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OF RUSSIAN HISTORY

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# THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN RESEARCH

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## PREFACE

This report is one of 13 separate papers by different authors which, assembled, will constitute the chapters of a Festschrift volume in honor of Professor Vera S. Dunham, to be published by Westview Press. The papers will be distributed individually to government readers by the Council in advance of editing and publication by the Press, and therefore, may not be identical to the versions ultimately published.

The Contents for the entire series appears immediately following this Preface.

As distributed by the Council, each individual report will contain this Preface, the Contents, the Editor's Introduction for the pertinent division (I, II, or III) of the volume, and the separate paper itself.



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(Editors' Introduction)

III. The Language of Ideology

For Vera Dunham, Soviet ideology has always been part of a broader political culture, existing within a particular social and historical context and necessarily changing over time. Her sensitivity to language makes her observations on this process of evolution particularly insightful. One example is her discussion of the "pronominal shift" in Soviet poetry, illuminating important changes in Soviet political culture and regime values during the thirty years following the October Revolution.

Early post-revolutionary poetry proclaimed the invincibility of the collective, focusing on the "we" that made the revolution and destroyed the old order. Eventually, however, revolutionary ardor waned, particularly as a result of Stalin's accusations against many of the revolution's heroes. In the 1930s, at the height of the purges and Stalin's power, "he" became the most important pronoun. And there was no question in the Soviet reader's mind to whom "he" referred. During the war, when it became clear that "he" was not invincible and the very existence of Soviet society was threatened by the disaster of the war, personal values began to enter Soviet lyrics. "I" replaced "he" as the center of poetic attention. After the war, when the danger to the regime had passed, one of the goals of the cultural retrenchment headed by Andrei Zhdanov was the restoration of the centrality of regime values in literature, downplaying the focus on individual needs and extolling the virtues of the positive hero engaged in the postwar reconstruction effort.

Following Vera Dunham's example, the essays in this section examine different aspects of ideology in terms of their historical evolution and changing semantic formulation.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY \*

This essay cautions against the uses (and misuses) of Russian history, as well as analyses of political culture, to conclude on the grounds of exaggerated 'continuity' that the USSR is incapable of major change, or to make assumptions about the future policies and actions of its government, especially in foreign relations. The author cites examples of "abuses" from American political discourse, presents counter-commentaries, and illustrates the error of selective evidence to allege causality. He concludes as follows below.

Of course there are continuities in Russian history. They may well be strongest in the areas of social and economic history, and in regard to popular attitudes and values. The attitude toward authority and the state is a likely candidate for significant continuity. The axiomatic acceptance of a powerful centralized state--while by no means unusual--does contrast strikingly with the characteristic American suspicion of government, regulation, and politicians. The role of the state as the principal source and instrument of change, as well as its paternalistic function as dispenser of welfare, has its "objective" historical causes. The paucity of secondary, voluntary associations mediating between state and individual has been remarked upon more than once. Even if that too had

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\* Prepared by the staff of the National Council

begun to change before 1917, it may be viewed as another part of the legacy inherited by the Bolshevic era. The weakness of individualism, the frailty of representative institutions at the national level, the absence of the values and forms of a Rechtsstaat--these are but a few of the prerevolutionary trends that have indeed affected the Soviet era. In all likelihood, prejudices, stereotypes, and customs of all sorts have persisted as well.

The question is what weight to attach to them. In all likelihood the love/hate relationship one finds in Russian attitudes toward the "advanced" West is none too different from the ambivalence toward the West found in India, Nigeria, or Japan. Many aspects of the critical attitude toward "bourgeois" norms and values may resemble those found both in Cherry Orchards and barrios the world over. The personalized attachment to their ruler--to the batiushka-tsar'--is a common trait in less developed societies. Autocracy, bureaucracy, red tape, and military necessity have their many analogs over time and space. Russification too has its counterparts in other societies where the dominant ethnic, linguistic or cultural group imposes its hegemony, with varying degrees of coercion and success.

No doubt, there remain peculiar features that contribute to the "operational code" of the Soviet decision-making elite. Some of its traits may be repugnant to American observers or travelers. Yet none of this validates the gloomy verdict of

predestination that the "hardline" historiographers seek to pronounce.

Historians must know not only the uses of history but also its limits. The future can never be assumed to be a replica, or an extrapolation, of the past: if it were, history as a subject of study might indeed be as boring as some of our students allege. To the earlier saying that history does not repeat itself: historians do, one may now add the remark of Sidney Hook, that "those who always remember the past often don't know when it's over." For this observer at least, there is no more validity in historical determinism than in economic or technological determinism.

