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It interprets the events of 1989, mainly in Eastern Europe, in the broad historical context of the "energy revolution" of the last several centuries, to suggest among other points a reordering of perspective and priorities of strategic analysis, and the related importance for the future of contrasting leaderships in Eastern Europe.

A Supplement, beginning after page 15, entitled, "Stalinism and Pluralism: Two Pathways from the Enlightenment," traces those two contrasting pathways of philosophy and societal organization from Descartes to the present.

LESSONS OF 1989:
A DISCUSSION PAPER

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There is little doubt what the greatest lesson of 1989 is: communism failed. Much recent commentary to the contrary, this failure is not a parochial event limited in its significance to Eastern Europe, to the Cold War, or to western policy initiatives, but rather a moment of global importance in the most important family of events of the last few hundred years. These events do not have a satisfactory name, even though we all know how fundamental they are. Instead of calling them the industrial revolution, modernization, the great transformation, the single transition, or the emergence of capitalism, I would like to call them the energy revolution. This name emphasizes the fundamental innovation that underlies the earthquake of change humanity has witnessed in the past ten generations or so, the on-going discovery and elaboration of how to extract energy systematically from non-living things such as gunpowder, coal, oil, uranium, and silicon. This discovery is comparable to only one other in human history, the discovery of how to extract energy systematically from living things, the agricultural revolution. And just like agricultural societies wiped the hunting and gathering peoples off the face of the earth by virtue of the vastly greater power they were able to produce, save, and expend, so the societies in

which the energy revolution has proceeded are now in the process of wiping agricultural peoples off the face of the earth.

The unprecedented social forces generated by the energy revolution have forced every human society to find new ways of organizing itself. I would like to suggest that three basic sorts of solutions to the fundamental challenges of the energy revolution, all first broached in the eighteenth century, have characterized the twentieth century. I would call them the anti-rationalist genre, the hyper-rationalist genre, and the pluralist genre.

By the first of these I mean, of course, those movements of rage and rejection from the first half of the twentieth century that craved the power of the energy revolution - the technology, the military strength, and the standard of living - but rejected the economic calculus of market capitalism and the political calculus of parliamentary democracy. Instead they espoused what Thomas Mann called "a highly technical romanticism," adopting Schelling's view that the universe contains "a primal, non-rational force that can be grasped only by the intuitive power of men of imaginative genius." Nazism and fascism repudiated the eighteenth century bases of middle class culture for what they believed were the superior principles of mass culture, rejecting reason for power, individuality for sacro egoismo, virtue for vainglory, transparency for obscurantism, constitutions for the Führerprinzip, humanitarianism for racial fanaticism, objectivity for prejudice, and, in the end, the guillotine for the gas chamber.

The hyper-rational genre, on the other hand, moved in the opposite direction by routinizing the application of reason into a rigid political formula. Stalinism is the reductio ad absurdum of Descartes' assertion that we humans can "render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature," a dream that found a confident echo as late as 1961 in the statement of the Hungarian author who wrote that socialism was on the verge of "the final maneuvers . . . for the ultimate conquest of the material world." In the twentieth century the agent for accomplishing this end was first the vanguard party sustained by its scientific (i.e. rational) understanding of human history, then the vanguard of the vanguard, and finally the great leader, who imposed himself as the ultimate source of human rationality that could transform the world.

The third genre is pluralism, which, in contrast to the other two genres, is not so much a system as it is an indeterminate set of political devices for structuring process. Because pluralist institutions are based on the prosaic observation that human beings are fallible and liable to contention, they are designed to prevent any "primal non-rational force" or "vanguard scientific party" from directing the affairs of society for very long. This does not mean they will not err, but it does mean that they will change - not immediately, not easily, and often with a great deal of pain and political struggle, not to mention cant and humbug. Pluralism's balanced and multilayered political configurations and processes, variety of ownership forms, diversity of associational possibilities, and openness of public discourse have proven flexible enough to match

the protean developmental surge of the energy revolution.

Without going into any detail, it seems to me that the experience of the twentieth century has taught us something about social organization that we did not know when the century began, namely that both the anti-rationalist and the hyper-rationalist genres are incapable of successfully solving the problems posed by the energy revolution. 1945 showed the bankruptcy of the anti-rationalist genre, and 1989 demonstrated the bankruptcy of the hyper-rationalist genre. The message of the twentieth century is not, as some observers would have us believe, that pluralism is the final answer to the energy revolution and that history is over. Indeed, the paradox of Fukuyama's notorious claim of two years ago is that the end of history has occurred because of the victory of the only genre within which history can occur. Both the anti-rational and hyper-rational systems sought final solutions and found stasis instead. The ease with which pluralism incorporated the information revolution of the past fifteen years compared to the difficulties socialist systems had with that revolution is a recent instance of pluralism's ability to respond to the unexpected challenges of the energy revolution poses.

But that does not mean that pluralism has adequately solved the modern problematic. When we observe the misery in which not just most people in the third world, but a large number of people in the first world, live, we understand that many issues remain on the agenda, not the least of which is the problem of finding a plausible framework for opposition to injustice in societies that

are suffused with self-satisfaction. The great message of the twentieth century is not the positive accomplishments of pluralism, although there are many, but the negative message of the other two genres: we have not learned what works as surely as we have learned what does not work. Pluralism has its problems, but the other two genres are dead ends. History is not over, just the twentieth century.

The most important lesson of 1989, therefore, the reason that year can be added to the short list of dates that students will learn as the landmarks of the modern era (the others are 1789, 1848, and 1945), is that the second of the twentieth century's two great experiments in coping with the energy revolution failed. Unfortunately, however, that failure does not present the same kind of unique opportunity for positive reconstruction that the failure of the anti-rationalist genre in 1945 did. In 1945 Europe was devastated not only physically, but psychically as well. The optimism of the nineteenth century was not only long gone, but the entire civilization that had spawned the disasters of two great wars seemed spent. This was a calamity, but a calamity with a positive side. Moments like 1945 are rarely seen in history - a wiping of the slate, if not clean, then close to it. Of course the wiping was done with blood - not something we would chose, but it was precisely the grotesque and bloody futility of the great thirty years war from 1914 to 1945 that convinced men like Alcide de Gaspari, Konrad Adenauer, Henri Spaak, Robert Schuman, and Jean Monnet - in a way that conferences, speeches, articles, and diplomacy never could have - that the old obsessions could not form the basis of a stable

Europe. They built their new community not on sacro egoismo, but on voluntary association and a politics of accommodation.

