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Stalin's Legacy to Brezhnev's Russia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"The past is not dead," William Faulkner said, "it isn't even past." The thesis of this study is that in order to understand the present situation of the USSR, we must be aware of ways in which the Stalin era, from 1928 to 1953, "isn't even past." The situation, in essence, is that Soviet Communism as a system of power is exceedingly strong, while as a society, a form of culture or civilization, it is critically weak.

As yet there is no definitive evaluation of the meaning of the Stalin era or "Stalinism" in Soviet Russia's history. In one widely accepted interpretation, Stalin's revolution from the 1930's, starting with the industrialization drive and the forcible collectivization of the peasantry and culminating in the Great Terror, was essentially a revolution of "modernization," an attempt to bring backward Russia into the modern world by cruelly swift means. In another, which is advanced in the present study, the Stalin era, although it produced the infrastructure of a modern industrial order in Russia, was in crucial ways a throwback to that country's distant past when the rulers built up a powerful military-national state, for defense and aggrandizement in a hostile international setting, by directly impressing all strata of the population, the nobility included, in compulsory state service.

Stalin's role of leadership in adopting this historical developmental pattern as valid for Soviet Russia expressed his "Russian national Bolshevism," an amalgam of Bolshevik revolutionism and Great Russian nationalism. Given this outlook, he found it natural to take certain early Russian tsars as well as Lenin as political role models (a psychological interpretation is presented in the Appendix below, "A Case of Mistaken Identity: Djugashvili-Stalin"). Because his Russian national Bolshevism and the policy patterns growing out of it went against the grain of a great many surviving members of the Bolshevik Old Guard in the early 1930's, Stalin encountered hostile criticism and opposition in the Communist party. He responded with the Great Terror, in which the ruling party was reconstituted as a new service nobility for a Soviet tsar-autocrat in his own person. Soviet statehood took on during that period the supremely centralized bureaucratic form that it still retains, with a privileged stratum of state servitors at the upper level.

The course that Soviet history took in Stalin's revolution from above profoundly affected the character of the belief system that formed the core of the Soviet culture. The meaning of membership not simply in the Communist Party but in the party-led Soviet society had been defined under Lenin in terms of commitment to the collective purpose of constructing a communist social
order in the USSR. A Soviet citizen was to be a conscious builder of socialism and eventually communism in Russia. In the 1930's and 1940's, with the rise of Stalin's personality cult, belief in the collective purpose was heavily personalized. To be a believer was no longer simply to be committed to the collective purpose, but also to believe in Stalin as the "Builder of Socialism" and the leader of genius who was guiding the Party and state along the path of constructing a fully communist society.

The beginnings of a crisis of belief date from the postwar years of Stalin's rule, when hopes raised by wartime promises of a better, freer life for Soviet people after victory were dashed during the Cold War. After Stalin's death, the reform politics pursued by Khrushchev had as a principal objective the revitalization of the belief culture through changes in the system and in policy that would bring palpable material benefits to the populace in a short time. To clear the way for reform measures, he exposed the anti-party terror of the 1930's in his secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress and in public at the Twenty-Second Congress. The outcome, apart from the failure of his reform course to produce the promised rapid material betterment, was to deepen the crisis of belief by destroying the Stalin myth in the minds of a generation of people brought up on it.

Brezhnev's period has seen a politics of Soviet normalization aimed at shoring up the state system by undoing many of the changes introduced under Khrushchev and solidifying the position and privileges of the bureaucratic ruling class. Stabilization of the political structure has been achieved at the cost of stagnation in many areas, including the civilian economy, and by now the belief system in which Soviet culture was founded has lost virtually all hold upon the minds of the people. The so-called "dissident" movement is better characterized as a "belief movement" inasmuch as the participants have moved from disillusion with the Soviet order as it exists to one or another form of sincere belief in a changed Russia.

Stalin's legacy to Brezhnev's Russia is a state system of huge military and repressive power, an extensive foreign empire, and a privileged class of high-level beneficiaries of the system who have been emancipated, largely, from the terror experienced under Stalin and the insecurities experienced under Khrushchev. Yet the society over which this statist supermonopoly rules is a spent one whose people en masse have lost credence in the Communist orthodoxy from which the system derives its claim to legitimacy. There exists in the society today a new "middle class" whose careers and fortunes are not necessarily linked with the fate of the supermonopoly. These people have in common a recognition of the fundamental bankruptcy of the supermonopoly as an economic system, and hence form a potential constituency for peaceful change. The West and in particular the United
Russia today is a mighty world power, with the largest territory of any state, a population of 260 million, great mineral resources in a resource-hungry world, and a geopolitical position that gives it a large role in both European and Asian affairs. It is a military superpower with intercontinental and intermediate-range nuclear missiles in large numbers, supersonic airplanes, a huge standing army based on universal military service, and fleets in all oceans. It controls an East- and Central-European empire extending deep into Germany and the Balkans. Its power and influence radiate into Asia, the Middle East, the Mediterranean, Africa and Latin America.

This formidable global presence is serviced and maintained by an internal state system centered in the historic capital city of Great Russia, Moscow; the formal autonomy of the outlying, non-Russian Soviet republics is constitutional fiction. Staffed by an army of party and government and other officials (it has been estimated that full-time party officials alone number close to half a million), the party-state edifice comes to a peak in the twenty-three departments of the party's Central Committee, whose Politburo is the focal-point of decision-making authority. Under this supreme directorate, about sixty governmental ministries provide centralized administration of the Soviet realm. Two of these bureaucracies, the police and the military, have roles and prerogatives of special importance. Their chiefs, along with the head of the Council of Ministers and his first deputy, the minister
for foreign affairs, the principal Central Committee secretaries, the first secretaries of the Moscow, Leningrad and one or two republic party organizations, sit with General Secretary Brezhnev on the Politburo and take part in policy-making.

The economy over which the Politburo oligarchy presides is that of a great industrial power second only to the United States in gross national product. It is first in the world in output of steel, pig iron and cement, second in aluminum and gold. It is self-sufficient in oil production and it exports oil and gas to countries of its empire and beyond. Its aerospace establishment is the sole competitor of America's. Its military-industrial complex, a great and privileged sector of the economy with priority claim on resources and expert personnel, supplies munitions for all Soviet needs and for export to other countries.

This political-economic system lays official claim to the title "developed socialism." A source inside the Soviet establishment, writing under the name of Fedor Zniakov, more aptly describes it as "supermonopoly capitalism." Ownership, he explains, is concentrated in a single center, the "supermonopoly," which possesses the plenitude of economic and political power. Totalitarian in that sense, the Soviet system may be described as a single gigantic conglomerate incorporating all industries and other state-controlled activity, including state- and collective-farm agriculture, under the unified management at the Politburo level.

The Politburo's control is ensured by a hierarchically
States can possibly facilitate a Russian renewal by the pursuit of policies designed to create an international situation and atmosphere conducive to such change.
organized ruling class that represents and defends the super-monopoly's interests in all spheres of social life and serves its fundamental aim: the preservation, strengthening and extension of its power. The ruling class starts at lower levels with plant directors, collective-farm chairman and heads of local party and governmental bodies, and extends to Central Committee secretaries and members of the Soviet government at the top. It is sometimes informally called the "nomenclature class" because of the system of nomenclature (nomenklatura), or lists of posts appointment to which requires the approval of a given higher or lower party body. The nomenclature class comprises those cleared for assignment to responsible positions in the party-state.

Its members and their families live in a relatively closed world of privilege which so sharply differentiates their life experience from that of non-privileged ordinary citizens that they could almost be living in different countries. People of the nomenclature class have comfortable apartments, cars and, in many cases, country houses. They are served by a network of so-called closed distributors. These are inconspicuous special shops where food and other products, including foreign goods, are available at subsidized prices to those who have access by virtue of their elite status. They have opportunities for foreign travel, adequate health care, and can enjoy the facilities of desirable Soviet resorts at desirable times of the year.
Through informal channels of influence their children can make their way into the restricted number of openings for higher education and thence into careers in the official world. Perquisites in that world are carefully differentiated according to gradations of rank. Thus in the Science Settlement at Novosibirsk, according to an ex-Soviet science journalist, "A full member of the Academy lives in a villa, a corresponding member has half a villa; a senior research officer has an apartment with a three-meter ceiling height, while a junior has one with a two and a quarter meter ceiling, on a higher floor with a communal bathroom."\(^3\)

II.

