeed here that the essence of the Leninist concept of the inseparable bond between military and socialist power lies...."[49]

Militarized socialism, as Stalin was so well aware, was an effective system (though certainly not the only one) for channeling the resources of a semi-developed country to enhance its military power and maintain what has amounted to a permanent state of mobilization in order to guard against what Stalin and his successors alleged to be the unrelenting menace of imperialism. As Milovidov and Kozlov assert, "The socialist mode of production makes it possible to create and develop a qualitatively higher, more efficient type of modern military organization, to mobilize the greatest amount of resources necessary for the conduct of war, to secure the highest combat efficiency and morale in the armed forces and inimable staunchness and endurance in the popular masses at the front and in the rear throughout the war."[50] However, by the time the Soviet Union had achieved a high degree of industrialization, increased technological complexity, and multiplied educational opportunities in its pursuit of superpower status during the 1960s and 1970s, it seems that the advantages of militarized socialism had been played out. Hence the growing chorus among Soviet experts about economic reform, incentives, decentralization, marketing, and the potential attraction of the models being worked out in Eastern Europe and China reflecting the economic mix of the NEP in Russian before Stalin made his total commitment to military forms and methods in civilian society. A surprising dialectic is

emerging as the success of militarized socialism undercuts its own future effectiveness. The revolution is over, and the time for evolution is at hand if the political powers that be are ready to accept it.

Another theory with disturbing implications as to the impasse that success has brought to the Soviet system is the contention of Richard Pipes and others that the Soviet political leadership, refusing to mend its ways internally, will be compelled to seek successes in foreign adventures in order to relegitimize its power and principles.[51] Such conjecture is hard to sustain or refute merely on the basis of a structural analysis of the Soviet system and its problems, but it probably understates the ability of the Soviet authorities to contrive ideological rationales for any kind of policy as circumstances and personalities dictate--be it reform or reaction at home or détente or adventure abroad. The official disclaimer in *Marxism-Leninism on War and the Army* is that "Only the enemies of socialism can stupidly insist on an 'export' of revolution, on an encroachment by world socialism by means of force on the 'free institutions' of the capitalist world. Revolution is not made to order but ripens in the process of historical development...."[52]

The proposition that militarized socialism pervades the Soviet model of economic and social organization should not be construed as implying a particular view of Soviet foreign policy motivations. To impute to the Soviet leadership a commitment to the forcible export of Marxist revolution would be ironic considering that the Soviet Union has departed so far from the track of social development envisaged by the progenitors of the revolution. Ever since Stalin's day, Marxist-Leninist theory has been reduced to a ritualistic and

self-congratulatory catechism but has been essentially unproductive as a source of meaningful goals, strategies, or even tactical judgments. More plausible in light of the Soviet leadership's record of ideological manipulation and reinterpretation is the image of the Soviet Union as a throwback to deep-seated strivings toward nationalist glory and imperialistic advantage covered in the deceptive language of Marxism and magnified by the USSR's status as one of the two nuclear superpowers. In this view, Moscow is guided by a set of implicit assumptions derived from Russian traditions, experiences, and leadership decisions expressed through a Manichean "we-they" view of the world, a compulsive need for internal control and discipline, and little attention toward the satisfaction of mundane human needs, except for those that the upper-level bureaucracy enjoys in semi-secret.

In this context, militarized socialism is not an end in itself, but rather a political instrument--a mode of social organization functioning analogously to the old society of serfs and nobles as the most dependable means of sustaining military power and national success against more aggressive or more advanced neighbors. It has even served as an instrument for the extension of the Russian military base when it was imposed as a system of imperial control and exploitation on the satellite states of Eastern Europe much as it was imposed on the Soviet peasantry.

Militarized socialism is the Russia's answer to life without real allies in a hostile world. For its own maintenance and legitimization, the Soviet system requires the perpetuation of an intense sense of foreign menace. This means not only unending isolation and internal stress, but the provocation or

prolongation of foreign hostilities, both of which perfectly serve the regime's political needs. The difficulty of escaping from this dialectic might be a much more serious barrier to real reform in the Soviet system than mere bureaucratic resistance to modernization.