There is ample room--indeed, there is need--for honest and profound differences among scholars. Especially in an area as vague and vast as this one, and as difficult to investigate, disagreements are both natural and healthy. What is lamentable is the use and abuse of the historical record to serve partisan political ends.

We have all damned Soviet historiography for rewriting the past in accordance with the changing demands of the political authorities. Professional integrity requires the application of similar standards among ourselves. In condemning those in the Soviet Union who would let history be made into a tool of politics, we must guard against those among us who, intentionally or otherwise, would likewise tailor history to suit their political needs.



THE USES AND ABUSES OF RUSSIAN HISTORY

## I.

It is a commonplace that historians, or would-be historians, all too often become politicians and generals shaping and reshaping the historical record to score points, clinch arguments, and advance their own solutions and nostrums. The history of Russia has surely been no exception to this pattern. Russian historians have written their self-serving patriotic versions, from medieval times to our days; foreign scholars, journalists, and statesmen have used both fact and fiction to make their case, including a centuries-long legacy of forgeries and fabrications.

The uses and abuses to which the ostensible record of the Russian past can be put deserve a more comprehensive examination than can be attempted here. This paper focuses only on the current effort to make Russian history a tool for partisan argument in policy-making in the United States. Not that such an endeavor is the exclusive preserve of any one orientation: if there are some whose reading of the past leads them to conclude that the values and purposes of the Russians are and will remain incompatible with those of the civilized West, there are also those others who find the key to Soviet behavior abroad in the fear engendered by memory of a millenium of invasions and incursions from abroad, making Moscow's policy but a defensive response to this trauma. Both these arguments are woefully wide of the mark.

Recent years have seen an unprecedented upsurge of efforts to "explain" the Soviet present in terms of continuities from the Russian past, stressing its unique or exceptional features. Several circumstances have contributed to this increasingly widespread trend:

--In the search for masterkeys to Soviet behavior, both "leading" earlier hypotheses, communist ideology and the totalitarian model, have come to be recognized as unsatisfactory at best. The continuity of Russian history has seemed to provide a simple and plausible alternative.

--If in earlier days the Bolsheviks as well as their opponents stressed the gulf that separated "traditional Russia" from the Soviet regime, over time public Soviet attitudes toward Russian history changed dramatically, and many observers reacted against the initial disjunction by erasing the caesura represented by 1917.

--Western social science in the 1970s saw an upsurge of interest in "political culture" and social history. It is natural that, to the extent that group norms and attitudes can be studied, interest in (and the seeming relevance of) traditional Russia should have reemerged.

--But to all these legitimate and natural contributing reasons, welcome in a healthy climate of scholarly diversity, one more needs to be added: a strictly political one. Stress on distinctive and unchanging (and presumably unchangeable) characteristics of Russian history has been particularly compatible with the views of, and appealing to, those who see the Soviet regime as beyond the pale and perhaps beyond redemption. Some of the most vociferous affirmations of the historical determinism which sees the Soviet system as an extrapolation of the Russian past (at times accompanied by the

view that "every nation gets the government it deserves") has come from persons espousing the most militant anti-Soviet positions.<sup>1</sup>

It must be recognized that there is indeed a suggestive seductiveness in the familiar parallels between Ivan the Dread, Peter the Great, and Stalin; between the Okhrana and the KGB; in the attitudes of old and new Russia toward Poland; in the well-nigh unchallenged acceptance of autocratic government at various times in the tsarist as well as in the Soviet eras. To point to such similarities and seeming continuities, however, is not to answer the questions before us: it is merely to raise them.

## II.

Let us assume for the moment that the image of Russia, as offered in the "hard-line historiography" (the apt term is James Cracraft's)<sup>2</sup> is substantially accurate. It depicts a Russia isolated from the West since the Church schism, with an elite influenced by the Byzantine legacy, a culture forcibly subjected to centuries of the "Tatar yoke," a country deprived of Renaissance and Reformation, with an arbitrary regime based on "patrimonial" rights, mixing property with political authority, instituting slavery and serfdom, denying groups and individuals what in the West came to be accepted as civil rights,

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1. As will be illustrated below, these include several prominent appointees of the Reagan Administration, such as Richard Pipes (in 1981-82 serving on the National Security Council staff), Edward Rowny (U.S. negotiator in the arms-control talks with the Soviet Union), and William Odom (chief of U.S. Army Intelligence).

