Review: The End of Sovietoloy and the Renaissance of Modernization Theory

Reviewed Work(s): The Accidental Proletariat: Workers, Politics, and Crisis in Gorbachev's Russia by Walter D. Connor: Ko-ops: The Rebirth of Entrepreneurship in the Soviet Union by Anthony Jones and William Moskoff: Steeltown, USSR: Soviet Society in the Gorbachev Era by Stephen Kotkin

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Source: *Contemporary Sociology*, Nov., 1992, Vol. 21, No. 6 (Nov., 1992), pp. 774-785

Published by: American Sociological Association

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2075622

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The End of Sovietology and the Renaissance of Modernization Theory

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The Accidental Proletariat: Workers, Politics, and Crisis in Gorbachev's Russia, by **Walter D. Connor.** Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991. 374 pp. $39.50 cloth. ISBN: 0-691-07787-8.

Ko-ops: The Rebirth of Entrepreneurship in the Soviet Union, by **Anthony Jones** and **William Moskoff.** Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991. 153 pp. $29.95 cloth. ISBN: 0-253-33158-8. $12.95 paper.

Steeltown, USSR: Soviet Society in the Gorbachev Era, by **Stephen Kotkin.** Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. 269 pp. $24.95 cloth. ISBN: 0-520-07353-3.

Celebrating the death of Marxism, Sovietology is actually partying at its own funeral. Whereas Marxism has been liberated from its greatest embarrassment and promises to gain a new lease of life as critique of capitalism unbound, Sovietology faces permanent demise. The greatest failure of Sovietologists—and given their interests, one cannot be surprised—is their failure to anticipate the collapse of the Soviet Union. Together with the Pentagon and the Soviet nomenclatura, their interests lay in magnifying the strength of the Soviet Union. Their criticisms could go only so far: they could condemn totalitarianism, they could write treatises on the wastefulness of planning, they could celebrate the degeneration of Leninism, they could embrace convergence theory, but they could never imagine a world without the Soviet Union, a world without themselves. Ironically, Western Marxists, in their desperation to rescue socialism from the Soviet connection, were often much more critical of state socialism than Sovietologists.

Sovietology has responded to its failure by embracing modernization theory, which claims that progress follows a single course toward a market economy and political democracy. Deviations from this pattern cannot sustain themselves in a competitive world. Modernization theory argues that advances in technology, education, and urbanization made the collapse of the Soviet Union inevitable. From being destructible only through nuclear war, in this new image "Communism" suddenly becomes the source of its own destruction, and its rabid anticapitalism inevitably gives way to a religious devotion to the free market and liberal democracy. This renaissance of modernization theory is not surprising, since it always lurked not far below the surface of Sovietology as a repressed wish fulfillment.

The three books under review plot modernization in different ways. Walter Connor argues that the Soviet Union created a working class that became its grave digger; Stephen Kotkin unveils a world of steel whose early industrial success ensured the Soviet Union's demise; Anthony Jones and William Moskoff describe the ineluctable growth of a market economy in the belly of the command economy. While these internal contradictions were always there, perestroika and glasnost unleashed them as social forces that challenged the old regime. Hostile to the Soviet past, all three see modern capitalism as the only possible road to a better future, although they are not equally optimistic about its realization.

My criticism of the emergent vision of history travels along two tracks. The first is theoretical. In their teleological view of the future, these variants of modernization theory fail to come to terms with the specificity of the Soviet experience and the enormous obstacles to development. In other words, the underlying evolutionary model of progress leads to a restricted understanding of social change. The second argument is methodological and follows from the first. In seeking to demonstrate the superiority of the West, Sovietology and now modernization theory show how the Soviet Union fell short of capitalism, conceived of as reality or, more usually, as an ideal-type. Important as these global comparisons were, they led to the homogenization of state socialism, overlook-

Thanks to Erik Wright and Mike Hout for their comments.

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ing variations both within and between countries. Yet such internal variations provide necessary clues to the dynamics of these countries. Without an appropriate comparative methodology, it is not surprising that Sovietology couldn't predict the collapse of the Soviet order and is now desperately trying to catch up by grasping at primitive versions of modernization theory.

Proletariat as Grave Digger of Communism

Sovietology's dramatic conversion from portraits of stability to portraits of inevitable decline plays itself out starkly in the pages of *The Accidental Proletariat*. Here the distinguished scholar of the Soviet Union Walter Connor combines both the old and the new—the Soviet Union as eternal and the Soviet Union as ephemeral—in a transparently awkward juxtaposition. Completing his book in times of political drama, Connor desperately tries to keep up with events by tacking arbitrary interpretations on to a body of data that were collected with a very different history in mind.

