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Thought and Action under Soviet Totalitarianism: A Reply to George Enteen and Lewis Siegelbaum

ROBERT V. DANIELS

History, as even the "Leninist" Mikhail Gefter suggests, is more an art than a science. Whether at the level of detailed narrative or the broadest explanation, Carl Becker and a host of other well-known historians have warned, it rests on the imaginative conceptualizing of events by the individual historian or tradition.[1] However, it is an art that has to be disciplined by the facts. History is personal and subjective, but there is always a common ground for debate in the record that all historians must deal with. In this spirit I welcome the comments of George Enteen and Lewis Siegelbaum, whether they parallel my views or run counter to them. Soviet studies may have passed from the realm of political science into history, but that history, like any other, will never be fixed beyond new argument.

One of the most common criticisms of my work is my use of a model from the comparative history of revolution to structure my interpretation of the Soviet period. Enteen seems sympathetic to this endeavor; Siegelbaum joins the critics. Comparative analysis, I have found, where one tries imaginatively to work out common themes and similarities (if not laws) while respecting the unique features of individual cases, is one of the riskiest kinds of history to write, particularly for an American audience. The social scientists never think you are rigorous enough and the historians find you much too rigorous.

The use of models or Weberian ideal-types is central if one wishes to compare and contrast systematically the likenesses and differences among actual historical cases and events. However, this methodology is widely misconstrued among both social scientists and historians. The model is not a law or a straitjacket to which the individual instance must conform completely, nor should it be permitted to assume a normative force, whether positive or negative. It may be derived from an actual event, as the Brintonian stage-by-stage model of the revolutionary process is derived

[1] See Carl L. Becker, *Everyman His Own Historian: Essays on History and Politics* (New York, 1935).

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from the history of the French Revolution, but this does not mean that the model case is more nearly perfect or proper and that other cases or the model itself are defective if discrepancies appear; the model is merely a point of departure.

Weber himself defined the method of the model very clearly:

> An ideal type is formed by the one-sided *accentuation* of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many . . . concrete *individual* phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified *analytical* construct.

Thus the ideal type is a "utopia" leaving to empirical studies "the task of determining in each individual case the extent to which this ideal-construct approximates to or diverges from reality."[2] By this method, says Weber, "we may hope to facilitate the presentation of an otherwise immensely multifarious subject matter by expediently constructed rational types."[3] A model for revolutions, therefore, must offer not a fixed pattern of events but a series of spectra of variability, within each of which a particular case can be located and described. I have offered in this vein a modified Brintonian model of the revolutionary process which I believe clarifies much in the Soviet record, above all in the Stalin era of "postrevolutionary dictatorship" and the Gorbachev-Yeltsin era of "moderate revolutionary revival."

The most controversial use of a model in Soviet studies is, of course, the concept of totalitarianism. Both the die-hard adherents of the totalitarian model and its most vociferous opponents misunderstand the use of a model, and treat it as an either-or defining statement of a political system, a sort of Aristotelian essence, rather than as a mere standard for assessing and comparing a variety of cases. In practice no two "totalitarian" systems are identical either in kind or in degree; certainly Mussolini pales compared with Stalin. Further, there can be no sharp line between "totalitarian" regimes and merely "authoritarian" ones, but only a continuum along which diverse dictatorships range.

In my own writing some readers have found a contradiction between my depiction of cosmic revolutionary forces according to the process model and my close-ups of political maneuver and accident that do not fit the model (especially in *Red October*). However, broad-brush interpretations of history based on comparative models do not rule out attention to unique and fortuitous details which may provoke significant deviations from the model in a given instance. This is the old problem of reconciling the "nomothetic" (general or law-governed) and the "ideographic" (unique or fortuitous) in human affairs.[4] In 1989 I was participating in an American-Russian conference in Moscow on the history of the 1920s, when a young researcher from the Institute of Marxism-Leninism who evidently had the assignment of reading all my works put to me exactly that question. I was prompted to answer by analogy with

[2] " 'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy," in Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences,* ed. E. A. Shils and H. A. Finch (Glencoe, IL, 1949), 90.