This general approach has been stressed, in the past, by a number of East European historians. (Cf. Jan Kucharzewski, Od białego caratu do czerwonego [Warsaw, 1923-35], 7 vol.; abridged trans., The Origins of Modern Russia [New York: Polish Institute, 1948]; and Tibor Szamuely, The Russian Tradition [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974].) It has also been popular with publicists of the latest Soviet emigration (e.g., Boris Shragin and Alexander Yanov).

2. James Cracraft, "The Soviet Union: From the Russian Past to the Soviet Present," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, January 1982, pp. 8-12.

generating a rapidly growing bureaucratic machine and armed force, and possessed by a relentless drive to expand abroad, combining cunning and suspicion, intolerance and xenophobia. If we view the present as the product of heredity and environment, that past cannot be ignored. In fact, the "hard-line historiographers" posit a powerful determinism in projecting the past forward to our days and beyond.

The first thing to note with regard to what David Hackett Fischer has called the "fallacy of presumptive continuity,"<sup>3</sup> is our methodological poverty: surprising as it may appear at first glance, we have simply no technique by which to test whether event E' and a later event E'' are continuous manifestations of the same phenomenon (or products of the same motivation)--or autonomous events. (This also implies that neither hypothesis can be conclusively falsified.) To be sure, there is a good deal of common-sense plausibility in the view that, say, the Russian peasants' drinking, or their beating their wives, both before and after the 1917 Revolution represented a "continuity"; but it is far more debatable whether the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was an extension of the Russian drive into that country begun a century earlier; or whether the treatment of Pasternak and Sakharov was essentially the same as that accorded Chaadaev and Tolstoy under the tsars. The latter two assertions require a scholarly judgment necessarily based on selective use of historical evidence, with all the attendant dangers which scholars have often warned against.<sup>4</sup>

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3. David Hackett Fischer, Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 154. He also pillories "the fallacy of prediction by analogy" (p. 357). It is scarcely necessary to warn against the familiar trap of post hoc propter hoc.

4. For a sophisticated discussion of the whole problem, see Alexander Gerschenkron, "On the Concept of Continuity in History," in his Continuity in History... (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press,

In his The Whig Interpretation of History<sup>5</sup> Herbert Butterfield was setting criteria relevant to our discussion:

The chief aim of the historian [he wrote] is the elucidation of the unlikenesses between past and present....It is not for him to stress and magnify the similarities between one age and another.... Rather it is to work to destroy those very analogies which we imagined to exist.

The historian, he continues, "can draw lines through certain events... and if he is not careful he begins to forget that this line is merely a mental trick of his; he comes to imagine that it represents something like a line of causation."<sup>6</sup> Butterfield warned against reading the present back into the past by discovering a "false continuity" that is the result of selecting out those events and trends which reinforce the author's thesis and omitting the rest, "remov[ing] the most troublesome elements in the complexity."<sup>7</sup>

Gordon A. Craig, recently president of the American Historical Association, warned not long ago in regard to German history that "too great a desire to prove continuity leads to a tendency to ignore nuances and to confuse chance likenesses and similarities of formulation with identity in essence."<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the attempts to trace the sources of Hitlerism back to the Reformation and beyond are not unlike

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5. (London: Bell, 1931), p. 10ff.

6. In the words of Gerschenkron, "at all times and in all cases, continuity must be regarded as a tool forged by the historian rather than as something inherently and invariantly contained in the historical matter. To say continuity means to formulate a question or a set of questions and to address it to the material." (Op. cit., p. 38.)

7. Cf. Dimitri Obolensky's comment: "...There is much in contemporary Russia that seems unfamiliar and puzzling to the modern Western observer...and so, wishing to understand the origin and meaning of these strange phantoms, he is tempted to single out those which appear to him most striking and to trace them back as far as

the attempts described in this paper in regard to the Soviet era. Similarly in regard to China, Benjamin Schwartz has argued that the heritage of Imperial China was so "fundamentally undermined in the twentieth century" that "we should be extremely skeptical of assertions that assign it greater causal weight in explaining present or future Chinese policies."<sup>9</sup> "One of the aims of sound historical education," remarked Sir Lewis Namier, "must be to wean men from expecting automatic repetition and from juggling with uncorrelated precedents and analogies."<sup>10</sup> And in a recent essay entitled, "Is History a Guide to the Future?" Barbara Tuchman concludes, "In the absence of dependable recurring circumstances, too much confidence cannot be placed on the lessons of history." Her examples, she finds, demonstrate two things: "one, that man fails to profit from the lessons of history because his prejudgments prevent him from drawing the indicated conclusions; and, two, that history will often capriciously take a different direction than <sup>that</sup> in which her lessons point."<sup>11</sup>

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(n. 7 concluded) possible into Russia's past history...He will be inclined to conclude that the similarity is proof of historical filiation." (D. Obolensky, "Russia's Byzantine Heritage," Oxford Slavonic Papers, I [1950], 37f.)