Surprisingly, given all the ink that has been spilled about the failure of the early dreams of creating a European political union, in a little more than thirty years this new community has become not just a strong economic unit, but also a vertical structure for containing the passions that burst the traditional European system of empires apart. Today, if you live in Florence, for example, you can be a booster of your neighborhood and city, a Tuscan patriot, a citizen of Italy, and an advocate for Europe, all at the same time, or singly on the appropriate occasions. One may fear that the increasingly inward looking preoccupations of the Community will eventually turn Europeans into multi-national nationalists, but the absurdity today of Germans shooting Frenchmen or Italians bombing Spaniards, both commonplaces of our fathers' time, is obvious.

One of the greatest costs of Stalinism in Eastern Europe was that it excluded the East Europeans from the unique cesura that made new solutions possible in the West. Eastern Europe had no stunde null. In 1989 many East Europeans emerged from their own devastating era of grotesque obsessions with no sense of despair over the collapse of civilization, but rather harboring both enthusiastic expectations and a host of ideas from the past that had been suppressed for forty years. Francois Furet has said that the most striking thing about 1989 was the absence of new ideas. East Europeans are exuberant at their release from lies, but some of them appear anxious to create their own deceptions;

other East Europeans are convinced that their particular people has been unjustly treated for forty years, but stand ready to do the same to others; East Europeans elites are frustrated by a long generation of humiliating compromises, but for that very reason find it difficult to practice a politics of compromise. Some authors have suggested that these data show that the East Europeans have reverted to the mentality of the twenties and thirties, to that moment at which they left off from Europe sixty years ago. It would be more accurate to say that, having missed the unique window of opportunity that the bitter tonic of 1945 offered to others, they have not yet had the chance to learn first hand the futility of some of the old ideas. This does not mean they will find it impossible to create the structures that will contain their passions, because, unlike 1918, the existence of the European Community will exert a constant pressure on them to democratize and to marketize. But, feeling that their predicament is not their fault but rather something imposed on them from outside, socialized to the ethic of a paternalistic state, and retaining a sense that some of the bad old ideas are not really all that bad, they will find it more difficult to take advantage of their particular cesura.

A third thought on the revolutions of 1989 came to me when I saw those first pictures of soviet tanks being loaded on trains in Hungary for their journey east. For the past forty years Western governments have quite naturally focussed on the military and economic strengths of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Enormous bureaucracies are devoted to understanding and countering every military threat, especially at the technological

level, to evaluating relative strengths in the leadership elites, and to analyzing the details of trade, finance, and investment. In the world of power relationships that civil servants and politicians inhabit, only data of that sort carried the conviction of being realistic. The hard-nosed analyst was preoccupied with studying the implications of the Nth Party Congress, charting CMEA statistics to estimate the none-too-good prospects for the next five year plan, assessing the meaning, or even the existence, of the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine, or analyzing the disposition of Warsaw Pact forces.

The academic community was preoccupied with similar concerns. Studies in conflict resolution, security issues, economic analysis, policy options, and various kinds of modeling focussed attention on those areas of public life that are quantifiable, that are consistent with social science theorizing, or that have policy implications. Fearing, with good reason, that they might be considered soft or unscientific, academics too gravitated toward "realistic" assessments of East European affairs.

The events of 1989 clearly show how limited a view this was, how, if you like, unrealistic. If anything is clear about the sudden swoon of the hollow East European regimes in November and December 1989 it is that those collapses were the result of moral rot at least as much as economic or political failure. After the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia convinced East European intellectuals that it would be impossible to create socialism with a human face, they turned from debating how to reform the

system to a much more devastating device - total rejection of the regimes' thoroughgoing falsity. What is the basis of hope in a hopeless situation? Living an ethical life, Leszek Kolakowski answered in 1971. Hope is not a prognostication about the future, Vaclav Havel said, but the conviction that something has meaning, which is what permits the undertaking of the hopeless enterprise of living in truth. "Even if people never speak of it," Havel said in his open letter to Gustav Husak in 1975, "they have a very acute appreciation of the price they have paid for outward peace and quiet: the permanent humiliation of their human dignity." This desire, necessity even, to live in truth is what lay behind the creation of KOR, Charter 77, and even Solidarity. "What all of us had in mind were not only . . . bread, butter, and sausage," said the Solidarity program of October 1981, "but also justice, democracy, truth, legality, human dignity, freedom of convictions, and the repair of the republic," which is why Andrzej Gwiazda characterized Solidarity as a "moral revolution." It was not economic deprivation that brought the people onto the streets in Eastern Europe in November and December 1989. They had suffered economic hardship for a long time, and in countries like Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria times were not even that hard. It was their humiliation, their disgust with the falsity of their regimes, their desire for freedom. That is why when the fall took place it was the uncompromised advocates of living in truth, the musicians, historians, philosophers, sociologists, and playwrights - the cultural leaders - who came to power. All the studies of strategic balances proved inappropriate and useless. The Soviet troops simply got on their trains and went home.

The events of 1989 have not only shown that strategic studies do not adequately take into account such intangibles as ethical values, religion, and national sentiment, but they have greatly changed the character of the kind of analysis we need in the future. At least when we faced a competitor with massive nuclear forces who was competing with us in many parts of the world using an ideology that claimed ultimate victory there were excellent justifications for concentrating on the strategic balance. After 1989, however, the situation has changed. Without question we must continue our study of policy options, to analyze the economic strengths and weaknesses of our competitors, and to monitor the status of military forces in the world. I do not propose giving up such vitally important work. But as the surprising outcome of the Iraq war, which unleashed the unexpected outpouring of Kurdish fears, confirms, we need to spend a bit more time on the intangibles.

For example, it was quite clear in 1975 what we meant by human rights. We meant that oppressive regimes, but particularly communist ones, should permit more freedom of speech, more free travel, and so forth. We purposefully avoided the obvious fact that human rights also means minority rights, since minority issues occur typically within already established states rather than among them and imply that established borders might have to change. Today minority rights, which in the Wilsonian era went under the name "self-determination of peoples," are a central issue of East European politics that threaten the stability of the region, and even the existence of two of the states. How are

we to deal with the apparent incompatibility of our advocacy of self-determination (minority rights) and stable borders? At this point we do not know. But strategic studies alone will not provide a fully adequate answer, because the issues involved are cultural, religious, ethical, and emotional as well as strategic.