On the one hand, Connor offers as comprehensive a description of the Soviet working class as we have to date. It relies on familiar sources: newspapers, Soviet studies, and emigré as well as Soviet surveys. It traces the development of the Soviet proletariat from the Tsarist period through Stalinism and into the Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods as the substitution of a hereditary working class for one made up largely of ex-peasants. Upward mobility became progressively curtailed as levels of educational attainment, worker autonomy, and income egalitarianism increased. That is the first face of the book—an account of the *objective* conditions of the Soviet working class. The second face, which attempts to mirror the first at the end of each chapter, is Connor's interpretation of the *subjective* consequences of those objective conditions—a "quiet revolution," leading to smoldering discontent, which exploded with economic crisis and political decompression in the era of late perestroika. In its endeavor to build socialism, the Soviet regime unwittingly created a proletariat which became an important player in the destruction of that regime. Tacked on or not, it is an argument that warrants careful examination.

Connor specifies his use of class with concepts borrowed from Michael Mann's classic, *Consciousness and Action among the Western Working Class* (1973). In this scheme there are four stages of working-class consciousness: the development of (1) a common identity vis-à-vis other classes, (2) opposition to another class, (3) understanding society as a totality, and (4) an emergent alternative vision of society. Connor claims that the periods of Khrushchev and Brezhnev witnessed the rise of class identity and class opposition, and, with the escalating economic crisis and the lifting of repression under perestroika, class consciousness moved to the third and fourth levels—an emergent sense of totality and an alternative vision of the future. Although Connor insists that his use of class has no Marxian baggage, since his "sympathies are unabashedly pro-market, capitalist and democratic" (p. 13), still *The Accidental Proletariat* recapitulates the Marxian formula of the development from class in itself to class for itself. It is a simple transfer to the Soviet Union of *The Communist Manifesto*'s declaration that in the proletariat the "bourgeoisie produces its own grave diggers." Like Marxian orthodoxy, Connor's account suffers from a strong dose of wishful thinking.

The empirical basis of Connor's claim is at best flimsy. Until 1989, he has no measures of any of his key dependent variables—class identity, class opposition, consciousness of totality or of alternatives. He can only infer them on the basis of dubious and arbitrary assumptions. He assumes that urbanization and particularly education during the Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods advanced class consciousness: "A 'we-they' consciousness, given the enhanced literacy and education of younger workers and a greater ability to conceptualize than their fathers had, *could move in the direction of totality*" (p. 72; italics added). He relies here on the discredited Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy which attributes a leading role to educated workers and backwardness to the peasantry. The next chapter (3), however, draws the opposite conclusion: "*Class totality, on the other hand, is not an element likely to emerge in the early years of a work career*. The mobility of young workers, the typical series of job changes before settling down, means that they often exercise an 'exit' option available to the young and unattached" (p. 102; italics

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added). By the end of chapter 4, confusion is compounded by the claim that wage policies favorable to workers *"may well have promoted class identity, but hardly opposition"* (p. 153; italics added). However, under Gorbachev, working-class living standards were threatened and, "To that degree, class identity and opposition, if we had a way to measure them over 1985–1988, would probably have shown an increase" (p. 154). In short, Connor takes a series of indices of social structure and social mobility to make arbitrary and often inconsistent inferences about their effects on class consciousness.

On the objective side he could have been describing the United States—expanding education and declining possibilities of using that education. Yet it would be hard to argue that a similar class consciousness emerged here. What made the Soviet Union different? One possibility is the increased egalitarianism that accompanied the reaction to Stalinism, beginning in the Khrushchev years and extending into the Brezhnev era. Alternatively, the putative heightened class consciousness could be attributed to Soviet workers' "negative control" over production, which is "a limited but clear manifestation of elements of working-class identity and opposition, if only at the level of the shop, the section or the plant" (p. 197). But such egalitarianism and negative control would just as likely have taken the steam out of any working-class identity and opposition. Nor does Connor provide convincing evidence that perestroika effectively challenged worker autonomy or income equality, let alone that such a challenge deepened working-class identity and opposition. We must return, therefore, to the question Why might the Soviet working class exhibit greater class consciousness than the U.S. working class? The difference, I will suggest, lies not in opportunities for social mobility, or even worker autonomy and income equality, but in the *relations* between the working class and the dominant class. But first, let us complete Connor's argument.

If there was an ascendant class consciousness, why did it not give rise much earlier to more visible expressions of worker opposition, such as strikes? Why was the quiet revolution so quiet? In chapter 6 Connor provides a list of explanations, including negative control on the shop floor (as a substitute for trade union defense of worker interests), the existence of a social contract which guaranteed minimal security to workers, and the wide gap between intellectuals and workers. But his preferred account rests on party control and political repression. Thus, when economic crisis and political decompression converged after 1989, there was an outburst of working-class mobilization. The consolidation of a stable industrial working class in the post-Stalin years had unintended consequences for the Soviet leadership: "They anticipated positive returns from an enlarged supply of hereditary, educated worker urbanites, but tended to overlook the complications that might arise as the 'quiet revolution' reached maturity and this supply came to dominate the workforce—and made it more of a class" (p. 317). A class for itself finally arrived with the miners' strikes in the spring of 1991: "The evidence was growing that, unlike in 1989, the workers—or at least the miners—not only had the qualities of identity, opposition and a certain 'totalistic' view of their relationship to central state power, but now conceived of an alternative" (p. 311). The miners were demanding a new democratic order in which they would play an important role.