[3] Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie,* in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology,* ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York, 1958), 324.

[4] See K. Grotsch, "Nomothetisch/ideographisch," *Historische Wörterbuch der Philosophie,* vol. 6 (Basel/Stuttgart, 1984)), 896–97.

the conundrum in physics about the nature of light—both wave and particle, two contradictory concepts which must be used together.

In *Red October* I did not intend to argue the free play of random chance or capriciousness in the Bolshevik Revolution. My point, in disputing the theory of diabolical conspiracy, was not that the Bolshevik takeover was some sort of bolt from the blue, but (as the record shows) that the Bolsheviks' success in the form it took emerged out of confusion and fear and unforeseeable opportunities. Despite Lenin's determination to seize power by force, his followers (and not merely the hapless Zinoviev and Kamenev) were holding back to wait for the Congress of Soviets to act, and only Kerensky's ill-prepared move against the Bolsheviks early in the morning of 24 October (old style) triggered the response that turned into the coup that Lenin wanted. I wrote in this journal, "From any rational contemporary standpoint, the Bolshevik Revolution was a desperate gamble," notwithstanding the mass movements that had undermined the Provisional Government. "Chance put Lenin in power, and chance kept him there during the dizzying days that followed."[5] I have not withdrawn from that view.

To be sure, the possibility of accidents or individual decisions changing the whole course of a nation's history is resisted by the rational mind, which demands more necessitarian explanations for such epochal events. Triggering reflexes that evidently ran deeper than the mere party line, *Red October* exercised an entire generation of Soviet historians, beginning when *Kommunist* devoted a whole article by the Old Bolshevik historian I. I. Mints to denounce my anti-necessitarian heresy.[6]

I do concede the possibility that if the Bolsheviks had faltered in October 1917, some kind of radical coalition would have taken power anyway, though not in the way Lenin wanted. What was most unlikely at this point, thanks to the revolutionary polarization of Russian society, was a smooth development of constitutional democracy. The authoritarian Right, far from liquidated in the Kornilov Affair and no friend of Kerensky, remained a serious contender for power, as it showed during the Civil War. In a paper I presented in 1969, I derived from comparative history the likelihood of an extremist takeover at a certain point in any revolution, but I found the question of the identity of the winners—Left or Right, ultrarevolutionary or counterrevolutionary—to be indeterminate.[7]

Thus, the uniqueness of the Russian Revolution did not lie in Lenin's precarious victory of October 1917. The crucial novelty in the Russian case was Lenin's ability in March 1921 (noted by Enteen) to carry out his own Thermidorean reaction, his "strategic retreat" as he called it, and avoid being overthrown at that point as the Jacobins were in France. The consequence was decisive: perpetuation of the rev-

[5] "The Bolshevik Gamble," *Russian Review* 26 (October 1967): 337, 339.

[6] "Neveroiatnye shansy Roberta Danielsa," *Kommunist* (April 1970). The official philosopher Iu. A. Krasin wrote, "Can the October Revolution and the momentous changes it wrought in mankind's social being and consciousness be conceived today as the product of the voluntarist intentions and actions of one party? Maintaining any sense of realism, one cannot explain transformations of such profundity and magnitude by ascribing them to an arbitrary action of will and consciousness carried out contrary to objective necessity" (*Dialektika revoliutsionnogo protsessa* [Moscow, 1972], 74–75).

[7] "Left and Right in the Extremist Phase of Revolution" (Paper presented at the annual convention of the American Historical Association, Washington, DC, 1969).

olutionary organization—the party—and the letter of revolutionary ideology—Marxism-Leninism—through all the shifting circumstances and postrevolutionary phases that followed.

There are two other major points at issue among Enteen, Siegelbaum, and myself, those that Enteen poses at the start. One is the significance of Marxist ideology under Stalinism. The other is the autonomous role of social movements and cultural forces during the revolution and in the development of the totalitarian system.