Michael Howard has put this point well in his recent book The Lessons of History. The real lessons of history, he says, are not so much about pride, folly and stupidity, as about "people, often of masterful intelligence, trained usually in law of economics or perhaps political science who have led their governments into disastrous miscalculations because they have no awareness whatever of the historical background, the cultural universe of the foreign societies with which they have to deal. It is an awareness for which no amount of strategic or economic analysis, no techniques of crisis management or conflict resolution . . . can provide a substitute." Professor Howard wrote those words in 1980, but they constitute an elegant way of saying that 1989 made a good case for soft-nosed analysis.

My fourth suggestion is closely connected with this third point. The events of the past two years have shown how important leadership is. For a historian like myself, there is little question that we all operate within a historically determined and relatively limited range of creative possibilities. But 1989 has shown once again, if it needed showing, and apparently sometimes it does, how important and unpredictable is the ability of individual leaders to stretch that range. Whatever the final assessment will be on Gorbachev, whether he is the Alexander II of our day, beginning a reformer and ending a conservative, or

the Kemal Ataturk who completely changes his nation's direction, there seems little doubt that his decision to let Eastern Europe go was original, unexpected (probably even by him), and difficult. If there was one thing we knew for certain about the Soviet relationship with Eastern Europe, it was that whatever else might happen, the Soviet Union would never relinquish its special relationship with the region. To have done so was not a socio-economic imperative or a structural necessity, although arguments in that vein are being made. The loss of Eastern Europe was the outcome of a policy conceived and introduced by a particular individual, representing a significant strain of Soviet thought, who saw, perhaps briefly, a possibility to revivify socialism while at the same time creating a constructive place in Europe for the Soviet Union that it had never had in the past. If we compare Gorbachev's rhetoric about autonomy of choice and his actions about arms reduction and withdrawal from Afghanistan with what we reasonably might have expected from his Brezhnevian rival from 1985, Viktor Grishin, we can grasp the power and originality of Gorbachev's leadership.

And Gorbachev was not the only original leader of 1989. It was not written that a German Chancellor should have moved as single-mindedly as Helmut Kohl did toward unification, nor that he should have done so in such a relatively restrained and un-nationalistic way.

For the next few years I think leadership, not structure, will determine whether the individual countries of Eastern Europe we be able to make successful transitions in the relatively

unpromising aftermath of 1989. One of the striking differences between East Central Europe and Southeast Europe lies precisely in this sphere. Moderate men with great prestige now lead Poland and Czechoslovakia, and even in Hungary Jozsef Antall at least understands parliamentary democracy. Unlike many of the politically inexperienced members of their societies, both among the public and among elites, these men recognize the fragility of their current position, know that it takes time to create the institutions of interest representation, and understand that democracy is a politics of accommodation. This is true even of Lech Walesa. Despite the fears many Poles express about the possibilities of a Pilsudskian resolution in Poland, one of the basic characteristics of Walesa's career has been his ability to seek out solutions rather than confrontations. During the Solidarity period he probably spent as much time advising the workers not to strike as in any other single activity.

In Southeast Europe, by contrast, we have at least one and probably more inward-looking and radically selfish leaders in Yugoslavia, a self-appointed and none too legitimate government in Romania, and a scramble that has not produced any clear leadership in Bulgaria. This contrast can only have a differential impact on the future development of these two regions. Structural analysis is useful and important, particularly when it is turned to past events. But 1989 has reminded us that leaders can make original decisions and that they can shape forces. We hardly notice, however, because these decisions quickly enter the structure of our presuppositions, changing them radically but almost imperceptibly as we go along.

The dramatic reversals in our perceptions of Soviet possibilities based on our assessment of Gorbachev's actions - at first skeptical, then enthusiastic, then gloomy, now perhaps a slight upturn - illustrate the point.

This comment on leadership is linked with a much larger theme, the last one I want to raise. Many people understood the weaknesses of centrally planned systems very well. But the actual drama of 1989 was foreseen by no one. The final lesson of 1989 is to remind us of something that in an intellectual sense we already know: the near-term future is unpredictable. And yet laymen and specialists alike seem to harbor a touching hope that we will find just that knowledgeable person who can tell us what the future holds. Anyone who has given a public talk about Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union recently can attest that the first question posed after the talk is certain to be "What is going to happen next?" One of the things that sustains that hope, I think, is that historians find it possible to trace causal strings through past events. We feel that the same kind of linear logic should permit us to extrapolate events into the future. But linearity only works backwards. Forwards, we live in a non-linear world where surprises lurk. The historian's ability to trace causal strings is an illusion, a slight of hand granted us by the fact that we already know, in a certain sense at least, what happened.

The future, by contrast, is subject to what chaos theory calls the butterfly effect, which is the modern version of that old tale of how the empire was lost for want of a nail. Its

point is simply that no matter how large the amount of data we accumulate about complex systems, there always exist uncertainties that radically transform outcomes. 1989 has turned the post-World War II era from current events into history, so that we now can talk about post-war Eastern Europe with a confidence that we did not have in 1985, let alone 1975 or 1960. We know what happened. But we must resist the temptation of turning our new-found confidence that we understand the period into a new-found memory that we understood it, because that will only continue to sustain our already overdeveloped hunger to predict the unpredictable.

To summarize then, the lessons of 1989, and this is of course not an inclusive list, are 1) the twentieth century is over, with both the anti-rationalist and the hyper-rationalist genres of solutions to the energy revolution having proven to be political, economic, and moral dead ends. This has not provided us with any silver bullets for the future, but it lessens the likelihood that we will repeat the grossest of errors; 2) East Europeans will probably not profit as much from their deliverance in 1989 as western Europe did from its deliverance in 1945, although the goal of entering Europe does provide a powerful positive incentive; 3) strategic assessments not only could benefit from taking moral and cultural factors into account, but in the post-communist world will be forced to do so; 4) leadership counts and will be an important ingredient in the differential development that appears to be the destiny of East Central Europe and Southeast Europe; and 5) surprises await us.