While the miners did indeed mobilize themselves as a political force, they were exceptional. Now, even their mobilization has come to an abrupt halt. Nor is it clear what if any "alternative" their leaders represented. During its first two years of existence, the strike committee in Vorkuta—regarded as the stronghold of the most militant and radical miners—attracted a motley crew of intellectuals and workers whose unity was based on opposition to communism. The "collapse" of communism brought ideological disarray both to the strike committee and to the new independent trade union of miners. Nor can the miners be regarded as having been a leading force in an escalating workers' movement, if only because there simply has not been such a movement, let alone one pressing for "modernization." Connor's thesis, that class consciousness developed from one stage to the next, is a dubious projection back into history of what must have taken place if something that didn't take place had taken place. In short, a fanciful construction of the present turns into a fanciful construction of the past.

Instead of a unilinear ascendancy of class

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consciousness, it would be more accurate to characterize working-class consciousness as marked by the *coexistence* of a conservative embrace and radical rejection of the Soviet order. How can we understand this dualism? We could do worse than return to Michael Mann's analysis of the Western working class. Connor borrows the concepts but ignores Mann's theory, namely that class consciousness is the stronger the closer the connection of the working class to precapitalist forms of production, specifically to peasant classes. His theory explains why working-class consciousness is weaker in United States and Britain than on the continent of Europe, in countries such as France and Italy. More to the point Mann would predict that working-class consciousness would become weaker as the Soviet proletariat becomes more stable, hereditary and educated—the opposite of the Marxist-Leninist/Connor thesis. Following Mann's logic the Soviet regime, far from digging its own grave with an "accidental" proletariat, to the contrary successfully created a "socialist" proletariat which defended and continues to defend that regime. There is much evidence to support this view. Connor himself refers to the "populist legitimacy" of the Soviet regime founded on a social contract in which working-class support for the regime is exchanged for security of employment and minimal welfare guarantees. He himself found industrial workers opposing perestroika because it threatened the preexisting socialist order.

However, to argue that the Soviet regime created a working class loyal to itself is not to say that there was no working-class opposition. Rather the source of that opposition lay in the failure of the Soviet regime, particularly its leadership, to live up to its own ideals of social justice, egalitarianism, and efficiency. The daily parade of compulsory rituals which celebrated socialism was turned against the regime for failing to realize its promises. Rather than endorsing alternative values, the working class embraced the regime's values as its own, which became a basis for opposition to the regime's actual practice. In this view, not blocked mobility, or education, or urbanization was necessary for the working class to develop class identity, opposition, and a conception of the totality. Rather, class consciousness is endemic to a regime which appropriates and redistributes goods and services in the name of working-class interests and socialist ideals, but which at the same time promotes the interests of the nomenclatura. At the core of such a theory of class consciousness are the *relations between classes*—between central planners and direct producers—rather than the social, political, and economic *conditions of one class*.

Michael Mann's conceptualization of class was developed specifically for comparing Western capitalist countries. It was designed to illuminate differences among these countries and took for granted the class structure shared by all advanced capitalist countries. Applying Mann's categories to the Soviet Union ignores its fundamentally different class structure—based on the difference between private appropriation and central appropriation—and therefore leads to erroneous conclusions. Connor commits one of the oldest sins of modernization theory: the uncritical adoption of categories elaborated out of the specific experiences of Western capitalism in order to comprehend the very different experience of noncapitalist societies. Of course, Connor was aided and abetted by Soviet ideology, which denied the existence of dominant and dominated classes. Nor should we be surprised at the links between Sovietology and Soviet ideology, since they both subscribe to modernization theory.

The Accidental Proletariat is one of the last works of Sovietology. Its weaknesses shed some light on the extraordinary failure of Sovietologists—specialists of the contemporary Soviet Union—to have anticipated or even imagined the collapse of the Soviet empire. Connor desperately tries to fabricate a history that might explain the unanticipated transformation of Soviet society, but the facts are simply absent. Because the glorification of the proletariat was so central to Soviet ideology, the real nature of the Soviet working class was probably one of the regime's best-kept secrets. Soviet society hid its truth not only from foreign scholars but also from its own ruling class, who then became helpless spectators to their own disintegration. What data there were—government statistics, newspapers, crude surveys—presented a picture of not only durability but also homogeneity of interests. Soviet ideology and thus Soviet social science

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studied society without regard to subjectivity, disregarding the division of society into different groups with different, competing interests. In true Marxist-Leninist fashion subjectivity did not require measurement, because it trailed behind objective circumstances and "objectively" there was only a single interest—the interest of the working class presented as the interest of all.