As Ronald Suny has recently observed in these pages, social history of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet era has become a growth industry in the United States in the last generation, to the dismay of traditionalists such as Robert Conquest and Richard Pipes.[8] But Suny errs (as he did in his earlier piece on this question[9]), and Siegelbaum makes the same mistake, in assuming that any scholar whose interests incline toward political or intellectual history is necessarily dismissive of the social domain and disdainful of the masses. Though to my mind social history is more often than not a variety of sociology in the time dimension, doing the kind of work that present-bound sociologists neglect, its general conclusions are just as important to a full historical picture as those of any other form of social and cultural inquiry. An example is the well-known thesis of Sheila Fitzpatrick, which I have repeatedly cited myself, about the *vydvizhentsy,* the young cadres whom Stalin pushed ahead in the early 1930s (and who ran the country, growing old in office as a cohort, until 1985).[10]

As a graduate student I ventured into Russian social history myself, and on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution I wrote a seminar paper for Michael Karpovich on the labor movment in 1917, so I can well appreciate all the impressive work that has since gone into that particular topic. If the October Revolution was merely a coup d'état, as Pipes and others insist, it was a terribly clumsy one whose fortuitous success was only made possible (though not inevitable) by the tumultuous movements of workers, peasants and soldiers that had reduced the authority of the Provisional Government to a cipher. Thus, while I personally moved on to concentrate on political and ideological themes, I would scarcely deny the significance of the social and the economic, and I have tried to do these realms justice both in my attempts at historical synthesis (*The Nature of Communism* and *Russia—the Roots of Confrontation*) and in my sketches of the Russian intelligentsia (in *Is Russia Reformable?*).

Just as there is no necessary incompatibility between political and social history, there is no hopeless contradiction between social history and the concept of totali-

[8] "Revision and Retreat in the Historiography of 1917: Social History and Its Critics," *Russian Review* 53 (April 1994): 165–82.

[9] Suny, "Toward a Social History of the October Revolution," *American Historical Review* 88 (February 1983): 31–52.

[10] Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Stalin and the Making of a New Elite, 1928–1939," *Slavic Review* 38 (September 1979): 377–402. See my *Russia—The Roots of Confrontation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 175, 266–67, 288–89, and "Political Processes and Generational Change," in *Political Leadership in the Soviet Union,* ed. Archie Brown (London: Macmillan, 1989), reprinted in my *Is Russia Reformable? Change and Resistance from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), 77–78, 90–91.

tarianism. Each area of emphasis can serve as a corrective to the other. The standard theory of totalitarianism errs, I feel, not in its characterization of a system like Stalin's but in taking that system out of time, allowing it neither a beginning nor an end, and failing to explain it except by ideological perversity. It sets up the model of totalitarianism based on what Stalinism was, and then explains Stalinism as an example of totalitarianism. To break out of this circular abstractness, I have tried to consider totalitarianism in its actual historical settings of causes and outcomes. In general terms, as I wrote in *The Nature of Communism,* "totalitarianism is the natural form of postrevolutionary dictatorship"—whether of the Left or of the Right—"under the conditions of social organization and governmental technique which now prevail."[11] This still leaves plenty of room for the forces of social history (and associated economic and cultural factors), which disrupt the old regime, contribute to the dynamics of the revolutionary process and the formation of the postrevolutionary dictatorship, constrain that dictatorship as well as being constrained by it (as Moshe Lewin in particular shows[12]), and ultimately help to undermine it. Nevertheless, in the Russian statist tradition, as Siegelbaum notes, politics and institutions played an unusually strong role vis-à-vis "stikhiinye" currents in the mass. Lewin illustrates how political culture emphatically returns;[13] this, I would say, is one of the defining characteristics of the postrevolutionary dictatorship in Russia or anywhere else.

Do I seem nevertheless to neglect Russian political culture and psychology? These in fact were powerful themes at the Russian Research Center when I worked there in 1948–52 under the leadership of the cultural anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn, and I found them borne out by my doctoral research—for example, the alarm expressed by Lenin and Trotsky over the revival of the tsarist bureaucratic culture, and the evidence of the authoritarian personality among the Stalinists.[14] My studies of the Soviet political elite have underscored continuities in the Russian bureaucratic culture, even in the way Stalin reshaped the Central Committee of the CPSU to create concentric circles of top officials around himself.[15] In 1987 I contributed a comment to *The Russian Review* on Edward Keenan's provocative article, "Muscovite Political Folkways"; my remarks may even have gone further than Keenan intended, to link the secretive and authoritarian governmental habits of the seventeenth century and the twentieth.[16] Political culture does not operate only among the masses.