STALINISM AND PLURALISM: TWO PATHWAYS FROM THE ENLIGHTENMENT

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The most fundamental event of the past few hundred years is the great environmental revolution brought about by humanity's discovery of how to extract energy systematically from non-living things. The mastery of gunpowder and steam, and the fundamental changes put in train by related developments, placed such an enormous amount of controlled power into human hands that agricultural society became obsolete, just as the discovery of how to extract energy from living things systematically, agriculture, made hunting and gathering obsolete. We are still in the first generations of coping with the literally incomprehensible changes in all aspects of our lives that this great transformation made necessary, and in fact are still using the ideas and forms invented, or at least brought to wide-spread consciousness, only within the past ten or so generations during which the transformation has been under way.

In my view, only three major genres of ideological and political solutions have been proposed for organizing societies to cope with these changes: anti-rationalist, hyper-rationalist, and pluralist, all created in meaningful modern ways in the eighteenth century. Only one of these, pluralism, has proven minimally adequate to the social and technological demands of the

past two hundred years. But the great finding of the twentieth century is not the positive one in which liberal democracy emerges victorious. When we observe the misery of not just most people in the third world, but a large number of persons in the first world, we understand that many issues remain on the agenda of pluralist societies, not the least of which is the problem of finding a plausible framework for opposition to injustice in political systems that are suffused with self-satisfaction. No, the great message of the twentieth century is a negative message: we have not learned what works so much as what does not work. Pluralism has its problems, but the other two genres are dead ends.

I do not intend to spend much time on the first of these dead ends, the anti-rational solution. By this term I mean, of course, those movements of rage and rejection in the first half of the twentieth century that craved the technological power put into their hands by the industrial revolution but believed, as Schelling did, that the universe held "a primal, non-rational force that can be grasped only by the intuitive power of men of imaginative genius."¹ Nazism and fascism rejected reason for power, individuality for sacro egoismo, virtue for vainglory, transparency for obscurantism, constitutions for the Führerprinzip, humanitarianism for racial fanaticism, objectivity for prejudice, and, in the end, the guillotine for the gas

1. Isaiah Berlin, "The Counter-Enlightenment," in his Against the Current, Henry Hardy, ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 19.

chambers.

If 1945 demonstrated the futility of this genre, 1989 demonstrated the futility of the hyper-rationalist genre. Stalinism may be understood, in my opinion, as the reductio ad absurdum of Descartes' assertion that we humans can "render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature."¹ It is not difficult to construct a historical pathway from Descartes to the ecstatic Hungarian author of 1961 who said socialism was on the verge of "the final manoeuvres . . . for the ultimate conquest of the material world."² The pathway would lead through Engels, who spoke of humanity becoming the "conscious lord of Nature,"³ and through Stalin himself. Robert C. Tucker calls Stalin a "transformist," denying all spontaneity and autonomy that would "impose unwanted limits upon the extent to which [something] could be transformed from without."⁴ In his most extreme and mature phase, Stalin believed implicitly in the ability of the

1. Rene Descartes, "Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason", in Elizabeth S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, trans. and eds., The Philosophical Works of Descartes (n.p.: Dover Publications, 1955), Vol. 1, p. 119.

2. Mihaly Vaci, quoted by Ivan Berend, The Hungarian Economic Reforms, 1953-1988 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 148.

3. Friedrich Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific," in Robert C. Tucker, The Marx-Engels Reader (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1972), p. 637.

4. Robert C. Tucker, "Stalin and the Uses of Psychology," in his The Soviet Political Mind: Studies in Stalinism and post-Stalin Change (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 93. Cf. Rousseau: "Whoever ventures on the enterprise of setting up a people must be ready . . . to change human nature, to transform each individual . . . into a part of a much greater whole, from which that same individual will receive, in a sense, his life and his being" (Social Contract, p. 84).

human actor (namely himself) to create a rational economy, produce new ideas in linguistics, and even transmute nature itself, denying that there was anything "arbitrary, subjective, risky, or unpredictable about the schemes for transformation that [his] regime put forward."¹

In delineating the pathway from Descartes to Stalin, of course, we must remain clear that it is not an unobstructed freeway leading to a known destination for which the concept emerged in the seventeenth century, the engineering plans were drawn in the eighteenth century, and the site preparation was completed in the nineteenth century. Instead we confront an utterly undriveable road of convoluted twists and turns built without blueprints by squabbling construction crews who had no idea of their destination and most of whom quit in any event to start their own roads. The way to Stalinism is not preordained or inevitable, but neither is it just another out of the infinite number of narrative paths that could be constructed. Alternatives were possible at every juncture, and many took them, but the set of branchways that produced Stalinism constituted a massive test of one particularly narrow understanding of how humans construct their world.

This view is connected with the new answer the eighteenth century proposed to St. Augustine's classic question, "Where then is evil and what is its source?" Augustine, and most Christians who followed, answered his question by means of the

1. Tucker, "Stalin and the Uses of Psychology," p. 94.

parable of the Garden of Eden. Man and Woman, punished for seeking to attain to God's absolute knowledge, had been cast out into the mortal world carrying their ineradicable burden of original sin. Evil is an inherent human characteristic that can not be eliminated but must be regulated or suppressed by authority when it inevitably bursts out into socially disruptive behavior. The gloomy implications of this position are best represented by the savage pronouncements of the conservative Catholic Joseph de Maistre, who proposed that "the whole earth, perpetually steeped in blood, is nothing but a vast altar upon which all that is living must be sacrificed without measure, without pause, until the consummation of things, until evil is extinct, until the death of death."¹

Rousseau completely rejected this view. For Rousseau, the corruption of human morals was not an insoluble problem of the soul, but a paradoxically direct consequence of humanity's most vigorous and conscious efforts to civilize itself. Only when compassionate natural man had created private property and thereby entered into civil society, with all of its "crimes, wars, murders, . . . misery and horror," had evil proliferated.² Rousseau's vision was vastly more optimistic than the Christian one. By placing the sources of evil outside of us, in the institutions that humans themselves had built for their own

1. Quoted by Isaiah Berlin, "Joseph de Maistre and the Origins of Fascism," New York Review of Books, Sept. 27, 1990, p. 62.

2. Jean Jacques Rousseau, A discourse on Inequality, translated with an introduction and notes by Maurice Cranston (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), p. 109.

purposes, by bringing the sources of evil to the surface, so to speak, Rousseau made modern politics possible.¹ To the extent that we believe that social problems can be ameliorated through the political process, whether by reform or by revolution, we are all today Rousseauians.