The system thus summarily described is in all fundamental respects an inheritance from the Stalin era, albeit with some changes since then that will be covered presently. It took shape in the course of what can best be described as a state-building process that was launched around 1929 when Stalin finally achieved personal ascendancy in the Soviet political leadership. Taking advantage of the ability that this gave him to manipulate the regime's policy (he was not yet the personal dictator that he became in the mid-1930's), Stalin steered a course in internal Soviet affairs that was predicated upon the imperative need to build an industrially and militarily powerful Soviet Russian state within ten years in preparation
for what he considered an inevitably oncoming great new war—a war that, with some assistance from Stalin's own diplomacy, did break out about ten years later, in 1939.

The state-building process started with Stalin's policy of collectivization of the peasantry. Looking back proudly in later years, he spoke of collectivization, whereby some twenty-five million private peasant farms were abolished and the peasants organized into some two hundred thousand state-supervised collective farms and a smaller number of huge state-owned farms, as a state-initiated and state-directed "revolution from above" that matched or surpassed in historical significance the October Revolution of 1917 by which Lenin and the Bolsheviks acquired power. 4 His phrase is applicable to the entire, many-sided, statist transformation during the 1930's of Soviet Russia.

In using it, Stalin forebore to mention a fact of which he was well aware, that coercive revolution from above in a long-range state-building process was no new phenomenon in Russia's history. A previous such process had its background and origin in national adversity: the conquest and two-hundred year occupation of the Russian lands by the Tatars. The Tsarist state, centered in Muscovy, developed in the early modern period, from the mid-fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, in a protracted struggle for the reconstitution of the national territory, a "gathering of Russian lands," in a hostile international environment that comprised not only the declining but still strong Tatar khanates but also powerful neighbors on three sides: Ottoman Turkey in the southwest, Poland-Lithuania in the west, and
Sweden in the northwest. Through war and diplomacy, but especially war, Muscovy expanded from an area of about 15,000 square miles in 1462 to that of the transcontinental Eurasian state that it finally became.

The expansionist drive placed a great premium upon military strength. Because of the country's economic backwardness and technological inferiority to its Western neighbors, the government sought to mobilize the resources for war by enlisting the population directly in its service. The exploitative relation of the state to the society brought an extension of coercive controls and hypertrophy of the centralized governmental system. This took place largely through a series of revolutions from above. Claiming ownership of the land, the state power destroyed the landowning boyars as a class and created a controlled nobility of serving men whose landed estates were allotted on condition of military service to the state. This was the foundation of the later growth of an "aristocracy of rank" under which bureaucratic distinction rather than birth became, in principle, the highroad of entry into the nobility. The fastening down of serfdom upon the peasants in the seventeenth century was another aspect of what older Russian historians called the "binding of all classes" in compulsory service to the state.

Under Peter the Great in the early eighteenth century, the last and most famous of the tsar-revolutionaries from above, the compulsory-service state underwent coercive remodelling from above through a Europeanization that connoted the borrowing of
advanced technology from the West and the forced development of Russian industry under governmental auspices for military power in the continuing process of external aggrandizement. Thus the primacy of foreign policy and the need for military strength for external defense and expansion were the mainspring of the internal state-building process. In his summation of this process, the pre-1917 historian Kliuchevsky wrote that "the expansion of the state territory, straining beyond measure and exhausting the resources of the people, only bolstered the power of the state without elevating the self-confidence of the people.... The state swelled up; the people grew thin."5

The pressure of external upon internal policy relaxed with tsarist Russia's achievement of its commanding world position by the close of the eighteenth century, making it possible for the government to give priority attention to the needs of internal welfare rather than territorial expansion. The earlier binding of all classes in compulsory state service gave way to a partial unbinding of classes with the release of the nobility from its compulsory-service obligations in the late eighteenth century.6 The "unbinding" proceeded in slow uneven steps. Not until 1861 was the peasantry released from serfdom by imperial decree. That action inaugurated a time of transforming change (from above) known as the epoch of Great Reforms. Although it witnessed a considerable liberalization of Russian life, the autocratic, authoritarian, centralized, bureaucratic state structure that had evolved in the state-building process was too well entrenched,
its repressive powers too formidable, and the history-bred submissiveness of the people too enduring, for the processes of change to work their way to fruition peacefully. What had developed as a dynamically active autocratic state authority in the earlier state-building process proved so strong as a static force later on that it could successfully block its own thorough transformation, as shown by its capacity to withstand the nationwide insurrectionary movement of 1905. Only under the unbearable strains of the third year of the World War did the structure finally buckle and collapse in 1917.

The Bolshevik party-state that emerged in control of what remained of the Russian Empire after the ensuing Time of Troubles was not initially oriented toward a renewed state-building process in the Russian national tradition. The Marxist ruling party's programmatic commitment was not to the restoration of a militarily powerful bureaucratic Russian state under a new tsar-autocrat, but to "socialist construction," meaning the building over time (a generation at least, Lenin said) of a socialist or communist society characterized by cooperative forms of production in a setting of economic and technological advance, by material abundance for the entire populace, and by a steady growth of popular self-administration in place of rule by a governmental bureaucracy. By the seizure and monopolizing of power and the establishment of a party dictatorship, Lenin and the Bolsheviks had, however, created a medium in which a dynamic resurgence of statism could occur. By virtue, moreover, of the losses of territory in the revolutionary
period and the new state's isolation in an unfriendly international environment, now called "hostile capitalist encirclement," the country's situation in the 1920's showed a certain parallel to that of the early Muscovite period.

III.

Among the leading Bolshevik contenders for power after Lenin died, Stalin alone was disposed by personal politico-ideological orientation to take that historical parallel seriously. His orientation is best described as Russian national Bolshevism, an amalgamation of Bolshevik revolutionary theory and practice with Great Russian nationalism. When he expressed it in moderate terms in the platform of "socialism in one country" that he advocated against the party Left in the debates of the mid-1920's, it had strong persuasive appeal to large elements of the ruling party, particularly the younger party generation. But linked as it was with his special perception of a parallel between Muscovite Russia's situation in earlier times and Soviet Russia's now, Stalin's actual position was far more radical in its political implications than his followers suspected—until he began acting upon it in 1929.

Such basic elements of the Bolshevik program as the construction of a socialist society in Soviet Russia and international Communist revolution were preserved but at the same time transformed in Stalin's Russian national Bolshevism. Communist revolution abroad was reconceived as a process spreading out from a
base in the USSR to neighboring countries, hence as, in part, a revived "gathering of Russian lands," such as those lost to Poland and to the independent Baltic states during the revolutionary period. In Stalin's Russian national Bolshevism, further growth of international Communist revolution and Soviet Russian expansion, territorially or in terms of spheres of influence, were fused into one process. Since a focal area for expansion was Eastern Europe and the Balkans, a diplomacy of accord with Germany, looking (among other things) to a new partition of Poland, was a fixture of Stalin's foreign-policy conception from early on. While encouraging Foreign Commissar Maxim Litvinov to pursue in the mid-1930's an open diplomacy of collective security and popular fronts against fascism, Stalin made his way by secret diplomacy toward the Nazi-Soviet pact that he concluded in 1939. Knowing that this would unleash war between Germany and the Western allies, he hoped to remain neutral until a moment of his choosing for intervention in the combined interests of the Russian state and Russocentric Communist revolution. However, Hitler's blitzkrieg defeat of France in 1940 upset Stalin's calculation that Germany and France would bleed one another white in a replay of 1914-18.

Thus Stalin's Russian national Bolshevism resurrected the historic Russian primacy of foreign policy, and with it the necessity--to Stalin's history-oriented mind--of a renewed, but this time Soviet Russian state-building process centering in forced-draft industrialization with emphasis upon heavy industry
and the amassing of military-industrial power. Collectivization was designed to undergird the industrialization drive by organizing the peasantry into collective farms (kolkhozy) and state farms. This insured government control of the great bulk of agricultural produce, including large amounts for export abroad to finance the importation of technology. That aim necessitated lightning collectivization rather than the long-range "cooperating" of the peasantry by persuasion that Lenin had envisaged. Lightning collectivization was, and could only be, accomplished by terrorist methods, whose utilization on Stalin's orders backfired because the mass of peasants, seeing in the collectives a revived form of Russian serfdom (which they were) slaughtered a huge proportion of their livestock before entering them. Although the state got control of the produce by the draconian means Stalin employed, it did so at the cost of an estimated ten to fifteen million lives lost in the ensuing great famine, whose effects are still felt in Russia's agricultural economy fifty years later.

Restoring as it did something very comparable to old Russia's serfdom, collectivization was not only a coercive revolution from above but a first phase of a renewed state-building process. Stalin moved to bring every element of society under regimentation and control. He reenacted the "binding" of all strata in compulsory service to the state authority. He pursued a policy of direct exploitation of the human resources of the economically backward country for a massing military power through industrialization. One major expression of this was the building
of the vast GULAG forced-labor empire in Siberia, the Far North and elsewhere, much of it initially recruited from the rural "kulaks" whose violent dispossession and deportation into the interior was the means used to terrorize the peasantry as a whole into joining the collectives. Another was the binding of the industrial worker to his place of work by the reintroduction of an internal passport system like the one that existed before 1917 and by legislation of the later 1930's prohibiting voluntary changes of jobs. Total exploitation of the populace necessitated totalitarian control. Much bureaucratic apparatus of police and other governmental regulation being requisite for this, a huge hypertrophy of the state resulted.