NOTES

1. Ferenc Feher, Agnes Heller, and Gyorgy Markus, *Dictatorship over Needs* (New York: St. Martin's, 1983).

2. See, for example, Najdan Pasic, "Sustina i smisao borbe Jugoslovenskih komunista protiv staljinizma" [The essence and meaning of the struggle of the Yugoslav communists Against Stalinism], *Socijalizam* (Belgrade), vol. 12, no. 5 (May 1969), p. 633.

3. Branko Horvat, *The Political Economy of Socialism: A Marxist Social Theory* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1982), p. 56.

4. See, for example, *On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism: Comment on the Open Letter of the Central Committee of the CPSU* (July 14, 1964) (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1964); and "The Current Danger of War and the Defense of World Peace," *Red Flag*, November 2, 1979 (trans. in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, People's Republic of China, November 27, 1979, pp. A1-7), where "the Brezhnev clique" is likened to the tsarist bureaucracy and the Soviet Union is termed "an imperialist superpower wearing the socialist sign." Direct attribution of this behavior to a bureaucratic ruling class was expressed repeatedly in personal conversations by members of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in June 1982.

5. Adriano Guerra, *Dopo Breznev: E riformabile il socialismo sovietico?* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1983), p. 21.

6. See, for example, J. L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1952); and Peter Berger, "Substituting Socialism for God," *New York Times Book Review*, October 9, 1983.

7. Emile Durkheim, *Socialism and Saint-Simon* (1928; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), p. 19.

8. The analysis of such reactions was the subject of a colloquium that I gave at the Kennan Institute on February 2, 1984. Third World manifestations of pro-Soviet sentiment based on antiimperialism and anticapitalism were the subject of research that I conducted as an IREX scholar in the Soviet Union in April 1984.

9. Cornelius Castoriadis, *Devant la Guerre* (Paris: Fayard, 1981).

10. Quoted in John Wheeler-Bennett, *The Nemesis of Power: The German Army in Politics* (New York: St. Martins, 1954), p. vii.

11. Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *What is to be Done?* (1902; New York: International Publishers, 1961) pp. 133 and 166.

12. Friedrich Engels, 1895 introduction to Karl Marx's *The Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850*, in Karl Marx, *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, n.d.), vol. II, p. 188.

13. See Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France* (Chicago: Kerr, n.d.), pp. 42-48; and Friedrich Engels, introduction to *The Civil War in France* (New York: International Publishers, 1940), p. 20.

14. V. I. Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution" (July 1905), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1950-52), vol. I, book 2, p. 142.

15. V. I. Lenin, "The Lessons of the Moscow Uprising" (September, 1906), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1950-52), vol. I, book 2, p. 166.

16. V. I. Lenin, "Polozhenie i zadachi sotsialisticheskogo internatsionala" [The situation and tasks of the Socialist International] (November 1914), *Sobranie Sochinenii* [Collected works], 2nd ed. (Moscow : Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, 1928), vol. XVIII, pg. 71; and "The War and Russian Social Democracy" (November 1914), *Selected Works*, vol. I, book 2, p. 406.

17. See *Leninskii Sbornik* [The Lenin collection] (Moscow: Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, 1924-1940), vol XII.

18. A. S. Milovidov and V. G. Kozlov, *Filosoficheskoe nasledstvo V.I. Lenina i voprosy sovremennoi voiny* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1972; trans. for the U.S. Air Force as *Philosophical Heritage of V.I. Lenin and Problems of Contemporary War* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, n.d.), p. 2.

19. Leon Trotsky, "Marxism and Military Knowledge" (May 1922), *Military Writings* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1969), pp. 110-111.

20. V. I. Lenin, Letter to I. T. Smilga (September 27 [October 10], 1917), *Collected Works of V.I. Lenin*, vol. XXI, "Toward the Seizure of Power," book 1, p. 265.

21. V. I. Lenin, "The Crisis Has Matured" (September 29 [October 12], 1917), ibid., pp. 227-278.

22. V. I. Lenin, Letter to the Central Committee, Moscow Committee, Petrograd Committee, and the Bolshevik members of the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets (October 3-7 [16-20], 1917), ibid., book 2, p. 70; and Letter to Bolshevik Comrades Participating in the Regional Congress of the Soviets of the Northern Region (October 1 [14], 1917), ibid., p. 100.