But how was one to fix ancient and culturally embedded institutions? From the time of Voltaire's Philosophical Letters, there was little doubt among most eighteenth century thinkers - one must seek out the natural laws of human interaction through the application of reason, and turn the knowledge thus gained to good use. The assumption of rationality did not mean that each individual acts rationally all the time, but that there must lie deep inside of each person a true sense of what is good. When all the people together use this sense to make a decision concerning their governance, they express a general will of society that will be "always rightful and always tends to the public good."² The general will is not only an expression of human rationality, therefore, but of humanity's fundamental virtue as well. This true understanding, this general will, can be achieved, however, only in conditions of real freedom, that is, only when we are living under laws to which we have given our

1. Of course he was not the only one to do so. For example, by substituting defense of property for defense of privilege as the proper function of government, Turgot and others entered into what Francois Furet calls "a very modern discourse," basing their justification of the state on defending the interests of society rather than on the abstract general will, as Rousseau did (Francois Furet, La Revolution de Turgot a Jules Ferry 1770-1880 (Paris: Hachette, 1989), pp. 34-5.

2. Rousseau, The Social Contract, p. 72.

full consent. "Obedience to a law one prescribes to oneself," said Rousseau, "is freedom."¹

Essential to Rousseau's view is his assumption that the people, at least when asserting their general will, are a homogeneous and virtuous whole, not a plurality of factions and individuals pursuing partial interests. This is in fact what differentiates the general will from partial wills - it is the single view on any given issue that truly reflects the virtuous will of the generality. This notion that the people had one view that could be both virtuous and rational was very common in the eighteenth century, in part because of the general acceptance of the idea of mixed government, in which the people were considered a single element that contrasted with the other two elements, the aristocracy, and the king. Thinkers as diverse as Edmund Burke, John Adams, and the Abbé Sieyès subscribed to the notion.² It is, however, the Trojan horse that permitted revolutionaries to turn Rousseau's undoubted passion for freedom into structures of

1. Rousseau, The Social Contract, translated and introduced by Maurice Cranston (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 65. Cf: Kant: "[The rational being] is free as regards the laws of nature, and he obeys only those laws which he gives to himself" (Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, translated by James W. Ellington, [Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981], p. 41).

2. Edmund Burke said "Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation with one interest, that of the . . . general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole" (Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 [Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1969], p. 175). Sieyès held that legislators "are not the representatives of portions of society, their electors for example, but of the entire nation" (Furet, La Revolution Francaise, p. 64). John Adams maintained his idea that the people were the virtuous single order of a mixed government until his death (Wood, Creation of the American Republic, p. 589-590).

unfreedom.

Rousseau's idea of a virtuous people expressing its general will contained what might be called an origination flaw. If freedom was obedience to the laws written on the basis of the general will and at the same time the condition for expressing the general will, how could the first law be written? Since it could not be written under the conditions of freedom that only it could establish, it could not be a true expression of the general will - there is no way to start the process. In 1789 the French found a way out of that dilemma - revolution. The French Revolution itself, the revolutionaries concluded, created "the natural public virtue necessary for the exercise of national sovereignty."¹ The reign of egotism was over, Saint Just claimed in his maiden speech, now that the people were sovereign.² This is why the revolutionaries made an early decision to dispense with traditional political forms, such as a senate, in favor of a unitary state unmediated by corporate structures of any kind.³ Only such a state could reflect the virtuous people's will

1. Keith Michael Baker, "Fixing the French Constitution," in his Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 286.

2. Carole Blum, Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue: The Language of Politics in the French Revolution (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 174. This is Blum's paraphrase of St. Just's remarks.

3. The view expressed here is based on the school of Francois Furet. For a critique of that school see Isser Woloch, "On the Latent Illiberalism of the French Revolution," American Historical Review, 95 (1990), pp. 1452-1470.

without hindrance, transparently as it were.¹

But if the people were virtuous and if the general will was rational, what was one to make of opposition? Rousseau's answer was that since a law passed in accordance with the general will was a rational expression of human freedom, disobedience to such a law could only arise from obstinacy or ignorance. In either case the duty of the magistrates was the same: to compel the deviants to obey, either by force or through education.² When an "opinion contrary to my own prevails [as the general will]," Rousseau said, "this proves only that I have made a mistake."³ During the French Revolution Robespierre, Saint Just, and the others turned the "mistake" of differing with them into treason punishable by death. As Albert Camus put it, whereas in the ancient world "there were more mistakes than crimes," in the modern world "there are no longer any mistakes, but only

1. Jean Starobinski introduced the term transparency to describe the fundamental thread that runs through Rousseau's work, which was to recapture the immediacy of childhood experiences in the highly mediated world of adult life. Jean Starobinski, Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, orig. pub. 1957); Francois Furet, Interpreting the French Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Lynn Hunt, Politics Culture and Class in the French Revolution (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

2. Rousseau said the deviants "shall be forced to be free" (Social Contract, p. 64). Cf. Lenin: "We must crush [the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists] in order to free humanity" (State and Revolution [New York: International Publishers, 1932], p. 73).

3. Rousseau, Social Contract, p. 153.

crimes."¹

The contributions of Rousseau and the French Revolution, therefore, are profoundly paradoxical. If the source of human evil lies in the structures of society, then it should be possible, assuming as the Rousseauians do that human beings can be rational, to improve society by changing these structures. For this to be possible political action must create the conditions whereby understanding can be expressed without being distorted by mediating institutions. Once those institutions have been eliminated, as by a revolution for example, the state can count on the rationality and virtue of the general will. And since it would be logically absurd to believe that a truly rational decision could injure the interests of those who make it, decisions made by recourse to the general will by definition support the public good. Anyone who dissents from such a law is either uninformed or damaging to the public good and must be reeducated or disciplined. Revolution breaks the old system of partial interests, of egoism. The virtuous people seize the reins of power and choose leaders who are emanations of their unquestioned virtue.² True rationality in politics - real freedom - consists of the efforts of these leaders to bring the recalcitrant members of society, those who chose not to count

1. The Rebel (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), p. 173. To break with Marxism, David Horowitz says, "was not a simple matter, like abandoning a misconception or admitting a mistake. It was more like accusing one's comrades. Like condemning a life" ("Socialism: Guilty as Charged," Commentary, December 1990, p. 17).

2. The phrase is from Blum, Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue, p. 223.

themselves among the people, to virtue.