Russia's history in Stalin's time retraced, therefore, the course epitomized by Kliuchevsky in his phrase cited earlier: "The state swelled up; the people grew thin." The people "grew thin" in the shrinkage of the unregimented parts of their lives, and in the simple sense of being hungry, living on rations, going without desperately needed housing, and enduring other hardship. Nevertheless, Stalin publicly proclaimed in 1936, when promulgating a new Stalinist version of the Soviet constitution, that the foundations of a socialist society had now been built. This claim contradicted Leninist assumptions that socialism connoted richer lives rather than poorer, more equitable distribution rather than less, less bureaucratic regimentation rather than more, more meaningful public involvement in administration rather than less. But it was consistent with Stalin's Russian national
Bolshevism, in which socialism-building and state-building were fused, so that the construction of a mighty Soviet Russian military-national state in which all strata were bound in compulsory service to the state power became the fundamental meaning of "socialism." Such a view necessitated the revision that Stalin made of the long-established Marxist and Leninist tenet that it was the destiny of the state as an institution to "wither away" with the advent of a socialist society. As Stalin reformulated the dogma, in 1939, the Soviet socialist state had to grow great and strong in order to defend itself in the hostile capitalist encirclement.

Much of this was alien to the thinking of the great majority of surviving Old Bolsheviks, members of the party generation that had made the October Revolution, and to many of their juniors in the new party generation that had matured during the early years of the Soviet regime and was heavily influenced by the Old Bolsheviks in its ways of thought. Even many who had been "Stalinists" in supporting Stalin's General Line, the platform of building socialism in one country, were unprepared for what his Russian national Bolshevism meant in practice—a replication under Soviet conditions of the patterns of revolution from above that had found earlier expression in the tsarist state-building process. They were appalled by the ghastly tragedy of collectivization by terror and the resulting hushed-up famine of the early 1930's. They were, many of them, repelled by the new, stratified society of
privilege that they saw emerging in those years of privation, and by the swelling of a bureaucratic state that, to their minds conditioned by Marxism and Leninism, should have been beginning to atrophy if socialism was really being built in Russia. Their disenchantment with the new statist society over whose construction Stalin was presiding found expression in negative attitudes, even oppositional feeling, toward him, and some Old Bolsheviks made an abortive attempt during the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1934 to carry out, belatedly, Lenin's parting confidential advice to the party elders that Stalin be removed from his position of power.

His lethal response was the Great Terror that began with the assassination of the Leningrad party leader, Sergei Kirov, in December 1934. As Khrushchev later indicated, this portentous event was organized on Stalin's orders as the pretext for a terrorist purge designed to remake the entire Soviet ruling elite. It would eliminate the Old Bolshevik generation and the generation of its party proteges—if not in all cases through execution or confinement, then at any rate from roles of power and influence—and create a totally subservient new Soviet governing class, a generation of ruling servitors who could and would accept the new society as socialist, see Stalin as the great Builder of Socialism that he conceived himself to be, and regard his state-building revolution of collectivization and industrialization from above as the super-October that he thought it was. According to a recent estimate by the most knowledgeable Russian
historian of the Stalin period, this Great Purge cost the lives or liberty of about two million party members and previously expelled party members, plus very many of their non-party relatives, associates and friends. Its calamitous effects, like those of collectivization, were shown in the terrible Soviet reverses during the early phase of the war with Germany in 1941-1945.

The terror did result, however, in the formation of a new, state-created as well as Stalin-oriented Soviet elite. A privileged class, it lived far better than ordinary citizens but was just as securely bound in service to the state as were the peasant and the worker. Hence, the Great Purge was another revolution from above, or another phase in the larger revolution from above of the 1930's. It recapitulated in a highly magnified twentieth-century way the binding of the landed aristocracy in compulsory state service. Like the boyars of old, the Old Bolshevik ruling elite was exterminated in large part and, for the rest, submerged in a new Soviet service nobility. The purge as a revolution from above was, moreover, the crucible of the reemergence of Russian absolutism in the Soviet setting, the rule of a new tsar-autocrat in whose dictatorial system the still ostensibly dominant political party was, like all other institutions of Stalin's state, a transmission belt for implementing his policies.

The interpretation of the Stalinist 1930's here propounded conflicts with a view that has enjoyed wide credence in the West.
That view sees Stalin's revolution from above as a harsh and cruel way of bringing backward Russia hothouse fashion into the modern world, a revolution of "modernization." An influential exponent of it, Isaac Deutscher, concluded his Stalin biography in 1949 by paraphrasing what Marx had written of Peter the Great. "Stalin undertook," Deutscher wrote, "to drive barbarism out of Russia by barbarous means." Impressive developmental success resulted, making Russia the first industrial power in Europe and the second in the world. Further:

Within little more than one decade the number of her cities and towns doubled; and her urban population grew by thirty millions. The number of schools of all grades has very impressively multiplied. The whole nation has been sent to school. Its mind has been so awakened that it can hardly be put back to sleep again. 8

The material advances, chiefly in industrialization, achieved under Stalin in the 1930's are not to be denied, although critically minded scholarship both in Russia and the West has been coming more and more to the conclusion that something similar could have been achieved at incomparably less human cost by means other than those Stalin employed; in short, that the appalling catastrophe of terroristic collectivization, not to mention the Great Purge, could have been avoided without inhibiting material progress on the scale that occurred. But the deeper issue is what the policies and the whole developmental pattern imposed by Stalin's Russian national Bolshevism meant in historical terms.
"Modernization" is a fuzzy concept. There is no question but that Russia underwent considerable industrialization and urbanization in the Stalinist 1930's, accompanied by growth in literacy, in the availability of education, chiefly technical, and in other indices. Yet all this took place—if the interpretation offered on these pages is correct—in a state-building process similar in fundamental pattern to one seen earlier in history. The upshot is that what happened in Russia in the 1930's is not only superficially described but actually obscured by the use of a term like "modernization." In fact, the nation under Stalin's rule underwent a reversion to the Russian past in its developmental mode, and without a clear comprehension of this it is not possible to understand at all deeply either the legacy of Stalin and Stalinism to the Russian present or the depth of the problems confronted by the regime of Stalin's successors. In particular, no accurate diagnosis can be made of the present situation of Soviet society.

IV.

"Russ is where the true belief is," a noted émigré interpreter of Russian thought and society has written. His point was that Russ developed in history as a belief culture, a community of right believers, meaning those of the Russian Orthodox faith. In what we may call its sustaining myth, Russian society was a political community of the faithful, an Orthodox Tsardom. So persistent was this pattern that as late as the early twentieth century a peasant—and the vast majority of Russians were peasants then—would speak
of himself not as "Russian" but as "Orthodox" (pravoslavny). Russian was his language; Orthodoxy, his identity. Since the Tsar was a centerpiece of the mythos, waning faith in the Tsar was a sign of the coming end of the Tsardom. Bloody Sunday in January 1905 has been mentioned in this context. On that day a priest-led, icon-bearing, procession of common people was met with murderous gunfire on its walk to the Winter Palace in Petersburg to ask the Tsar for redress of grievances. The priest, Father Gapon, is said to have declared in the midst of the carnage, "There is no Tsar anymore."

A new transnational belief culture was assiduously promoted by the rulers of Bolshevism's revolutionary republic, which Lenin called Rus' in an article of 1918. Their militant atheism, the unremitting effort through, anti-religious propaganda to dislodge Orthodoxy from Russian minds, was the other side of their culture-building project of instilling in those minds a new set of right beliefs, a new orthodoxy. At its core was a mythos of Soviet Rus' as a community of "builders of socialism." This envisioned the society as a collective of citizens united in belief in future socialism and eventual full communism as a transcendentally worthy life goal and in the commitment to devote their lives to its realization. As Lenin formulated it in his speech of 1920 to a congress of representatives of the Young Communist League:

The generation of those who are now at the age of fifty cannot expect to see a communist society. This generation
will be gone before then. But the generation of those who are now fifteen will see a communist society and will itself build this society. This generation should know that the entire purpose of their lives is to build a communist society.\footnote{11}

Though not in Lenin's audience on that occasion, one of the youths whom Lenin meant to address was a Leonid Brezhnev. Born in 1906, he was just turning fifteen. He must have, among the many in the growing generation in whom the mythos of building a socialist Rus' was deeply implanted.