8. American Historical Review, April 1976, p. 403.

9. Benjamin Schwartz, "The Chinese Perception of World Order, Past and Present," in John K. Fairbank, ed., The Chinese World Order (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 284.

10. Sir Lewis Namier, "History and Political Culture," in Fritz Stern, ed., The Varieties of History (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), p. 377.

11. Barbara W. Tuchman, Practising History (New York: Knopf, 1981), pp. 249, 251. This tallies with H.A.L. Fisher's conclusion that time and again historians after searching for laws and patterns recognize "the play of the contingent and the unforeseen." See also Ernest R. May, "Lessons" of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

Thus cautioned, we might also reflect on the characteristic fate of "political cultures." This is not the occasion to examine the content and scope of that concept, both useful and dangerous.<sup>12</sup> But however described and defined, "political culture" cannot be seen to be unchanging. If it were, the entire notion of political socialization would be absurd, for--surely in communist systems--it hinges on the alteration of prior norms and political values. Far better then to recognize the formidable body of evidence that, whatever the particular cultural traits of a given society, the process of socio-economic modernization tends to lessen the specific weight and the saliency of traditional culture. It is typically marked by the uprooting of large groups from the traditional environment, in the course of wholesale urbanization, a change of occupations and of reference groups, greater exposure to mass communications and access to new sources of information, greater interaction with the world abroad, and an attenuation of traditional attachments. There is good evidence that this tends to make for the emergence of commonalities across cultures at the expense of particular traditional values and attitudes.<sup>13</sup>

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12. For some of the relevant debate, especially in regard to Russia, see Archie Brown, "Introduction," to Brown and Jack Grey, eds., Political Culture and Political Change in Communist States (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1977) and the literature cited there. The writings of Robert C. Tucker, Stephen White, and Frederick C. Barghoorn illustrate significant attempts to apply the concept to the Soviet experience. An important theoretical contribution is Kenneth Jowitt, "An Organizational Approach to the Study of Political Culture in Marxist-Leninist Systems," American Political Science Review, 68:3 (September 1974), 1171-91. I am not here concerned with the interesting and rather deviant views on the subject of Robert Tucker and Zbigniew Brzezinski. (See Brzezinski's "Soviet Politics: From the Future to the Past?" in Paul Cocks, et al., eds., The Dynamics of Soviet Politics [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976], pp. 337-51.)

13. See in particular Alex Inkeles, "The Modernization of Man in Socialist

As Dietrich Geyer reminds us, moreover, in the Russian case it is scarcely possible to argue both the operational importance of traditional popular culture and national character in the Soviet era, and also to insist on the utter divorce of the Kremlin's masters from the rank and file and their yearnings and anxieties.<sup>14</sup>

Do we need to invoke the Tatars, the Time of Troubles, Pugachev, Pobedonostsev, or the village commune to understand current Soviet policies and attitudes? While it may not in all instances be a safe guide to the choice of explanatory variables, in case of doubt it is a sound rule to opt first of all for parsimony in causality, rather than for more devious, remote, complex, or overdetermined alternatives. Indeed, in regard to other societies this seems to be done without equal dispute. Who would refer to Savonarola, Cromwell, or Robespierre, or to the War of the Roses, the Huguenots, and the Treaty of Campoformio to explain the contemporary behavior of Italians, British, or French? And while there may well be a traditional component, say, in the Soviet inclination toward excessive secrecy, there are also perfectly rational explanations why Stalin (and, to a lesser extent, his successors) chose to conceal much of what was going on in the USSR from foreign eyes and ears.<sup>15</sup>

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(n. 13 concluded) and Nonsocialist Countries," in Mark Field, ed., Social Consequences of Modernization in Communist Societies (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1976), pp. 50-69; and Alex Inkeles and David Smith, Becoming Modern (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974). See also Richard Fagen, The Transformation of Political Culture in Cuba (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969). The above argument is not meant to challenge either the survival and indeed frequent revival of traditional culture at a later stage, or the different ways in which traditional culture may impede or assist modernization in different settings.