If this thumbnail sketch of an eighteenth century phenomenon sounds eerily familiar in the twentieth century it is because, among other reasons, Marx and Lenin passed it on to us dressed in a new form. A creature of class analysis breathed to life by dialectical materialism, the proletariat is none other than Rousseau's virtuous people. Marx did not use the vocabulary of virtue and he considered the Christian view of evil a prime example of false consciousness. The contradictions of capitalism do not grow from the greed of the capitalists, although they are greedy, but rather from their self-interested efforts to produce structures in which to live, just as Rousseau suggested. But Marx did consider the proletariat the "special and essential product" of capitalism, the "self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority."¹ It was the class that would, by seizing the means of production, eliminate the category of class itself and create a humanity that was fully free, no longer alienated by the anarchic constructs of market exchange. Such a world would be essentially without evil as we have known it. History, to paraphrase Fukuyama, would be at an end.

Marx's entire project is a deeply eighteenth century one - to comprehend the laws of human society and to show how this understanding can create a truly human society. Marx called the method by which he arrived at his insights scientific, which is just the word Condorcet used to describe what the eighteenth

1. "The Communist Manifesto," in Robert C. Tucker, The Marx-Engels Reader (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1972), p. 342.

century meant by rational.¹ Neither Marx nor the philosophes meant by this term "thinking clearly," although they did think clearly about many things. Instead they meant "thinking as I, the one who understands these things, do." Reason is for them metaphysical, not pragmatic, which is to say that Marx did not think of his views as one theory among many. Because he based his ideas on what he considered "real" foundations, that is, relationships that grew inevitably out of humans' unique attribute as producers, and because he elaborated his views in terms of the dialectical method, which he believed scientifically verifiable, he and Engels considered their views simply correct. "Marxism is not a philosophy of history," the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty said, "it is the philosophy of history, and to renounce it is to dig the grave of Reason in history."²

In the eighteenth century Rousseau believed that whereas the people were fundamentally good they were also weak, and so they needed a lawgiver, education, and even on occasion coercion. In the twentieth century Lenin believed that whereas the proletariat was the only class able to create the unalienated society of the future, it was prone to error and therefore needed a mentor. "The people is never corrupted," said Rousseau, "but it is often misled." "The history of all countries," Lenin wrote, "shows that the working class, exclusively by its own efforts, is able

1. Francois Furet, La Revolution de Turgot a Jules Ferry 1770-1880 (Paris: Hachette: 1988), p. 35.

2. Quoted by Tony Judt, "The Dilemmas of Dissidence: The Politics of Opposition in East-Central Europe," Eastern European Politics and Societies, 2 (1988), p. 231.

to develop only trade-union consciousness."¹ In the republic of virtue the people's representatives were fully rational because they represented the virtuous nation. In the republic of socialism the vanguard party was the repository of reason because only it truly understood the interests of the historically progressive class. As Evgenii Zamiatin put it with heavy irony in the last sentence of his novel We, "I am certain we shall win. For Reason must prevail."²

When Reason with a capital R did prevail in 1917, there was little doubt in the minds of Bolshevik revolutionaries that they would be able to shake the misguided proletariat by its red neck and produce a "new Soviet man." If under capitalism the worker was unable to see his own interest with perfect clarity, under communism the structures that had prevented proletarian virtue from shining forth would be eliminated and the Rousseauian vision would be complete. And what if the new Soviet man seemed just as prone to quibbling and disputatiousness as his old capitalist counterpart? Education and coercion would come to the rescue, just as Rousseau proposed.

The French revolutionaries faced the paradoxical problem of leading to virtue a people that were by definition already virtuous; the Russian Revolutionaries faced the problem of creating an new and unalienated Soviet man out of a proletariat

1. Rousseau, Social Contract, p. 72; V. I. Lenin, What is to be Done: Burning Questions of Our Movement (New York: International Publishers, 1943), pp. 32-33.

2. Eugene Zamiatin, We, translated by Gregory Zilboorg (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1959), p. 218.

that was only potentially unalienated. But the Russian revolutionaries thought they had an advantage over their French predecessors because they possessed an elaborate plan of centralized economic planning supported by a highly organized and disciplined party. But despite that advantage, 1989 has shown us unequivocally that they failed.

The view that this depressing culmination of the Marxist experience is an outgrowth of a sterile kind of rationalism characteristic of an Enlightenment overestimation of human capacities has led to harsh judgments. Vaclav Havel considers the approach in "which people are first organized in one way or another (by someone who always knows best 'what the people need') so they may then allegedly be liberated" is depraved.¹ "The Marxist myth," Tony Judt has suggested, "is not simply the error of our time, it is the inevitable consequence of a belief in the possibility of a cognitive grasp of the external world. Rationalism has not given rise to our problems - it is our problem."² This judgment is not dissimilar to the one made during World War II by two critics of the anti-rationalist genre of modernizing solutions. "The Enlightenment," said Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in the opening sentences of their 1944 work, "has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty. Yet the fully enlightened earth

1. Vaclav Havel, "The Power of the Powerless," in his Living in Truth (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1989, written 1978), p. 90.

2. Judt, "Dilemmas of Dissidence," p. 237.

radiates disaster triumphant."¹ These judgments, and others like them, have naturally focussed on the debacles characteristic of the two failed genres. The cost of their failures to assimilate the industrial revolution has been so immense as to defy description, so that students of the year 2000 will look back on the twentieth century with the same sort of incomprehension earlier generations looked back on the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But these same students will not look back on every outgrowth of the eighteenth century with the same incomprehension, because there they also will find the third genre of coping with the energy revolution, pluralism.

If Rousseau is the father of the rationalizing genre of solving the political and social issues of the energy revolution, Adam Smith is the father of the pluralist genre. Smith started from the obverse of Augustine's question that motivated Rousseau. He did not ask "Where then is evil and what is its source," but the potentially more constructive question "wherein does virtue consist."² Given the enormous passions that drive human beings toward self-aggrandizement, how is it that people can and do form

1. Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment (New York: Continuum, 1989), p. 1.