The Soviet system as a belief culture is best understood in the context of this conception of a future-oriented citizenry of committed socialism-builders. Upon it rested and rests the Communist Party's claim to a legitimate monopoly of political leadership of the society and to an authoritative guiding role in all governmental and non-governmental organizations. For the Party, as the proclaimed possessor of a true teaching, Marxism according to Lenin (or, as it came to be officially designated in the 1930's, "Marxism-Leninism"), embracing knowledge of society's future Goal of socialism and eventual communism and of the way to the Goal, could picture itself and present itself to the people as its conscious vanguard in the march to the Goal. A citizen, in this conception, need not himself or herself belong to the Party in order to be a member of the larger community of builders. To be Soviet, whatever one's nationality, is to possess such membership and the belief in the Goal that goes with it.
Thus the concept of a "Soviet" citizen is in direct historical succession to the earlier concept of an "Orthodox" subject of the Tsar. As the propaganda of "Soviet patriotism" developed during the 1930's and what was known as the "Great Patriotic War" of 1941-1945, the official concept of Soviet citizenship became more and more infused with Russianism. For example, Soviet citizens of all nationalities were indoctrinated from school years into acceptance of whatever was officially defined as progressive in the Tsarist Russian past as something to be regarded with pride as their own. Not only much of pre-1917 Russian culture in literature, music, painting, the theater, folk art and science was so defined, but also such elements of Russian political history as the building of the centralized Muscovite Russian state and such leaders in that process as Peter the great and Ivan the Terrible, who were portrayed as progressive tsars.

Along with the developments of the Stalinist 1930's mentioned earlier, the revolution from above wrought much change in the content of the sustaining myth. Soviet Russian culture remained a belief culture. But the rise of Stalin's Russian national Bolshevism to dominance meant far-reaching shifts in what a Soviet citizen was supposed to believe. Two are particularly noteworthy. First, the socialism that Soviet citizens were asked to believe in took on the contours of the Soviet state as it was being transformed under Stalin. As noted above, the building of socialism
the construction of a mighty military-national Soviet Russian state governed by a privileged stratum of state servitors and resting on a base of developed heavy industry, serf agriculture in the kolkhoz, and a police-run forced-labor empire that served terror and state economic needs combined. As of the mid-1930's, a Soviet citizen was supposed to believe that this system was socialist in its fundamentals. The future orientation remained in place since it was an article of belief in the Stalinist canon that the basically socialist society was on the way to full communism. Secondly, the belief culture was personalized in a special way with the rise of Stalin's personality cult. It had already been personalized upon Lenin's death insofar as the deceased founder of Bolshevism was made into a cult figure embalmed in the mausoleum on Red Square, a venerated supreme authority whose writings figured as sacred texts on, above all, the Goal and the way to it. In the early and middle 1930's, however, this adulation became overlaid and overshadowed by adulatory official recognition of Stalin as the Builder of Socialism, the leader under whom Lenin's directions had been carried out and Soviet society transformed into a socialist one. Soviet citizens were thus expected to believe not simply in socialism as a fait accompli and in communism as the further objective, but in Stalin as the party's genius-leader to whom credit was due for the historically unprecedented breakthrough of a society to the socialist stage of development foretold by Marx, Engels and Lenin but not realized in their lifetimes.

The Old Bolsheviks, as already indicated, were mostly Old
Believers as well (to borrow another term from Russian history), and so were many of their younger contemporaries who had come into the Party during the Civil War and the 1920's. As Marxists they believed in the goal of a socialist society and in such specifications for it as there were in the Marxist texts and in Lenin's glosses on them and elaborations of them. They believed in Lenin as the authoritative source of guidelines for the building of socialism in Russia. They had, in their majority, been willing followers of Stalin when he spoke in the mid-1920's of socialism in one country. But not being Russian national Bolsheviks of his peculiar stripe, they could not believe in the unprosperous, deeply stratified, bureaucracy-ridden society of the mid-1930's, with its reinserter peasantry and its increasingly bound working class, with its more and more strident Great Russian nationalism, as the socialist society Marx and Lenin had envisioned. Nor, a fortiori, could they accept Stalin, the colossal bungler of collectivization, as the socialism-building leader of genius portrayed in his subservient regime's fulsome personality-cult propaganda. Those generations of Leninist Old Believers were mowed down wholesale in the terrorist purges of the later 1930's.

We should beware, however, of assuming that the people who took their places in leading positions, or in lesser ones with higher status in store, were all cynical, opportunist non-believers prepared to do or say anything to further their private fortunes in the upper reaches of Stalin's "socialist" Soviet society. Some, perhaps many, were, to be sure, just that. But Stalin, however
vicious, was not stupid in this phase of his state-building policy. He consciously brought along a new generation of state servitors who could be and in very many cases would be believers of a new kind. These people could and did accept the society he was building as the socialist one he proclaimed it to be. They admiringly looked upon him as indeed the Builder of Socialism. Risen from simple, mostly peasant origins, these New Believers were culturally disposed to think of Russia as a new Orthodox Tsardom of Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist persuasion, naturally with a new tsar, albeit an uncrowned one, at its head. They could accept the equation of a socialist Soviet Russia with an industrially developed and militarily strong one, take satisfaction in their participation in the state-building effort, and be proud of the country's emergence as a great power on the world stage. They could un-critically accept the results of the devious foreign policy that made a deal with Hitler which turned his aggression westward and meanwhile opened the way for Russia's and Communism's expansion into Eastern Europe.

When, after confounding Stalin's calculation on a long debilitating war in the West, Hitler "perfidiously" (as the Soviet version goes) hurled the full force of the Wehrmacht against his alliance partner of 1939-1941, the New Believers--for lack of very many Old Believers still alive and out of camp--were a rock of support for the defense effort. As for the common people, they were wary as the war began, not knowing what to expect from the Germans, who were European and hence (as Russians had always
supposed) a "cultured" nation. When they discovered that the invaders were behaving like savages rather than liberators, they were ready to respond to the Stalin regime's call to arms. It did not say, "Rise in defense of Soviet socialism," but: "Mother Russia calls you." The symbols invoked, such as General Kutuzov who commanded Russia's defense in the war against a previous invader from the West, Napoleon, were Russian national symbols, and in keeping with this Stalin took steps toward bringing back into favor a Russian Orthodox Church that blessed the Great Patriotic War.

Having no one to defend it but the people, whose material conditions of life had to grow worse rather than better in wartime, the regime made the one concession possible: it lifted the terror-tinged atmosphere of the pre-war years and allowed the warring nation a relaxed sense of more-freedom-to-come. During those awful years of death and privation, commitments were quietly made to the population. Not by open proclamation but by spreading the word through the grapevine that serves the country's real communication needs, the regime encouraged the people to believe that victory would be a great turning point toward materially better as well as freer conditions, that peasants would be allowed to leave the kolkhozy, that intellectuals would enjoy a respite from party-state regimentation of culture, that there would be opportunities for foreign travel and study in a no longer hostile world, and even that the Americans would be invited to open department stores in Soviet cities.
So, at a cost of twenty or more million casualties and with critically important aid from the Western allies, Russia prevailed. The war itself became a popular one in the sense that the great bulk of the population was behind it. Stalin himself became, for the first time, a popular hero as beleaguered Russia's rugged war leader. The fact that he had panicked and gone into a temporary nervous breakdown at the beginning was not known outside a tiny circle at the top. Nor did the people know about his grievous faults as supreme commander of the fighting forces, and many had but a hazy realization, if that, of the fact that his terrorist collectivization and methodical destruction of seasoned cadres in all fields in the fury of the Great Purge had done far more to wreck the war effort in advance than to prepare for it.

V.

The beginnings of the crisis of society that exists in present-day Russia can be traced to the later 1940's, when the hopes for the future inspired by the regime during the war years were dashed. "Now it is time to live!," exulted a Red Army officer in the hearing of the writer of these lines during the joyous victory celebration in Red Square in May 1945. That was what people widely believed and what Soviet culture as a belief culture had come to mean during those years. When the anticipated and longed-for new period of economic betterment and liberalization did not come with the victory for which the people had paid so
dear a price, Russians en masse stopped believing. In a society founded on the presumption of belief, that spells crisis.

Stalin, now a supremely glorified hero-figure as well as absolute ruler, defined the postwar period as a new prewar period. That was the message of his postwar address of February 9, 1946, in which he spoke of the necessity of three or four more heavy-industry-oriented five-year plans in order to prepare the country for "all contingencies" in a world where the continued existence of "imperialism" made new wars inevitable. Stalin was decreeing a new round of the state-building process for what was already then becoming, in his foreign policy, an era of Cold War and near total isolation of the nation from the outside world. That meant renewed austerity and the restoration of a fear-ridden atmosphere inside the country. A Russian of the older generation in whose apartment I sat as Stalin's words were transmitted to the people by radio placed his head on his folded arms when he heard them. All over Russia people figuratively were doing the same.