[11] *The Nature of Communism* (New York, 1962), 285.

[12] See, for example, Moshe Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 25–27.

[13] See, for example, Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System: Essays in the Social History of Interwar Russia* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 274–76.

[14] See *The Conscience of the Revolution: Communist Opposition in Soviet Russia* (1960; reprint ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 187–93, 311, 404, 492.

[15] See especially "Evolution of Leadership Selection in the Central Committee, 1917–1927," in *Russian Officialdom: The Bureaucratization of Russian Society from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century,* ed. Walter Pintner and Don K. Rowney (Chapel Hill, 1980), reprinted in my *Trotsky, Stalin, and Socialism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991). On the post-Soviet regime see my "Revenge of Russian Political Culture," *Dissent* 41 (Winter 1994): 32–34.

[16] Keenan, "Muscovite Political Folkways," *Russian Review* 45 (April 1986): 115–81; Daniels, "Russian Political Culture and the Postrevolutionary Impasse," ibid. 46 (April 1987): 165–75, reprinted in *Is Russia Reformable?*

The question of Marxist ideology is my main area of disagreement with Enteen, as it is with what I might call the straight-line school of ideological determinism maintaining that Marxism brought about Leninism and Leninism brought about Stalinism. To be sure, Lenin always considered himself the world's best Marxist, and Stalin represented his "general line" as the exclusive incarnation of Leninism. But Lenin's roots reached more into non-Marxist sources than into Marx, as I pointed out in the Karpovich Festschrift, among other places.[17] The "operational code" that Enteen refers to is much more Lenin than Marx, and often contradicts the latter; contrast *The Poverty of Philosophy* and *What Is to Be Done?* on the ability of the workers to organize themselves.[18] Similarly, Stalin had some roots in Lenin, but there were other influences on him and on the way he used Lenin's words and ideas. Three-generation connections are all the more dubious: one cannot assume that what Stalin got from Lenin—the "operational code," for instance—was what Lenin got from Marx or was even compatible with the latter.

Similarities between an earlier thinker and a later do not make the earlier figure necessarily responsible for everything the later one said or did, whatever the claims of the epigone. If we traced a line of descent from Lenin back to the Jacobins, we could keep on going to John Calvin and ad infinitum. One could prove any kind of intellectual ancestry by selectively culling the past this way. In the case of Marxism, the straight-line-of-descent argument leaves no place for alternatives—non-Marxist socialists, non-Leninist Marxists, and non-Stalinist Leninists; it is the Stalinist version of history turned inside out. The real problem is not simply determining the lineage of bad ideological genes. It is to show what use each individual made of his intellectual heritage: what use Marxism made of socialism and Jacobinism; what use Lenin made of Marxism and the Russian revolutionary heritage; what use Stalin made of Marxism-Leninism and Orthodox authoritarianism.

My sensitization at Harvard to cultural and psychological factors contributed to my discovery early in my research that Soviet reality was not guided by or in conformance with Marxist ideology, but that the ideology was readjusted to justify or mask a reality mainly governed by other factors, both objective and personal. In other words, Marxism became the ideological "false consciousness" of Communism. Curiously, one component of my Harvard training that proved instrumental in this realization and valuable for Soviet studies in general was a course with Charles Taylor in medieval intellectual history. It was a revealing introduction to the scholastic mind that reappeared under Stalin.[19]

[17] Daniels, "Lenin and the Russian Revolutionary Tradition," in *Russian Thought and Politics,* ed. Hugh McLean, Martin E. Malia and George Fischer, Harvard Slavic Studies, 4 (The Hague, 1957).

[18] Lenin asserted, in a well-known passage, "Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without,* that is, only from outside of the economic struggle, from outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers" (*What Is to Be Done?* in Lenin, *Selected Works,* vol. 1 [Moscow, 1950], book 1:287). By contrast, Marx had written in *The Poverty of Philosophy* that "economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle . . . this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle" (Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* [New York, 1963], 173).