23. Robert V. Daniels, *Red October: The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917* (New York: Scribners, 196; Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).

24. See, for example, Sheila Fitzpatrick, "The Civil War as a Formative Experience," Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, Occasional Paper no. 134 (May 1981).

25. See Robert C. Tucker, "Stalinism as Revolution from Above," in Robert C. Tucker (ed.), *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation* (New York: Norton, 1977), pp. 89-94.

26. V. I. Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" (April 1918), *Selected Works*, vol. I, book 1, p. 476.

27. Ibid., p. 482.

28. Quoted by John Keep in "Lenin as Tactician," in Leonard Schapiro and Peter Reddaway (eds.), *Lenin: The Man, the Theorist, the Leader* (London: PM, 1967), p. 146.

29. See Alec Nove, "Lenin as Economist," ibid., p. 203.

30. V. I. Lenin, Speech at the session of the VTsIK, April 29, 1918, *Sobranie Sochinenii*, vol. XXII, page 482.

31. V. I. Lenin, "O 'levom' rebiachestve i o melkoburzhuaznosti" [On left childishness and the petty-bourgeois quality] (May 1918), ibid., p. 516.

32. Resolution of the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, "Ob organizatsionnom voprose" [On the organizational question], Kommunisticheskaya Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza v rezoliutsiyakh i resheniyakh s'ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK [The Communist Party of the Soviet Union in resolutions and decisions of its congresses, conferences, and plenums of the Central Committee] (Moscow: State Press for Political Literature, 1954), vol. I, page 444.

33. Leon Trotsky, *Dictatorship vs. Democracy* (New York: Worker's Party of America, 1922), p, 54. Originally published as *Terrorizm i Kommunizm* (1920).

34. Ibid., pp. 141-142.

35. See, for example, Joseph Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism" (April 1924) in Joseph Stalin, *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1940), pp. 72-83.

36. Guerra, *Dopo Breznev*, p. 176.

37. Joseph Stalin, "The Tasks of Business Executives" (February 1931), *Problems of Leninism*, p. 367. Cf. S. G. Strumilin, "Industrializatsiya SSSR i epigony narodnichestva" [The industrialization of the USSR and the epigones of populism], *Planovoe Khoziaistvo* [Planned economy], no. 7, 1927, p. 11.

38. Declaration by Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky, February 9, 1929, quoted in the Politburo resolution of the same date, *CPSU in Resolutions*, vol. II, p. 558.

39. See Holland Hunter, "The Overambitious First Soviet Five-Year Plan," *The Slavic Review*, vol. 32, no. 2 (June 1973).

40. Horvat, *The Political Economy of Socialism*, p. 46.

41. Dusko Doder, private conversation, April 24, 1984.

42. Joseph Stalin, "Industrialization of the Country and the Right Deviation in the CPSU (B)" (November 1928), *Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1949-54), vol. XI, p. 259.

43. Joseph Stalin, "The Tasks of Business Executives" (February 1931), *Problems of Leninism*, pp. 365-366.

44. "Za otechestvo" [For the fatherland], *Pravda*, June 9, 1934.

45. Joseph Stalin, Pre-Election Speech of February 6, 1946, trans. in *The Strategy and Tactics of World Communism: Supplement I*, U.S. House of Representatives Document no. 619, 80th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), pp. 170 and 177.

46. Joseph Stalin, Answer to *Pravda* Correspondent, *Pravda*, March 14, 1946, trans. in the *New York Times*, March 14, 1946.

47. *Marksizm-Leninizm o voine i armii* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1968), p. 262.

48. Milovidov and Kozlov, *Filosoficheskoe nasledstvo V.I. Lenina*, p. 138.

49. Ibid., p. 260.

50. *Marksizm-Leninizm o voine i armii*, p. 289.

51. See Richard Pipes, *Survival is Not Enough: Soviet Realities and America's Future* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), pp. 41-44.

52. *Marksizm-Leninizm o voine i armii*, p. 90.