14. Dietrich Geyer, ed., Osteuropa-Handbuch: Sowjetunion Aussenpolitik 1917-1955 (Cologne: Böhlaus Verlag, 1972), pp. 16-19.

15. Cf. Walter Hahn, "The Mainsprings of Soviet Secrecy," Orbis, VII:4 (1974), and Alexander Dallin, The Soviet Union, Arms Control and Disarmament (New York: Praeger, 1964), chapter 10.

All these injunctions together argue that, even if we accept the accuracy of the "hard-line" determinists' account of Russian history, we would be well advised against a mindless extrapolation from the past into the future. With a similar deterministic bias a Parisian in the 1780s, prior to the capture of the Bastille, would have argued that French political culture was authoritarian and permitted no democratic or republican traits. Political scientists and journalists writing about Germany and Japan, prior to 1945, did indeed often--and erroneously--deny the possibility of a significant change in political behavior and institutions, given the dominant and presumably persistent political cultures in these two countries. It behooves us then to allow for some doubt and some humility in our projections and to beware of erecting a mental wall against the possibility of future change.

### III.

But is the version of Russian history propounded by the continuity school factually and analytically accurate, and are its representatives drawing proper inferences from it? This is a subject that has often invited intense and bitter controversy, and surely this paper cannot go through the whole problematic alphabet, from aggression to xenophobia, that this question conjures up. Suffice it to look at a few relevant points.

If Mackenzie Wallace and the elder George Kennan had revealing insights into Russian life, other Western travelers--often ignorant of the language and the country--in that long roster from Herberstein and Fletcher to Custine and Haxthausen and beyond, produced accounts no more reliable than the wild reports of travelers in early America

about the Red man and his habits, or the dispatches from the first visitors to Cathay and Cipangu. Now it may well be that Russia was (as an English traveler reported) inhabited by a people "ignorant, superstitious, cunning, brutal, barbarous, dirty, and mean"<sup>16</sup>; that the tsarist regime amounted to an autocracy atop a "garrison state" (albeit a garrison state with a Tolstoy, a Nijinsky, and a Mendelejev), marked by an absence of civil rights, a lack of constraints on the samoderzhavie, and riddled with abuse and corruption that only a Solzhenitsyn would deny. The question is what it all adds up to. Richard Pipes ends his account of Russia Under the Old Regime in 1880 --not because the years from 1880 to 1917 cannot be made to fit his thesis, he tells us, but because by then Russia had assumed the contours of a bureaucratic police regime that it has ostensibly been ever since. To be sure, this requires ignoring much of what occurred in the early years of the twentieth century. In this light not only 1905 but 1917 becomes a mere detail: the Soviet takeover is the only possible outcome of the February Revolution (the "hardliners" must thus agree with Soviet historiography on the inevitability of the event), and if the handful of Bolsheviks had not existed, they would have had to be invented.<sup>17</sup>

Actually, of course, the events of 1917 can be fruitfully examined in the framework of comparative history (as well as comparative revolutions). And then we discover that a good deal of the alleged Russian uniqueness fades once the Russian experience is compared with that of other societies. Thus--citing almost at random--J.H. Plumb reminds

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16. Cited in Ann Kleimola, "Muscovy Redux," Russian History, IV:1 (1977), 23. See Lloyd E. Berry and Robert O. Crummey, eds., Rude and Barbarous Kingdom (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968).

17. For an articulate expression of differences on this issue, see the exchange between Richard Hellie, Ann Kleimola, James Cracraft, and Richard Wortman, in Russian History, IV:1 (1977), 1-41.

us, "In the 17th century Englishmen killed, tortured, and executed each other for political beliefs; they sacked towns and brutalized the countryside. They were subjected to conspiracy, plot, and invasion...."<sup>18</sup> It would be easy to document the brutality of the Thirty-Years' War or the insensitivity of Europe's crowned heads to popular aspirations. As for the misery of the countryside, prior to modernization and the emergence of a sense of citizenship, we need go no further than Eugen Weber's Peasants into Frenchmen.<sup>19</sup> Like Russia, India and Japan failed to experience the Renaissance--without therefore having turned to Bolshevism. Tsarist officialdom deserves careful comparison with others, such as the Prussian or the Swedish. Neither serfdom nor autocracy, neither a service nobility nor borrowing from more technologically advanced societies was peculiarly Russian. And if the autocracy finally decayed in St. Petersburg, so it did of course in the Ottoman Empire, and under the Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns too. True, much of what developed in Russia came with a substantial time lag and often did have a particular Russian stamp to it: there is truth in Henry L. Roberts' formula that, by comparison with the European West, Russia often seemed both "related and belated"<sup>20</sup>--but surely not unique.