[19] In this connection see Thomas Blakely, *Soviet Scholasticism* (Dordrecht, 1961); and Daniels, *Conscience of the Revolution,* 305–7.

To be sure, thanks to the revolutionary anomaly of 1921, when the Bolshevik organization and ideological rationale survived the Thermidorean transition, Marxism persisted as the official language of the Soviet regime. It was Marxism, not something else, that served as Communism's false consciousness, and that is why the language of Marxism subsequently permeated official Soviet thought, as Enteen properly stresses.[20] On the other hand, I would not agree that everything in Marxism was turned into official mendacity; there is something to be said for the conception of successive socioeconomic formations, which was not entirely invented by Marx and need not be indiscriminately thrown out with the bathwater of Stalinist dogmatism. After all, it was the liberal Herbert Butterfield who observed, "We do not need to be Marxists to confess that in reality Marx and Engels, in spite of the mass of faults in which their work is entangled, have done important service to the study of the historical process in modern times."[21]

There does not appear to be any fundamental disagreement between Enteen and myself about the "false consciousness" thesis and its importance, and Enteen lends new support to the concept when he brings in the "linguistic turn" and "ideolo-linguistics." The "linguistic turn" is an inevitable spillage into history-writing of recent fads in literary theory (of which I was unaware when I produced most of my works, like the man who spoke prose without knowing it). It has undeniable value, as when the semioticist Yuri Lotman cautions about "word-magic" and "the tendency to confuse a sign with its referent." This is exactly what happened in Soviet ideology, for instance, in speaking of the soviets or of the "workers' state" and deducing alleged characteristics of these institutions from their names.[22] But historians have all along been aware of this problem and other discoveries of postmodernism, such as the relativism in perceptions of historical truth according to time, place and the proclivities of the author. On the other hand, there is a danger in the "linguistic turn" in abstracting language and culture from the rest of the social matrix and ascribing to them an independently determinative role, just as classical Marxism did with economics.

I agree with Mikhail Epstein in his Kennan Institute paper on the multiple sources of Soviet ideology, including the cultural-linguistic, though I am skeptical of his argument of "ideololinguistics," to the effect that the Russian language in its syntax and semantics lends itself to totalitarian manipulation more than other idioms. (This comes perilously close to the mad Soviet linguist N. Y. Marr and his class theory of language structures corresponding to types of societies.[23]) I am baffled by Epstein's proposition that false consciousness ceases to be false under totalitarianism, when common sense would judge it to be even more so. Perhaps this is his way of

[20] For a succinct statement of the *real* consciousness of Stalinism (or subconsciousness, as Siegelbaum might say) see my Kennan Institute paper of 1985, "The Militarization of Socialism in Russia, 1902–1946," reprinted in *Is Russia Reformable?*

[21] Herbert Butterfield, *History and Human Relations* (New York, 1952), 80.

[22] The successor regime makes the same mistake, with a negative twist, in speaking about the "soviet" past.

[23] See *The Soviet Linguistics Controversy* (New York, 1951), especially I. Meshchaninov, "For a Creative Development of Academician N. Y. Marr's Heritage," 24–25 (originally printed in *Pravda,* 16 May 1950).

addressing my distinction between spontaneous false consciousness and that which is coercively imposed by the state, overwhelming any independent intellectual reference points.[24] To my mind, Epstein captures the essence of Soviet false consciousness when he describes the ideology as "an all-encompassing system of ideological signs which can acquire any significance desired."[25]