Aware of this mass reaction, Stalin prescribed as antidote what has been called the Zhdanovshchina, the campaign, initiated in 1946 by his party lieutenant Andrei Zhdanov and others, to revitalize political consciousness and belief. They castigated what was called "apoliticality" and "non-ideologism" (bezydeinost'). The phenomena so designated were real, whereas the means employed to counteract them, including propaganda of Russian chauvinism and, increasingly, anti-Semitism, were impotent to reinstill active commitment in a generally dispirited people that had lost
hope for a better life in their time. Fear became the main stimulus. By Stalin's death in 1953, the terrorized society was in the grip of something close to paralysis.

Stalin's successors were bound to pursue a politics of change although they were divided over how far and fast it should proceed, in what directions, and who should preside over it. Some staunch Stalinist conservatives, such as Kaganovich and Molotov, appear to have wanted only limited change hypercautiously administered, whereas younger leaders like Malenkov and Khrushchev stood for substantial reform but differed over the course it should take and how to implement it. Having achieved a sort of supremacy in a two-year struggle, Khrushchev embarked in 1955 upon a reform course and made the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956 his forum for it. His reform course was aimed at making the Soviet system work, at restoring it to a condition of economic and sociopolitical health, and at doing this within the framework of the single-party order inherited from the Bolshevik Revolution.

A peculiar blend of Old and New Believer in his makeup, Khrushchev was acutely aware that a loss of faith in the system, a widespread failure of belief, was both a part of and a cause of the social crisis, and hence that the system could not be made to work well unless the belief culture were made meaningful again in the minds of Soviet citizens. The evangelical quality of this tirelessly itinerant politician who went around Russia and the world preaching the superiority of the Soviet way is not
inconsistent with what has just been said. His faith was in the system's potentialities and so did not stand in the way of realistic appreciation of the situation and its seriousness. This believing Communist could be astonishingly frank in exposing the spotted actualities, whether it was the grim state of Soviet agriculture in 1953, or the ills of Moscow-centered bureaucratic management of the economy, or Stalin's criminality in the terrorist purge of the party. It took a deep believer in the fundamental underlying rightness of the Soviet order to be such a scourge of past tragedies and present malfunctioning.

As a reformer, the sponsor of a Soviet version of reform Communism, Khrushchev was backward-looking in orientation. He could not conceive of a well functioning Soviet system save in the frame of single-party rule. Consequently, the restoration of party primacy after the long period of police-based Stalin autocracy was the basic political platform. To make it fully meaningful to his party contemporaries, and to disarm high-placed opposition to the elimination of some elements of Stalin's political heritage in the course of his reform politics, Khrushchev had to dislodge Stalin from his still relatively sacrosanct posthumous status. The only sure way to accomplish this was to acquaint the party in detail with the still heavily shrouded story of what had happened to it during the years between Kirov's assassination in 1934 and Stalin's death. The grand theme of Khrushchev's secret report to the Twentieth Congress in 1956 was, therefore, Stalin's violation of the "Leninist norms" of
collective party leadership, or, to put it more bluntly, the
twenty-year suppression of party rule by a terrorist despot
who wielded all power via the secret police. This chilling
expose of tyranny was not published in Russia, but its contents
soon became known through the grapevine after the report was
read at closed meetings of party cells all over the country.
Hence the whole of politically literate Russia became aware, if
it had not been before, of the Stalin heritage of anti-party
terror, and millions of its still surviving victims began re-
turning to Soviet society from concentrations camps. The con-
sequences of this de-Stalinizing, which were most serious, will
be touched upon presently.

The point of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization was to clear a
political path for reforms of the system aimed at revitalizing
Soviet society and its belief system. He realized that if the
belief culture was to be galvanized back into life, there must
be an end, finally, to empty promises of coming abundance.
After decades of privation accompanied by promises of pie on
earth, the people must be shown that the system, meaning first
of all the economic system, could be made to work for their
benefit, and soon. In a literal sense, it was time to deliver
the goods. Khrushchev made plain his awareness of this by
sponsoring the slogan: "The present generation of Soviet peo-
ple will live under communism!" It appeared on signboards every-
where, along with a still more concrete message that a visitor
could see even along dusty Siberian roads in the summer of 1958:
"We shall overtake and outstrip the USA in per capita production of meat, milk and butter!"

This was to be accomplished in a few short years. The new CPSU Program adopted by the Twenty-Second Party Congress in 1961 formalized the present-generation theme: during the 1960's, the USSR would outstrip the USA in per capita output, make agriculture flourish, provide a sufficiency of material goods, basically meet the country's housing needs, and become the land with the shortest working day. In the 1970's, it would establish the material-technical base of full communism, secure material and cultural abundance, make a start on distribution according to need (e.g., rent-free housing and free public transit). "Fundamentally a communist society will be constructed in the USSR," the Program declared in italics, leaving the construction to be "fully completed" in 1981-1990.

Many new departures in domestic policy were aimed, if not at achieving communism-by-1980, then at any rate at raising depressed Soviet living standards very sharply in the near future. They included the large-scale cultivation of virgin lands in southern Siberia and northern Kazakhstan for grain production, the effort to solve the fodder problem by the cultivation of corn, the sale of the farm machinery of the state-owned machine-tractor stations to the kolkhozy, and various changes in the structure of economic administration. The great Stalinist ministerial bureaucracies were dissolved and their officialdom scattered across the Union into regional economic councils in
an effort to decentralize the directing of the economy. When this failed to produce the desired results, Khrushchev resorted to another organizational panacea: the party apparatus was split into industrial and agricultural divisions locally so as to compel party officialdom to concentrate upon the problems of production. Under the banner of democratization, certain reforms were adopted that chipped away somewhat at the privileged status of higher officialdom. Ministerial salaries were reduced from extremely high Stalinist levels. The new Party Rules adopted in 1961 mandated rotation of membership in party committees, the Central Committee included. A reform affecting children of persons in the privileged stratum, along with others, made vocational experience mandatory between school and higher education.

Khrushchev's optimistic faith in the capacity of his organizational and other reforms to make the Soviet economic system work productively for the benefit of the populace proved largely misplaced. There were some successes, especially in housing construction, and the virgin-lands scheme paid off temporarily. But the promises of overtaking America in per capita food production and of giant strides toward full communism in the near future were not being borne out. Khrushchev's missiles gamble in Cuba—a move to offset U.S. strategic superiority cheaply, so as to allocate to civilian needs resources that would otherwise have to be invested (and were later invested) in a costly ICBM construction program—backfired in a manner that was politically quite damaging to him. Meanwhile, his shakeup of
the party and state bureaucracy intensified the opposition in high places to his leadership and prepared the ground for the palace revolution that swept him out of power in 1964.

Before this final defeat, however, he made a last-ditch attempt to mobilize support against the conservative pro-Stalinist opposition by bringing his anti-Stalin campaign into the open at the Twenty-Second Party Congress in 1961. Here he and his party lieutenants repeated in public many of the sensational revelations that had been made behind closed doors in 1956, and the congress ended with a dramatic decision to remove Stalin's remains from the mausoleum on Red Square and erect a monument to the victims of his bloody crimes. In one of Khrushchev's own public speeches before the congress, he referred to the circumstances surrounding Kirov's murder in such a way as to implicate Stalin in that precipitating event of the Great Terror.

It is not clear that this bluff man, not given to psychological subtleties, realized what the impact of the revelations about Stalin would be upon the minds and spirit of very many people in Russia. We have noted above how, with the rise of the Stalin personality cult in the 1930's, the entire official Soviet belief system became "personalized" in a special way: To be a believer in socialism and communism as the goals of Soviet society came to mean being a believer in Stalin as the Builder of Socialism and the genius leader who was guiding Russia on its path to the ultimate aim. Now this leader stood condemned before the people as a man guilty of criminal abuse of power on an appalling
Many in the generation of New Believers who had come up during the heyday of Stalin's rule in the 1930's and the war years were deeply shocked and disoriented. Some resisted the blow to their belief system, others ceased to believe in anything. To still others, albeit a small minority composed of intellectuals, the revelations about Stalin meant a welcome break with the Stalinist past and a promise of more far-reaching reforms pointing the way to a humane socialism in Russia. That point of view found expression in Roy A. Medvedev's *samizdat* work *Let History Judge: The Origin and Consequences of Stalinism*. On the whole, however, Khrushchey's politics of de-Stalinization worked against his effort to revitalize the communist belief culture in Soviet minds. By the time of his removal from power, the crisis of belief was in many ways more serious than it had been when he assumed the leadership and embarked upon his reform course.