2. "In treating of the principles of morals there are two questions to be considered. First, wherein does virtue consist? . . . And, secondly, by what power or faculty in the mind is it, that this character, whatever it be, is recommended to us?" (Adam Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, edited by D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie [Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1982], p. 265). Note the similar view of that great opponent of the hyper-rational genre, Vaclav Havel: "I am not interested in why man commits evil; I want to know why he does good" (Letters to Olga, translated by Paul Wilson, [New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989], p. 232).

moral judgments? His answer was that although pursuit of their own interests pits human beings against each other, their capacity for sympathy, imagination, reason, and reflection "provides them with the rational and moral faculties to create institutions by which the internecine struggle can be mitigated and even turned to the common good."¹ These institutions do not emerge directly as a result of leaders putting into effect a systematic and rational plan based on a general will. Smith had no faith in men of system, as he called them.² Whatever virtues society had were rather the unintended consequences of the internal struggle between self-interest and morality that work themselves out under the guidance of the natural laws of individual human interactions. The arena in which this play of invisible forces went on, of course, was the market. The point, however, is that Smith did not see the people as a homogeneous or potentially virtuous whole, in their market relations at least, but as a community of Hobbsean individualists who in non-market spheres of activity were capable of building structures that enabled virtue to occur, despite all odds to the contrary.

Adam Smith had much less influence on the American

1. Robert L. Heilbroner, "Adam Smith," Encyclopedia Britannica, fifteenth edition (1976), Vol. 16, p. 905.

2. "The man of system seems to imagine that he can arrange the different members of a great society with as much ease as the hand arranges the different pieces upon a chess-board. He does not consider that the pieces upon the chess-board have no other principle of motion besides that which the hand impresses upon them; but that, in the great chess-board of human society, every single piece has a principle of motion of its own, altogether different from that which the legislature might chuse [sic] to impress upon it" (Smith, Theory of Moral Sentiments, p. 234).

Revolution than Rousseau had on the French Revolution, but it is in the American Revolution, specifically in the Constitution of 1789, that we find the innovation that gave political expression to the pluralism latent in Smith's notion of the market. The revolution of 1776 played the same function initially for Americans as the revolution of 1789 did for the French: in the minds of the revolutionaries it transformed a divided people into a republic of virtue in which the chronic divisiveness of the colonial era would disappear. Gordon Wood puts the American confidence as follows:

Enlightened men could believe . . . that new habitual principles . . . could be created and nurtured by republican laws, and that these principles, together with the power of the mind, could give 'man's ideas and motives a new direction.' By the repeated exertion of reason . . . it seemed possible for man to recover his lost innocence and form a society of 'habitual virtue.'¹

When the revolution came, therefore, one of the first acts in every colony was to write a new constitution that severely limited the power of the king's surrogate, the governor. The revolutionaries firmly believed that the state legislators, once they were freely elected by a virtuous people to protect its interests against the tyrannical governor, would be incapable of passing laws damaging to the public interest.

But just as Robespierre found a bit later and Lenin much later, the people turned out to be far from homogeneous, legislatures did not always do the right thing, and disinterested natural leaders were few and far between. Tyranny on the part of the state legislatures, the first decade after 1776 showed, was -----

1. Wood, Creation of the American Republic, p. 120.

just as real a possibility as tyranny on the part of colonial governors. When the people are "loosened from their attachment to the ancient establishments," Alexander Hamilton remarked, "[they are apt] to grow giddy [and] more or less run into anarchy."¹ "We have, probably, had too good an opinion of human nature in forming our confederation," George Washington observed.²

Here is the crucial point at which the Americans found a new solution to the problem of popular sovereignty. Private interests have always disrupted stable government and threatened political leaders. The almost universal reaction has been to suppress unruly demands and pretensions. The rich mythology of human sinfulness standing at the center of Christianity justified social restraint in the name of order. Repression in the name of a virtuous people or in the name of the proletariat, therefore, was in a sense nothing more than a new wrinkle in a very old pair of pants, a secularization of repression that can be seen as simply another chapter in the demystification of the world.

In the decade after 1776 Americans unexpectedly re-wrote this chapter in their own way. The Articles of Confederation were not working because the theoretically virtuous people were refusing the pay federal exactions, repudiating debts, printing cheap money, and generally running amok, at least in the eyes of the men who considered themselves the natural leaders of the

1. Quoted by Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, p. 67.

2. Wood, Creation of the American Republic, p. 472.

revolution. James Madison knew that the traditional method of dealing with such disruptions was repression, but his originality, and the originality of the federalists in general, was to look the obvious fact that no society had ever been homogeneous straight in the eye. "As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it," Madison said, "different opinions will be formed. . . . The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man."¹ Agreeing with the Christian view that original sin was an inherent human characteristic, Madison rejected the Christian solution. Government must not suppress divergent opinions, he argued, because doing so would destroy the very freedom that is the ground for producing them. "Liberty is to faction what air is to fire. But it could not be less folly to abolish liberty, which is essential to political life, because it nourishes faction, than it would be to wish the annihilation of air, which is essential to animal life, because it imparts to fire its destructive agency."² Instead of ignoring the fact of human contentiousness in a search for unity and harmony, Madison and his federalist colleagues proposed to contain the effects of faction by creating a republic in which the powers accorded to the state were "so divided and balanced among several bodies of magistracy as that no one could transcend their legal limits

1. Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison, The Federalist Papers, edited by and introduction by Clinton Rossiter (New York: NAL Penguin, 1961), pp. 78-79.

2. Federalist Papers, p. 78.

without being effectually checked and restrained by the others."¹

This solution, in which it is important to note that powers were not only separated horizontally among the three branches of government but vertically among several layers of local, state, and federal governments, broke with the idea of a homogeneous people possessing a single interest. The people remained sovereign in the Constitution of 1789, as they did in the French and Russian revolutions, but their sovereignty did not inhere in any single institution, such as a legislature or a party, nor in fact in any institution at all. The people retained their entire sovereignty, only dispensing "such portions of power as were conceived as necessary for the public welfare . . . to such bodies, on such terms, and under such limitations, as they think proper."² This was the essential innovation of American political pluralism. All organs of government in the American system were, in their separate spheres, equally possessed of the people's sovereignty, a situation expressly forbidden during the French Revolution.

The contrast with the principles of homogeneity characteristic of the hyper-rationalist genre is stark. The Chapelier Law of 1791, for example, stated in its preface the following: "Sovereignty being one and indivisible, and belonging to the entire nation, no administration of a department [i.e.