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18. J. H. Plumb, The Growth of Political Stability in England, 1675-1725 (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. xviii.

19. (Stanford University Press, 1977).

20. See Henry L. Roberts, "Russia and the West: A Comparison and Contrast," Slavic Review, XXIII:1 (March 1964), 1-12. Cracraft reminds the reader that "...the larger historical field against which Russia is more properly studied is surely that of Western Asia, the Balkans, Central and the rest of Eastern Europe, where often similar conditions produced often similar results, including in modern times more or less imitative cultures, bureaucratic absolutism, agrarian forced labor, virulent nationalism, acquiescent church hierarchies, alienated intellectuals, and the active, interventionist, regulatory Polizeistaat..." (Russian History, loc. cit., p. 33).

It is in such comparisons that selectivity of information becomes crucial, for the historian can stack the deck either way. If there was (let us call it) a Slavophile tradition that stressed and cherished the distinctiveness of Russia, there were also the Westernizers who saw salvation in modernization. For every "tradition" we can find a counter-tradition, for every Dostoyevsky there was a Turgenev, and if the anti-Western animus runs like a thread through Berdiaev to Solzhenitsyn, the opposite thread links ancient Novgorod, the veche, Miliukov, the Constituent Assembly, and Andrei Sakharov. If before the twentieth century there was little evidence of institutionalized pluralism in Russian political life, the emergence of political parties, partisan journals and newspapers, and the vigorous public life of the last fifteen years of the monarchy--along with economic development--testify to the fact that the gap between Russia and the more developed countries was shrinking fast.

The view that the Soviet Union inherited a tradition encompassing a highly-centralized government, a command economy, and a large bureaucracy, finds itself challenged by S. Frederick Starr, who writes:

It need hardly be said that this is a highly selective characterization of Russia's political heritage. One might suggest, for example, that Russia has suffered as much from undergovernment as from overgovernment; that its undermanned elites have ruled as much by default as by design; or that centralization has existed more as an ideal than as a functioning reality.<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps the area where the continuity thesis has been applied with greatest abandon relates to Russian (and Soviet) foreign affairs. As Geyer states in his skillful review of the historiographic arguments,

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21. U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Perceptions: Relations Between the United States and the Soviet Union (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 65.

those stressing continuity in foreign policy have focussed on three aspects: (1) imperial interests and expansionist tendencies abroad; (2) autocratic or dictatorial rule in Russia as the basis of decision-making; and (3) attitudes toward the outside world, in substance a part of the "national character." For our purposes it is the first of these that is the primary question at issue. What the similarity in the locus of Russian expansion before and after 1917 illustrates, Geyer correctly points out, be it Poland, Finland, Manchuria, or Northern Iran, is the "continuity of geography," but not necessarily the continuity of perceived interests or objectives. To be sure, a recital of tsarist and Soviet interests in neighboring areas, from the Balkans to Korea, is at least suggestive, but a closer look leads to the conclusion that not only the international context but also the definition of interests has radically changed. <sup>22</sup>

As for that recurrent reference to Russian messianism, it remains to be shown that it actually motivated any policy-makers. There is no obvious evidence to support the view that any Muscovite prince went to battle in pursuit of the tenet of the Third Rome, or that Panslavism--rather than creating a political climate around the court and in high society--actually prompted the tsar or his minister to take action in the Balkans. No doubt the verbiage was there--just as the "pragmatic" United States easily generated a concept of manifest destiny or European empires rationalized their colonial conquests as the "white man's burden."

Some familiar clichés--such as the perennial "urge to the sea" or the search for warm-water ports--which are so often used to "explain"

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22. Geyer, loc. cit., pp. 2-15.