VI.

Brezhnev's regime is best characterized as one of Soviet normalization. Taking over from the willful, erratic, yet believing and reform-minded Khrushchey, Brezhnev and his associates set about stabilizing the system. If he had the reform impulse without a coherent overall design for reform, they lacked the impulse. To a country in desperate need of transforming change they brought dyed-in-the-wool conservative government. The politics of de-Stalinization were at first toned down and then
partially reversed: the broken idol was restored to posthumous official respectability, and further efforts to excavate the history of Stalin's time and lay bare the facts about it were driven underground. Normalization at home went along with normalization in the Soviet empire, shown by the military intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 to suppress the movement of reform communism going on there.

Structurally speaking, Khrushchev's successors restored the system to something close to the form it had taken under Stalin, minus the autocracy at the apex and police supremacy over the party hierarchy. The organizational innovations of the Khrushchev era were undone. The centralized economic ministries were re-established and their official families returned from the provinces to the capital. The bifurcated party apparatus was re-unified. The principle of rotation in party office was shelved. The slogan of the regime of normalization, from early on, was "Trust in cadres." Essentially it meant that higher officialdom was released not simply from the perpetual fear endured under Stalin's terroristic despotism--Khrushchev saw to that--but also from the incessant uncertainties and insecurity of privilege and tenure that Khrushchev's reform course entailed. But it is solely the nomenclature class that has come to enjoy this degree of emancipation. In a remote way this development bears comparison with the "unbinding" of the nobility in late eighteenth-century Russia.12

The regime of normalization has achieved a measure of
stability of the Soviet system at the cost of stagnation in many fields, especially those sectors of the economy that should minister to the needs of the population at large. Graft and corruption, amounting in sum to an entire "second economy," are rife. The civilian economy is in very bad shape. Agriculture does not and seemingly cannot feed the country adequately, and the food situation has grown worse during the later 1970's rather than better, except for the privileged stratum. The civilian industrial economy does not and seemingly cannot produce and distribute the goods that would make earlier sacrifices meaningful. The Soviet people is underfed, under-housed, indeed almost under-everything except under-ruled and under-propagandized.

The anonymous establishment voice cited earlier, Fedor Zniakov, diagnosed the condition of the supermonopolistic economy in 1966 as one of "general crisis" and movement toward "economic bankruptcy." He explained the situation as follows:

The entire activity of the ruling class in the USSR is aimed at the preservation, consolidation and expansion of the power of the supermonopoly, and is determined by the latter's self-interests alien from society....The lack of a genuine market, the separation of economic management from direct contact with the production base, the liquidation of private initiative and its replacement not by the public initiative that would be characteristic of socialism but by outright bureaucratic command, have eliminated from the public life of the USSR the most essential elements of self-regulation and have thereby deprived the Soviet system of viability, which manifests itself in the adaptability
to new conditions, in dynamic use of reserve productive capacities. The economy of the supermonopoly stands today before the prospect of full collapse, the threat of which grows day by day with every step in the growth of the quantitative indices of economic development. It was evidently with the aim of staving off the economic bankruptcy of the Soviet system that the Brezhnev regime embarked at the start of the 1970's upon a vigorous attempt to enlist Western and Japanese aid through technology transfers under a policy of limited detente. To this non-economist it seems that the transfusions of aid have at best, like blood transfusions for a hopelessly ill patient, prolonged the process of decline. The same applies to the provision of foreign grain for the chronically ailing Soviet agricultural economy.

Despite stagnation, the regime of the supermonopoly is completely dependent for its claim to legitimacy upon the myth of Soviet advance toward the goal of full communism. True, in his address to the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress in February 1981, Brezhnev said that the time has come to rewrite the Party Program adopted in 1961, eliminating promises of complete construction of communism in the 1980's; it was, he argued, inappropriate for the Program to stipulate specifics. This calls to mind a revealing anecdote heard by the present writer in Moscow in 1977. The Soviet Union is a train headed for a destination called "communism," with Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev as leaders in authority. When, after a time, the train grinds to a halt, Stalin orders the engineer to be shot
and the fireman condemned to a concentration camp. The train moves on and comes to a halt again. This time it is Khrushchev's turn, and he orders that the engineer be posthumously rehabilitated and the fireman returned from camp to drive the train. That happens, the train moves on, and then stops. Now it is Brezhnev's turn to give orders. He says to Stalin and Khrushchev: "Let us draw the curtains and pretend the train is moving."

The popular mind, as revealed in this anecdote, senses that not even Brezhnev and his associates believe any longer in the official Communist world-view and its centerpiece, the idea of future communism as the society's goal. However that may be, the anecdote is one small part of a plethora of evidence that multitudes of people in the society, in higher as well as lower places, have lost credence in the official claim that the train is moving toward the destination "communism" or--which is more important--that such a goal is meaningful as a collective purpose. As Andrei Sakharov has said in a message from his apartment-prison in Gorky, "There are few people who react seriously anymore to slogans about building Communism, although there was a time when, perhaps as a result of a certain misunderstanding, Communist slogans reflected a wish for justice and happiness for all in the world." 15

Every society has its real existence in the minds of its members, in their sense of common participation in a meaningful collective enterprise. That is what the society's "sustaining myth" signifies. The critical condition of contemporary Soviet
society, an outcome of the historical developments reviewed here, is that the sustaining myth of Soviet Communism no longer sustains any more than a small minority, if that. There is evidence of this in the crisis of morale that finds manifold expression: in the shoddy work that so many perform on the job, in the desire of very many to emigrate, in the veritable epidemic of chronic drunkenness that afflicts Russia nowadays, in the near universal disinterest in and indifference toward what is written in the official press, and so on.

The conclusions of sensitive foreign observers with much experience of Russia and her people support this assessment of the situation. According to one, who compares the Russia he reported twenty years ago to the one he reports today, "Twenty years ago, when controls were tighter, there was an atmosphere of hope. Things were loosening up. Liberalization, however slow and full of reverses, was the order of the day. Today, though the regime is more permissive, the hope is gone." According to another, "no one believes any longer and Marxism-Leninism is bankrupt.... There is no alternative to Soviet rule, no genuine debate, no real information; only a pervasive aimlessness from having reached a dead end. Bezizkhodnost', the word most people used to sum up their condition, is literally 'exitlessness'." But the sense of "exitlessness" is not quite universal: there are those who seek and find "exits." I refer to what is called in the West the Soviet "dissident movement." That word is an
understandable usage, but in a deeper sense a misnomer. For what is called the "dissident movement" would be more accurately described as a "belief movement." Those who have belonged or belong to it are divided in many ways, but united in one: they are all in search for, or in possession of, a vision of a Rus' they can believe in as distinct from the Rus' over which Brezhnev presides. For some, such as Roy Medvedev, it is a Rus' that has moved from Communism as known since Lenin to something like a Russian version of "Eurocommunism." For some, like Solzhenitsyn, it is a resurrected pre-1917 Rus'; for some, like Sakharov, it is a Rus' convergent with Western civilization, one in which human rights are secured and whose government cooperates with other enlightened governments in addressing the serious problems of war, population, resource depletion, pollution, etc., on the darkening globe of the late 20th century. In many the search for an exit has led to a revitalized religious belief, for others in a minority-nation nationalism.

So, what is distinctive of the "dissidents" is not the fact that they are against something but that they have moved from failure of belief in the mythos of Soviet Communism to serious new or new-old forms of belief which they openly profess and for which no few have proved willing to give up careers, comforts, homeland, or liberty. Nor should this whole phenomenon be dismissed as of small significance because of the small numbers of people involved and the fact that most have been repressed. More will take their places. More important, for
every one who has actively participated, there are many who mentally gravitate in their direction without becoming activists. Hence the "belief" movement, properly interpreted, is one more weighty piece of evidence for the thesis that Communist "Orthodoxy" has lost its hold on Russian minds.