1. Federalist Papers, p. 311.

2. Thomas Paine, "Dissertations on Government, the Affairs of the Bank, and Paper Money," in Michael Foot and Isaac Kramnick, eds., Thomas Paine Reader (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), p. 168.

local government], no district administration, no municipality, commune or section of a commune, nor any section of the people . . . has the right to execute any act of sovereignty."¹ Instead of fearing a division of sovereignty, as did the eighteenth century authors of the Chapelier Law, the designers of the American constitution positively reveled in it. We will sow the "seeds of political warfare . . . in the constitution" itself, said Thomas Jefferson.² In this way, the Americans found a way to cast aside the ancient fear of conflict and recast it into a strength, to rechannel diversity into a strategy of cohesion.³

American revolutionaries hoped to seize hold of their world and remake it according to human reason just as much as other revolutionaries. Alexander Hamilton asked "whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force," whereas Leon Trotsky held that "the Soviet system wishes to bring aim and plan into the very basis of society, where up to now only accumulated consequences have reigned."⁴ But "reason" for the Americans did not mean "consistent with the world as we

1. Le Moniteur universel, February 28, 1791, p. 503.

2. Wood, Creation of the American Republic, p. 449.

3. These are the phrases of Sacvan Bercovitch in the introduction to his forthcoming book on Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter.

4. Federalist Papers, p. 33; The Russian Revolution, abridged edition, (New York: Doubleday, 1989), p. 483.

would like to see it," but rather "consistent with the facts as we think we see them." They were pragmatic rationalists rather than metaphysical ones. The experiences of the decade that followed 1776 convinced them, contrary to expectation, that revolution did not suddenly make human beings virtuous. Therefore they found it only sensible to construct a political system that enlisted "the interest of vice on the side of virtue."¹

By permitting a plurality of interests to compete within complex and overlapping layers of government, by not assuming that the general will was one, and by not excluding a plurality of viewpoints on the grounds that they destroyed order and harmony, the Americans proved to be profoundly modern. The classical idea is that beneath the flux and chaos of ordinary experience there must exist simplicity and harmony. The task of human reason is to reduce complexity to simplicity. The modern view since Heisenberg, and surely since Einstein, Bohr, and von Neumann, is that under the flux and chaos of ordinary experience exist flux and chaos, or at least indeterminacy, complexity, and uncertainty.² The task of human reason under this dispensation is exactly the opposite as its classical duty - to avoid falling into the reductionist error of making complex things simple, and instead to find ways to understand complexity in all its contradictory confusion.

1. John Taylor, quoted by Wood, Creation of the American Republic, p. 591.

2. See James Gleick, Chaos: Making a New Science (New York: Penguin, 1987).

The Anglo-American pathway out of the Enlightenment is not as clear or as easily traced as the one that led to Stalinism, in part because no European states actually adopted the American system of federalism, but mainly because pluralism itself is by definition so multi-faceted. None the less, pluralist political systems characterized by representative democracy, a politics of accommodation in which interests contend openly in the public sphere, parties that compete in contested elections, government that is responsible in some way to the people, an electorate that eventually takes in all adults, and legal protection of civil rights did establish themselves in the European continent by the second half of the twentieth century. To the extent that they base themselves on the insight that political structures must be constructed to contain human error one may speak of them constituting a genre of solutions to the problems posed by the energy revolution.

Why has this genre, which in the past decade has had a significant resurgence not only in Eastern Europe but around the world, proven relatively successful in coping with the forces of the industrial revolution? The fundamental strength of pluralist logic, which is also its prime fault in the minds of systems builders, is its fertile vagueness. Pluralism is messy. It does not offer formulaic solutions. It is an open-ended process rather than a system. Change can occur in pluralist systems. When new situations arise, as they inevitably must, they are not automatically rejected as lying outside the current definition of rationality, although there will be those in the system who

attempt to do so. Pluralism temporizes; it equivocates; but it finds a place for new phenomena - not immediately, not easily, and often with a great deal of pain and political struggle, not to mention cant and humbug. But it finds a place.

The most dynamic sphere in which pluralist political structures have permitted process to occur of course is the economic. Hyper-rationalist solutions to economic problems have sought out an optimal plan for achieving certain social aims. Pluralist political systems, while not abandoning rationality in the sense of utilizing quantitative data and developing sophisticated economic theories, have permitted an enormous variety of solutions to the economic and social challenges posed by the industrial revolution to achieve a hearing. Underlying all of them is a Smithian confidence that in the end market mechanisms are the best regulators of production and distribution, but within that general rubric the variety and mix of solutions is enormous: French indicative planning and ownership of large enterprises; Swedish socialism; German codetermination; American mixed economy; Japanese cooperative structures. The flexibility of these systems has been demonstrated with particular clarity in the past decade when the explosive growth of information systems has revolutionized business without threatening the political stability of any pluralist system, while at the same time neo-Stalinist economies were collapsing.

If flexibility is a basic characteristic of pluralism, one of the great failings of the hyper-rationalist genre, and it is a typically eighteenth century failing, is that its solutions were

reified and static. Modernity was a thing, a specific set of material objects that some people knew how to achieve. For young enthusiasts who cut their teeth on Engels' description of working class Manchester and who experienced serious privation in their youths, modernity was steel mills, coal mines, and hydroelectric dams.¹ Build those gigantic factories and fill them with workers in blue smocks and caps and you are modern. But of course life is not static. Least of all are the dynamic economies unleashed by the energy revolution static. Pluralism provided a shiplap hull into which the enormously complex new structures created by capitalism could pour themselves. The ship creaks, grinds, shifts, and complains, but it accommodates. A politics in which adjustment to changing circumstances and pressures is not only allowed but honored as the fundamental organizing principle can weather many storms. The politics of accommodation is the great strength of pluralism, and this is what we know better now than we did thirty years ago, when a Hungarian communist could in good conscience write that his party's envisioned plan would, within twenty years, "not merely exempt our people wholly from problems of livelihood but allow the attainment of consumption targets . . . sufficient to satisfy the harmonious physical and intellectual needs of man," a view the central committee seconded by suggesting that Hungary would shortly arrive "at a standard of

1. Every leader of Eastern Europe in the 1970s, including Leonid Brezhnev and excepting Gustav Husak, came from a working class family at best, and some, such as Kadar, Ceausescu, and Zhivkov, came from backgrounds of real privation.

saturation on a society-wide scale."¹ It is difficult to imagine a world-historical ideology with extravagant claims such as this seeming both plausible and modernizing in the near future.

1. Berend, Hungarian economic reforms, p. 147.