Soviet policy, simply do not stand up. Neither Central Europe nor Central Asia fits these formulae; and when Yermak crossed the Urals, he could scarcely have known that there was a Pacific Ocean at the other end of Siberia. In any event, in the age of jets and ICBMs warm-water ports have considerably shrunk in priority or importance.<sup>23</sup>

Nor does the historical record bear out the notion of a grand design or master plan of Russian imperial expansion. As Michael Karpovich put it, it amounted to the pursuit of "concrete aims unconnected by any general idea." Indeed, there was no sense of any national interest underlying the process, and at times the drive to the south and east resulted from decisions by local commanders acting without prior sanction from St. Petersburg.<sup>24</sup>

The discontinuity of objectives is particularly clear in regard to the Middle East. While the tsar's court was in the 19th century concerned to keep the Holy Places out of the hands of the infidels, the Soviet authorities can hardly be said to have shared this worry. And if a century ago St. Petersburg wanted to assure the safety of Russian grain exports to the West going from Black Sea ports to the Mediterranean, Moscow today would look with nostalgia upon an era in which Russia had grain to spare for export abroad....<sup>25</sup>

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23. An exception to this generalization must be made for those instances in which a Soviet policy-maker believes that such a continuity exists and acts on this belief. If true, this was the case with Stalin in regard to Korea, as analyzed by Robert Slusser, in Yunosuke Nagai et al., eds., The Origins of the Cold War in Asia (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).
24. This point is reinforced by Muriel Atkin's conclusion regarding tsarist policy toward Iran: "Russian expansion in this part of Asia, for all its momentous consequences, was more the product of accident than of a carefully considered master-plan." It is true, she finds, that Russia was consciously imitating a Western colonialist approach: not only would colonies make Russia rich; they would also make her look great and civilized like the empires of the West. (Muriel Atkin, Russia and Iran, 1780-1828 [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980], pp. 162-63.) I owe this reference to Cracraft, "The Soviet Union,"

Of course the point of all this is neither to argue that there have not been significant continuities and similarities over time; nor to claim that there were no significant differences between Russian and other foreign policies. The question is whether the burden of these constants outweighs the impact of change, and whether these differences between Russia and other societies--and in particular, in our "hardliners'" view, in foreign policy--were so fundamental and enduring as to set it apart as unique and essentially beyond any prospect of repair.

For, that is what the curious linkage between "hard-line" historiography and hard-line politics now suggests. It is well illustrated in the writings of Colin Gray (but could be shown to apply equally to those of others of substantially similar political orientation). A recent paper co-authored by Gray examines "the extent to which the Soviet Union has adopted tsarist Russia's imperial ambitions, attitudes and style" and more broadly "the influence of the imperial factor on Soviet strategy."<sup>26</sup> If most of the historical argument is familiar, its congruence with its political counterpart is striking:

Save as a tactical ploy the Soviet Union cannot endorse a concept of stability in the relations between socialist and nonsocialist states. Richard Pipes almost certainly is correct when he argues that Marxism-Leninism became the state ideology in Russia because the grosser features of that ideology, and the practices that they legitimized, fit so well a Russian national political character marked by cunning, brutality, and submissiveness.

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25. For a macro-comparison of the course of empires, which reaches substantially similar conclusions about Russia's conforming to the patterns typical for big-power expansion, see George Liska, Russia and the Road to Appeasement (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1982), pp. 18, 51.
26. Rebecca V. Strode and Colin Gray, "The Imperial Dimension of Soviet Military Power," Problems of Communism, November-December 1981.

This leads Gray to reject the possibility of successfully dealing with the Soviet Union. As he puts it, "It is virtually self-evident that Soviet strategic culture precludes the negotiation route to enhanced stability...." The answer is nuclear warfare as a realistic choice: "A stable strategic balance, in U.S./NATO perspective, is one that would permit the United States [among other things] to initiate central strategic nuclear employment in expectation of gain...."<sup>27</sup> Despite the quaint terminology, the meaning--a first strike--is clear.

There are several related elements which recur frequently as part of the same "hard-line" syndrome; here all that can be done is

to point out the repeated conjunction of some or all of the following elements: (1) assertions of historical determinism; (2) advocacy of militant strategic options; (3) the alleged "militarization" of Soviet society; (4) the denial of diversity and politics at the apex of the Soviet system; and at times, (5) stress on the role of non-Russian nationalities of the Soviet Union as a cause of both militarization and expansionism.<sup>28</sup>

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27. Colin S. Gray, "Strategic Stability Reconsidered," Daedalus, Fall 1980, pp. 142, 150-51. See also Colin S. Gray and Keith B. Payne, "Victory is Possible," Foreign Policy, no. 39 (Summer 1980), pp. 14-27, on nuclear war; and Colin Gray, "Nuclear Strategy: The Case for a Theory of Victory," International Security, Summer 1979. For an able rebuttal of Gray's views, see the first UCLA Distinguished Lecture in honor of Bernard Brodie: Michael Howard, "On Fighting a Nuclear War," ACIS Working Paper, no. 31 (January 1981). Gray is a member of the U.S. Government's General Advisory Committee on Arms Control and Disarmament.