What is perhaps of greatest importance for a diagnosis of the possibilities of change in Russia is not the pervasive sense of "exitlessness" nor the discovery of "exits" by those with a vision of a new Rus'. It is the fact that there exists in Russia today, in various positions in the institutions of economic management, in research institutes, and even among military and other professionals, what has been called a Soviet "middle class." These people are linked with the present regime by the circumstances of their lives and careers--many are members of the Communist Party. They are not visionaries. They are thoughtful, patriotic citizens with training and experience in the management functions of a modern society, with a sense of responsibility for their society and its role in the world, with a desire for Russia's inclusion in European civilization, perhaps on the basis of a humane socialism, and with a realization that for all this to become possible there must be a movement away from the supermonopolistic character of the Soviet state. They have the mental freedom to think in these ways because, despite their linkages with the supermonopoly, their futures are not necessarily bound up with its perpetuation; they are men and women whose talents and energies would be as needed
in a post-supermonopolistic Russia as in the Russia of the supermonopoly, and would have, indeed, far greater outlet for useful application in such a changed Russia than in the present one. They are a constituency for change.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the kind of change these people envisage and in many cases long for is peaceful, evolutionary change away from the supermonopoly, not revolutionary change. In this they are at one with the great majority of the activists of the dissident movement itself. So weary are the peoples of Russia with the catastrophes of war and revolution that a kind of consensus has come about that one more violent revolution is not the way out for their society. So implacable an enemy of the Soviet regime as Solzhenitsyn has himself endorsed that position in the most unequivocal fashion. He writes that "from my experience of Russian history I have become an opponent of all revolutions and all armed convulsions, including future ones... Intensive study has convinced me that bloody mass revolutions are always disastrous for the people in whose midst they occur. And in our present-day society I am by no means alone in that conviction. The sudden upheaval of any hastily carried-out change of the present leadership (the whole pyramid) might provoke only a new and destructive struggle and would certainly lead to only a very dubious gain in the quality of the leadership." 18

Writing in European exile in the second half of the nineteenth century, the expatriate Russian, Alexander Herzen, said
of the contemporary Tsarist Russian state that "It wields power in order to wield power." It had lost what spiritual raison d'être it earlier possessed. By force of the whole circular movement of Russia's history in the twentieth century, that judgment has again come to apply. Stalin's rule fundamentally wrecked the Russian Soviet Revolution, destroyed the hopes that people lodged in it. His heirs in power today are men in control of a spent society, a culture that is played out because the belief system on which it was predicated has lost meaning. As a system of power expressed in military and police institutions, Soviet Communism remains strong, very strong. But as a culture it is historically finished. The rulers wield power in order to wield power.

The problem is to bring about a Russian renewal peaceably and evolutionarily. The West, and the United States in particular, have potentially a part to play in facilitating this process. To play that part responsibly and effectively, it will be necessary to adopt policies that combine firmness with restraint, that hold out encouragement for the healthy forces for change inside Russia, and that create an international atmosphere conducive to their long-range success.
APPENDIX

A Case of Mistaken Identity: Djugashvili-Stalin

Freud's concept of identification was the principal source of subsequent thinking about identity. "Identification," he wrote, "endeavors to mold a person's own ego after the fashion of the one that has been taken as a model."¹⁹ Unlike imitation, identification is a largely unconscious process. So, children form identifications with parental figures, and group members with group leaders.

In the work of Erik H. Erikson, Freud's seminal idea of identification grew into a theory of self-identity. From his early assertion that "The study of identity becomes as strategic in our time as the study of sexuality was in Freud's time,"²⁰ through his exploration of one person's history-shaping identity crisis in Young Man Luther, to the further elaborations of the idea in later writings, Erikson created a body of thought centering in the notion of a life-stage in adolescence, occasionally protracted as in Luther's case, when a maturing person's basic need is to establish a firm, unself-conscious identity. "Identity formation," he writes, "begins where the usefulness of identification ends." An unconscious activity of creative and selective fusion of the "identity elements" yielded by early identifications produces a "new configuration" that is buttressed by the community's "confirmation" or "recognition" of the individual in the identity
that has been formed.\textsuperscript{21} This is a critical life-stage, and for some a time of great stress or inner crisis, for failure of identity formation looms as a threatening alternative to success. Failure can take the form of "identity confusion" (or "diffusion"), manifested in such phenomena as the inability to settle on an occupational identity\textsuperscript{22} and avoidance of competition.\textsuperscript{23} Failure can also take the form of choosing a "negative identity," meaning "an identity perversely based on all those identifications and roles which, at critical stages of development, had been presented... as most desirable or dangerous and yet also as most real."\textsuperscript{24} Becoming a juvenile delinquent, or a prostitute, are among the examples cited.

What is perhaps most useful to a biographer in Erikson's thinking about identity is his persistent emphasis on its "psychosocial" character. For him selfhood is always a composite of the "psycho" and the "social." Society, as the sum of meaningful group affiliations, is inside the personality. The experience of Iosif Djugashvili well exemplifies this basic point. Born in 1879 in a poor family in the Tsarist dependency of Georgia, the sole surviving son of an early widowed mother, he did not become the Orthodox priest that she meant him to be but dropped out of the Tiflis theological seminary around 1900 to become a full-time revolutionary. Dedicated as it was to the destruction of the Tsarist social order, the all-Russian Marxist movement that Djugashvili joined was an anti-society. As such, however, it confirmed and recognized him in his newly formed self-identity as
a revolutionary. His process of identity formation came to a climax in the early 1900's when he formed an identification with the distant charismatic leader of the Bolshevik wing of the Marxist party, Lenin, through the study of his writings. The Lenin identification was the fulcrum of Djugashvili's enduring sense of heroic revolutionary self-identity as "Stalin" and, with it, his conversion to a sense of himself as Russian (like Lenin) in nationality. He endeavored to mold his own ego after the fashion of the one that he had taken as a model.

Helpful as it is to a Stalin biographer, Erikson's view of identity presents problems as well. In Djugashvili's case, the "usefulness of identification" did not end where identity formation began. The Lenin identification remained the permanent keystone of his identity, epitomized in the Soviet posters of the 1930's captioned "Stalin is Lenin today." Second, what was a "negative" identity from the standpoint of official Tsarist society, and of Djugashvili's mother, was a thoroughly and thrillingly positive one in his own eyes and those of the revolutionary antisociety that received him into its midst and recognized him as a Bolshevik. For whatever reason, Erikson seems to find it hard to think of anti-societies, such as a revolutionary party, as positively real societies for their members, and hence to take account of the relativity of negativity in identity matters. Third, Djugashvili, while never subjectively confused about his identity as Stalin, while so unshakably convinced of it that he chose a name signifying "steel" to symbolize this identity, was wrong
about who and what he was. He could no more be a revolutionary and leader of Lenin's stature than he could convert himself from an ethnic Georgian into an ethnic Russian. His was a case, psychologically rather than legally, of mistaken identity. Erikson's theorizing about identity, nuanced as it is, offers no conceptual handle for this extremely important psychological phenomenon.25

The further development of identity theory in the work of Daniel J. Levinson and his colleagues on the psychosocial development of men in early adulthood and the mid-life transition provides fresh vistas for a biographer.26 Although their study was conducted with American male subjects, its relevance to the non-American case before us shows that it is not narrowly culture-bound. Levinson builds upon Erikson's pioneering work, yet makes a major advance by bringing out the programmatic dimension of the identity formed in early adulthood. Along with a sense of "who and what I am," self-identity comprises a sense of what it is my destiny or mission to achieve or become. The programmatic dimension of identity had been stressed by Adler, Allport and Sartre in their concepts of the "life goal," "appropriate striving," and the "life project" respectively.27 Levinson and his colleagues have given such notions an experimental foundation and found significant ramifications of them in the process.

According to their research results, many men move into adulthood "with a dream or vision of their own future," and this "guiding dream," as they call it, can be a powerful motive force in adult development. It is also common for young men in their
twenties and thirties to develop close relations with a "mentor" who is normally eight to fifteen years older, is taken as a model, and renders assistance to the mentee's progress toward achievement in the adult world. Later, as one becomes "One's Own Man" in one's later thirties, the relation with the mentor ends, often in a conflict; the older person who was loved and admired comes to be experienced as an oppressive presence and an obstacle to one's independent achievement of life goals. At this time of life there is intense need for society's affirmation of one's identity in its most sought-for programmatic aspects. Then, as the individual enters the "Mid-Life Transition" that often occurs in the early to middle forties, he is confronted with the necessity to measure present and prospective achievement against past aspiration and to face "the experience of disparity between what he has gained in an inner sense from living within a particular structure and what he wants for himself." One question is whether and to what extent the "guiding dream" has been or is being fulfilled and how the person comes to terms with his life performance and himself in that respect. It follows, therefore, from the Levinson research that a person's most serious identity problem--indeed, his real "identity crisis"--may very often occur in mid- to later life rather than in the adolescent period where Erikson locates it, although it of course may occur there too.

All this applies to the material with which a Stalin biographer works. While a young revolutionary in his later twenties and early thirties, having adopted Lenin (a man about ten years
his senior) as his mentor, Djugashvili indirectly revealed in things he wrote that his "Stalin" identity carried with it a guiding dream of future revolutionary glory on a par with that which Lenin was already winning by his leadership of the Bolshevik movement. He would become the co-leader and eventually the successor, demonstrating such prowess as a revolutionary leader that he would be Lenin II. The stunning triumph that Lenin I later scored by leading the Bolsheviks to power in October 1917, by which time Djugashvili was a member of his leadership cohort, could only reinforce the younger man's dream of Lenin-like revolutionary glory. But then, as he became His Own Political Man in the early 1920's, which were his early forties, he chafed under the presence of his mentor as the party's leader. He grew increasingly impatient in coveting that role for himself.