I am also puzzled by Enteen's belief that I have retreated from "false consciousness" in *The End of the Communist Revolution,* and his accompanying assertion that I have engaged in a "polemic against intellectual history," since much of what I have written or edited is actually in that genre. Stalinism as the "annihilation of experiment" in the name of Marxism was to me the ultimate in false consciousness. Perhaps what Enteen understands by "intellectual history" is belief in the direct determinism of ideas from one thinker to the next and from abstract thought to concrete action. This I do dispute, as I have already indicated. I am more comfortable with Siegelbaum's opinion that I have been tracing the development of the "subconscious" in Soviet history, where I would stress just as much as Enteen the significance of "mindsets" and "cultural codes" in shaping regime behavior. However, along the lines of Pareto's paradigm of "residues" (basic needs and feelings that govern behavior) and "derivations" (customs and rationalizations that make behavior appear rational), I feel that such psychological and cultural influences are often irrational or subverbal, and cannot be properly understood in purely literal and rationalistic terms.[26] So I do question "the presupposition that people act on the basis of the philosophical assumptions that they carry in their heads." Most people (especially politicians, but even philosophers, as Lewis Feuer has shown in a long series of studies[27]) pick up and modify their ideas to fit their feelings and urges or the requirements of their circumstances. As I tried to explain many years ago in a short piece called "The Ideological Vector," ideas and ideologies may have a force, but the actual direction of that force is not given by the literal words in question.[28] Intellectual history must come to terms with the political, social and psychological factors that influence the effective meaning of ideas, and this is how I have tried to write it in the Soviet context.

Was Stalin a Marxist? In the same way that the Grand Inquisitor was a Christian, making everyone conform to the word while he made a mockery of it in deed. Did the respective faiths have something to do with making these monsters what they

[24] See *Trotsky, Stalin, and Socialism,* 183–85, and my citation of Rudolf Bahro therein, quoted by Enteen.

[25] Mikhail Epstein, "Relativistic Patterns in Totalitarian Thinking," Kennan Institute Occasional Paper No. 243 (Washington, DC, 1991), 75.

[26] See Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society* (New York, 1935), esp. 2:509 and 3:887–88.

[27] See, for example, Feuer, *Psychoanalysis and Ethics* (Springfield, IL, 1955); idem, *The Scientific Intellectual: Psychological and Sociological Origins of Modern Science* (New York, 1963); and idem, "The Philosophical Method of Arthur O. Lovejoy: Critical Realism and Psychoanalytical Realism," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 23 (1963): 493–510.

[28] Daniels, "The Ideological Vector," *Soviet Studies* 18 (July 1966): 71–73 (a comment on Alfred G. Meyer's essay, "Functions of Ideology in the Soviet Political System," *Soviet Studies* 17 [January 1966]: 273–85).

were? Yes, to the extent that they provided dogmatic reference points for control and self-justification, serving a system of power in an instrumental role. An argument could be made in each case that the commitment to a particular rationale—Marxism or Populism, Christianity or Mithraism or Islam—was historically accidental and of secondary importance. Of course, neither Stalin nor the Grand Inquisitor personally chose their respective ideological environments; they simply found themselves there and made the most of it.

In the actual event, the Russian Revolution and the development of the Soviet system failed to sustain the Marxian scheme of history. Populism would have worked better in Russia as a revolutionary theory based on the elite and the peasants. As time went on, maintaining Marxism as the official rationale in Soviet Russia required an extraordinary degree of thought control, most of all in the exposition of Marxism itself. In Karl Mannheim's terms, the function of Marxism in the Soviet Union changed from a "utopia" to an "ideology."[29] This was one of the defining differences between Leninism and Stalinism. In my view it is grossly misleading to imagine, as some authorities still do (even some who lived under the system), that a Marxist "utopia" remained in power in the Soviet Union until 1985 or 1991.[30] This suggests a Manichaean battle of good and bad ideas that is again only the negative mirror image of the Stalinist version of history.

Most Marxist-inspired ideas and programs proved inconvenient to Stalin, and he brushed them away as "anti-Marxist." In the familiar "Great Retreat" that Enteen takes note of, these positions were supplanted by traditionalist norms in everything from schools and the arts to nationalism and the military. As Enteen recognizes, Stalin even rejected economic planning, in any careful and scientific sense, and replaced it with the system of military-style commands and allocations that has now given planning a bad name everywhere. This surreptitious but sweeping social and cultural counterrevolution of the 1930s, first recognized by Nicholas Timasheff,[31] is a proposition that I elaborated with the help of colleagues at the Russian Research Center and have developed in various articles and book chapters, especially "Soviet Thought in the 1930s: The Cultural Counterrevolution."[32]

Did Stalin nevertheless believe in Marxism and the legitimacy of his ideological manipulations, or was he purely a cynical and paranoid power-grabber? This remains a problem for the psycho-historians, and a difficult one. Nevertheless, if Stalin really had been a genuine Marxist with his eyes open, he would have to have seen that the

[29] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (1929; English translation, New York, 1936), esp. 192–96.