28. See, e.g., William Odom, "A Dissenting View of the Group Approach to Soviet Politics," World Politics, July 1976; Odom, "The Militarization of Soviet Society," Problems of Communism, September-October 1976; and Odom, "Whither the Soviet System?" Washington Quarterly, IV:2 (Spring 1981).

## IV.

Of course there are continuities in Russian history. They may well be strongest in the areas of social and economic history, and in regard to popular attitudes and values. The attitude toward authority and the state is a likely candidate for significant continuity. The axiomatic acceptance of a powerful centralized state--while by no means unusual--does contrast strikingly with the characteristic American suspicion of government, regulation, and politicians. The role of the state as the principal source and instrument of change, as well as its paternalistic function as dispenser of welfare, has its "objective" historical causes. The paucity of secondary, voluntary associations mediating between state and individual has been remarked upon more than once. Even if that too had begun to change before 1917, it may be viewed as another part of the legacy inherited by the Bolshevik era. The weakness of individualism, the frailty of representative institutions at the national level, the absence of the values and forms of a Rechtsstaat--these are but a few of the prerevolutionary trends that have indeed affected the Soviet era. In all likelihood, prejudices, stereotypes, and customs of all sorts have persisted as well.<sup>29</sup>

The question is what weight to attach to them. In all likelihood the love/hate relationship one finds in Russian attitudes toward the "advanced" West is none too different from the ambivalence toward the West found in India, Nigeria, or Japan. Many aspects of the critical

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29. A substantial part of the more sophisticated observation of continuities turns out to be precisely in the area of attitudes. See, e.g., Hedrick Smith, The Russians (New York: Quadrangle, 1976); Edward Keenan, "Muscovite Political Folkways" (ms., 1977), and Keenan, "Russian Political Culture: Dominant Trends and Dissident Traditions" (Department of State, External Research Study, INR/XRS-11, 1977). For a brief discussion of "continuities" shaping Russian economic development, see William L. Blackwell, The Industrialization of Russia, Second ed. (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1982), chapter 5.

attitude toward "bourgeois" norms and values may resemble those found both in Cherry Orchards and barrios the world over. The personalized attachment to the ruler--to the batiushka-tsar'--is a common trait in less developed societies. Autocracy, bureaucracy, red tape, and military necessity have their many analogs over time and space. Russification too has its counterparts in other societies where the dominant ethnic, linguistic or cultural group imposes its hegemony, with varying degrees of coercion and success.

No doubt, there remain peculiar features that contribute to the "operational code" of the Soviet decision-making elite. Some of its traits may be repugnant to American observers or travelers.<sup>30</sup> Yet none of this validates the gloomy verdict of predestination that the "hardline" historiographers seek to pronounce.<sup>31</sup>

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Historians must know not only the uses of history but also its limits. The future can never be assumed to be a replica, or an extrapolation, of the past: if it were, history as a subject of study might indeed be as boring as some of our students allege. To the earlier saying that history does not repeat itself: historians do, one may now add the remark of Sidney Hook,

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30. As a senior American arms-control negotiator concludes, "...the main lesson to learn is that the Russians are, as the Marquis de Custine pointed out 150 years ago, of a different culture from us. We spring from different roots and do not share a common heritage. My six and one-half years at the negotiating table taught me two fundamental lessons. First, that the Soviets are still Russians. Second, that they are more unlike us than like us." (Edward L. Rowny, "The Soviets are Still Russians," Survey, no. 111 [25:2], Spring 1980, p. 9.)

31. For a survey of Western perspectives on the possibilities of change in the Soviet system, see M. Kamil Dziewanowski, "The Future of Soviet Russia in Western Sovietology," Co-Existence, 19:1 (April 1982), pp. 93-114.

that "those who always remember the past often don't know when it's over." For this observer at least, there is no more validity in historical determinism than in economic or technological determinism.

There is ample room--indeed, there is need--for honest and profound differences among scholars. Especially in an area as vague and vast as this one, and as difficult to investigate, disagreements are both natural and healthy. What is lamentable is the use and abuse of the historical record to serve partisan political ends.

We have all damned Soviet historiography for rewriting the past in accordance with the changing demands of the political authorities. Professional integrity requires the application of similar standards among ourselves. In condemning those in the Soviet Union who would let history be made into a tool of politics, we must guard against those among us who, intentionally or otherwise, would likewise tailor history to suit their political needs.