Relations between the two men virtually ended in the acute conflict that went on between them behind the scenes in 1921-1923. The mentee's later political success would almost certainly have been blocked if the failure of Lenin's health in early 1923 had not prevented him from fulfilling his plan to remove Stalin from the position of the Communist Party's general secretary. The survivor's bitterness could only have been greatly intensified when he learned, some months after Lenin died in 1924, that the latter had put on paper his counsel to the party leadership to remove him from his key political post. The Levinsonian scheme of the development of men in adulthood accommodates these historical particulars quite well. But it too makes no provision for
"mistaken identity," a concept without which we cannot deeply grasp and analyze Stalin's role in the subsequent course of Soviet events. Here, unavoidably, we must abandon the ground of modal lives or generalized life patterns and turn to individual biography.

A psychological thinker who has developed the notion of mistaken identity, though without using that expression for it, is Karen Horney, the revisionist of Freudian psychoanalytic theory who presented in her several books an analysis of the "neurotic personality structure." According to her analysis, highly adverse emotional circumstances in very early life may induce a condition of "basic anxiety" that impels a child to find a rock of inner security by forming an "idealized image" of himself. Gradually, and unconsciously, the child may move from self-idealizing to the adoption of the idealized image as an idealized self, after which the energies available for self-development are invested in the compulsive, never-ending effort to prove the idealized self in action and thereby gain affirmation of it by significant others. In the process of seeking to actualize the idealized self, which Horney calls the "search for glory," the individual fails to become his authentic self, that is, to realize the potential of personhood present within him.

Because the idealized self is absolute--free of the faults, blemishes and limitations that inescapably inhere in humanhood--it can never be fully actualized. Accordingly, the individual will begin to feel estranged from, and to accuse, hate and condemn, the fallible, merely human "empirical self" that he turns
out to be, and experiences himself to be, in practice. The drive to be the idealized self is, however, compulsive, with unbearable pain of anxiety and self-condemnation as the price of failure. Consequently, the inwardly conflicted neurotic person develops a whole system of unconscious defenses against the experience and awareness of failure. These defenses include denial of the disparity between the idealized and empirical selves through repression; various forms of rationalization of disparities; the seeking of affirmation of the idealized self by significant others; and the projection upon still others—who can realistically be condemned and combatted—of both the denied faults and blemishes and the self-hatred and self-condemnation that they arouse. Repressed self-hatred is experienced as hatred of others. The particular others on whom the self-hatred is projected are likely to be those who have incurred the neurotic person's vindictive animosity by failing somehow to affirm him as the idealized self that he mistakenly takes himself to be. 29

Although neurosis in Horney's analysis is a pathology of selfhood, it need not, especially in younger and middle years, prove an insuperable handicap, or even a serious handicap, in the quest for worldly success and glory, including success in political life. Like all others, neurotics differ in their native endowments, their aptitudes and capacities. And while, in the surge toward the mirage of the idealized self and its super-ambitious goals, they fail to become their authentic selves, they nevertheless draw upon the talents, capacities and energies on which they would draw in realizing
authentic selfhood. Not only, then, may neurosis not critically impair a given individual's effective functioning in, for example, the competition for a leadership role; it may, because of the very compulsiveness of the need for success, be a potent contributing force toward that end. Like a certain car rental agency, a neurotic may "try harder." As he ages, however, he may grow more rigid and less fit for effective functioning in the role earlier won. These points call for emphasizing lest it be inferred from Horney, who refers occasionally to neurotics severely incapacitated for normal social functioning, that such impairment must regularly be the case, or, conversely, that a particular individual's successful performance in a leadership role is, ipso facto, an argument against the applicability of her conception of the neurotic personality to that person. 30

Djugashvili-Stalin is an exemplar of the conception. The main pertinent facts have already been noted. The biographical evidence shows early self-idealization as a heroic fighter and people's avenger, and later development of a neurotic character structure as described by Horney. In young manhood the idealized self took final shape in Djugashvili's vision of himself as "Stalin," the destined co-leader of the all-Russian revolutionary movement, the genius-successor and idolized coequal of Lenin in history. When, by 1929, he had fought his way to political supremacy by ousting his chief opponents from positions of power, his entourage stage-managed a lavish public fiftieth-birthday celebration of him in which the Soviet Communist Party appeared
to affirm him as Lenin's successor in just those terms. That was a fateful and, in the sequel, a fatal misstep for the party as then constituted, and the opening scene of a ghastly tragedy, or series of them, for the whole country.

For Djugashvili took the party's affirmation of his mistaken identity as an invitation and mandate to push through a revolution from above in the Russian state-building tradition, starting with the revolutionarily swift collectivizing of the peasantry by force in 1929-1933. To him it was a revolution of socialism's construction in the USSR, an internal super-October overshadowing the one for which Lenin had won great glory, and thus proof of his own genius as a revolutionary political leader. In fact, the constructive accomplishments in Soviet industrialization were more than counterbalanced by the terrible catastrophe of forced collectivization, which led to the mass slaughter of livestock by peasants (who correctly perceived the collectives as a resurrected form of Russian serfdom) and later to the worst famine in Russian history, with a toll of lives running into many millions. The party from which the leader expected idolization as a political genius of truly Leninist caliber showed deep disillusion in his talents as a leader. His lethal response was the Great Terror of the later 1930's.

When the carnage was over by late 1939, Djugashvili was still not Lenin II, but nobody in the terrorized Soviet society of that day dared to intimate this fact. The fulsome affirmation that he
received from the remade party and society was a collective lie. But since so many who knew the truth had died, many of those who survived, especially among the younger generation, did not know it was a lie; they too were mistaken about who and what he was. In this instance, an individual had sought to resolve a lifelong identity crisis by inflicting it upon his society. Marx said the bourgeoisie would rue his carbuncles; Stalin made all of Russia, and not Russia alone, suffer for his neurosis. His inner psychological defenses were converted into outer political realities. His need to repress whatever was discordant with his idealized self was served zealously by police organs of repression. He transformed the Soviet state into a fully totalitarian one, a nightmare society resembling that depicted by Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

The idealized "Stalin" formed the centerpiece of revolutionary and party history as rewritten in the later 1930's and after. This was a history of the Communist movement, Soviet Russia and the world as Djugashvili needed--and needed significant others--to view it in retrospect. The Orwellian "memory hole" into which very many Bolsheviks of revolutionary renown disappeared, and the Orwellian "ministry of truth" where Trotsky and others were made to appear as counter-revolutionary villains, were Djugashvili's twisting of truth and repression of fact, enforced in public by his regime. The institutionalizing of a mistaken identity necessitates the systematic falsifying of the history in which the individual concerned has been an actor. That in turn is made possible by the political terror that makes him into an absolute
dictator and the regime into his pliant tool.

Fifty years ago, Harold Lasswell proclaimed that "Political science without biography is a form of taxidermy." The truth of that proposition was slow to dawn upon the profession. In the recent past, it has done so. The now emerging non-taxidermic science of politics will find, in its use of identity theory, that it must take account of the concept of mistaken identity. For the phenomenon to which it refers is real, and sometimes politically real.
NOTES

1. Fedor Zniakov, "Pamiatnaia zapiska" ("Memorandum"), Arkhiv samizdata, document no. 374, p. 3. Fedor Zniakov is believed to be a pseudonym. The memorandum is dated May 1966.

2. Ibid., pp. 3-4.


8. Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography*, second ed. (New York: Oxford, 1967), p. 568. In the "Postscript" that he added for this second edition, Deutscher, with greater hindsight, somewhat qualified his earlier assessment by saying (p. 626), "In Stalin's last years the progressive impact of his regime was increasingly nullified by the means he employed. In order to go on civilizing herself, Russia now had to drive out Stalinism."


14. In his Letter to the Soviet Leaders, trans. Hilary Sternberg (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 47, Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn says at one point: "And you, when you open your newspapers or switch on your television—do you yourselves really believe for one instant that these speeches are sincere? No, you stopped believing long ago, I am certain of it. And if you didn't, then you must have become totally insulated from the inner life of the country."


22. Childhood and Society, p. 262.
23. Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 171


25. Biographical evidence in support of the statements about Stalin in this essay is to be found in the writer's Stalin As Revolutionary 1879-1929: A Study in History and Personality, and in that volume's sequel, in progress, Stalin and the Revolution From Above 1929-1939: A Study in History and Personality.


29. My summary of Horney's analysis of the neurotic character structure is based on her book Neurosis and Human Growth.