[30] See, for example, Mikhail Heller and Alexander Nekrich, *Utopia in Power: The History of the Soviet Union from 1917 to the Present* (New York: Summit Books, 1986).

[31] Nicholas S. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat: The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia* (New York, 1946).

[32] "Soviet Thought in the 1930s: An Interpretive Sketch," *Indiana Slavic Studies* 1 (1956): 97–135 (reprinted in *Trotsky, Stalin, and Socialism*). Compare especially Barrington Moore, *Soviet Politics: The Dilemma of Power* (Cambridge, MA, 1950); Harold J. Berman, *Justice in Russia* (Cambridge, MA, 1950); Paul Aron, "The Impact of the First Five-Year Plan on Soviet Historiography" (unpublished seminar paper, Russian Research Center, Harvard University, 1951); Raymond A. Bauer, *The New Man in Soviet Psychology* (Cambridge, MA, 1952); and Henry Dicks, "Observations on Contemporary Russian Behavior," *Human Relations* 5, no. 2 (1952): 111–75.

realities of Russia and the revolution were not permitting the results that Marxism presumed, and that the Communist goal could only be pursued by violent Russian statist methods (which contradicts much of Marxism). But Stalin never intimated any such frankness, and my guess, paralleling Robert Tucker, is that he was the kind of concrete-minded and self-righteous person who could do anything he thought expedient and deceive himself that he was defending the faith against all its enemies, open and hidden.[33] Some in Stalin's entourage were different: Amy Knight's biography of Beria shows him, for one, to be completely cynical and pragmatic in his criminality, while Molotov's recently published reminiscences reveal him as an undeviatingly true believer.[34]

In arguing the continuing influence of Marxism under Stalin, Enteen takes as his main example his own special field of historiography. Historiography happened to be the area most suffused with Marxist language, "encoded in its terms," but this was owing to the fact that history was where Marxism as false consciousness was most assiduously pounded in to script the contrived morality play of the Communist past that Enteen describes so well. Georg Lukács, late in life, realized starkly this permeation of mendacity: "Agitation is primary. Its needs determine . . . what science must say and how it must say it."[35]

The notion of a socioeconomic formation may or may not be all nonsense if the dogma is taken out of it, but in any case Soviet theorists never offered a meaningful explanation of their own system in terms of socioeconomic formations. Far from pursuing class warfare on behalf of the proletariat, Stalin shackled the toilers and boosted the "New Class" of the nomenklatura, while masking this reality, as Tatiana Zaslavskaia noted once glasnost enabled her to speak out, with "a false public consciousness."[36]

Marxism might have been used by some Soviet writers to test the reality of capitalism, in Enteen's phrase, but until Gorbachev, reality-testing of the Soviet system itself was utterly taboo. However broadly you define Marxism, Stalinism bastardized it and instrumentalized it as a compulsory state religion with the lies that sustained the system and were sustained by it.

[33] See Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928–1941* (New York: Norton, 1990), 548–49, passim.

[34] Amy Knight, *Beria: Stalin's First Lieutenant* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Albert Resis, ed., *Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics—Conversations with Felix Chuev* (Chicago: Ivan Dee, 1993).

[35] George Lukács, "Reflections on the Cult of Stalin," in *Marxism and Human Liberation: Essays on History, Culture, and Revolution by George Lukacs,* ed. E. San Juan (New York, 1973), 69 (quoted in Daniels, *Trotsky, Stalin, and Socialism,* 184).

[36] Tatiana Zaslavskaia, "Tochka zreniia: Perestroika kak sotsial'naia revoliutsiia," *Izvestiia,* 24 December 1988 (quoted in Daniels, *Trotsky, Stalin, and Socialism,* 184).