Still there are ways of reading between the lines if only one's eyes are trained to see, which brings me to another flaw of Sovietology, namely the poverty of its theory. What theories existed were grand theories that celebrated the superiority of Western bourgeois capitalism and liberal democracy. There was little interest in variation either over time or between places. Mystified by the homogenizing ideology of Marxism Leninism, it failed to recognize the diversity of institutions that lay beneath the same ideological cloud. In search of sweeping generalization Sovietology overlooked crucial variation that is the key to understanding causal process. Of particular significance was the reluctance to consider the experiences of Eastern Europe. Sovietologists reproduced the superior attitudes, evinced by the majority of Soviet social scientists who couldn't see or were not allowed to see the relevance of 1956, 1968, and 1980–81 for developments in their own country. Eastern Europe lay in the periphery of the Soviet empire, and so it should remain in the periphery of analysis. Even Connor, who has written on Eastern Europe, reduces the history of Solidarity to two paragraphs, where a careful comparison might have made him more cautious in predicting the eruption of his quiet revolution. To its own cost Sovietology ignored the lesson of world history that innovation and challenge usually come from the periphery rather than center—a lesson that has found resounding corroboration in the unfolding transitions in Eastern Europe.

Framed by the Cold War and by ties with Soviet institutes, Sovietology not only homogenized difference within the Soviet orbit but also set the Soviet Union apart from other countries. Soviet studies constituted the Soviet Union as "special" and so cut themselves off from developments in other areas of social science. Connor, for example, shows no sign of familiarity with three decades of social history of class formation or with the burgeoning literature on social movements. Had he been more conversant with such developments, he would not have been so cavalier in deriving subjective consciousness from objective conditions; nor would he have so easily assumed that economic crisis plus political decompression automatically created fertile grounds for collective mobilization. However, important as the political and ideological predispositions of Sovietology are, one should not forget the interest of Sovietologists in the longevity of their subject matter, the Soviet Union. Their blindness was ultimately an interested one.

"A Mighty Steel Plant Turns into a Wheezing Dinosaur"

If *The Accidental Proletariat* sounds the death knell of Sovietology, Stephen Kotkin's *Steeltown, USSR* could be the harbinger of a new research agenda which pays attention to how people actually experienced Soviet life, to the subjective dimension which so eludes Connor. The material for such research is not mobility tables, income distribution, educational attainment, or surveys abstracted from their social context, but rather the situated social processes of everyday life. Such scholarship is not entirely new. While sociologists, political scientists, and economists were busy at work on contemporary studies of the Soviet Union, historians were digging in the archives for a more experientially based analysis of the Russian working class—its origins, its participation in the Russian Revolution, and the aftermath. Stephen Kotkin was moving this literature forward into the 1930s when glasnost struck, enabling him to visit Magnitogorsk, the legendary city in the Urals built as a monument to Stalin in 1929. It contains the biggest steel complex in the world, producing sixteen million tons, more than the total steel production of Canada and almost as much as Britain's. The city's population is nearly half a million, while the steelworks themselves employ 63,000 people, which is nine times the number of employees at USX's modern integrated mill at Gary for only twice the output. As one of the managers put it in *Pravda,* "The factory has the largest assemblage of obsolete equipment in the country" (p. 2). When asked how far behind was Magnitogorsk, a Japanese visitor replied, "Forever." Thus, in Kotkin's graphic por-

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trait, Magnitogorsk embodies both the dramatic success of Soviet industrialization and its equally dramatic failure.

This is a remarkable book, unimaginable before 1989. Kotkin spent two months in Magnitogorsk in the spring of 1987 and two months again in spring 1989. According to the local authorities in 1987, he was the first American to stay there in forty-five years. Kotkin exploited the opportunity to the full, interviewing as wide a range of people as he could: workers, managers, new entrepreneurs, journalists, party bureaucrats, dissidents, artists, novelists, police. He was able to talk to those who could recall the 1930s as well as those who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s. He visited hospitals, prisons, schools, courts, and observed the 1989 elections to the Congress of People's Deputies. Individual chapters deal with economic restructuring, cultural activities, the Communist party, everyday life, elections, and finally, the legacy of the Stalinist past. Throughout, Kotkin lets the people of Magnitogorsk speak for themselves, merging his own commentaries at the ends of chapters. As a portrait of life in a Soviet city, this book has no equal.

If Connor's thesis of the working class as a gravedigger of Soviet society has validity anywhere, surely it should be in Magnitogorsk, heartland of the Soviet proletariat? But in Kotkin's account there is no renaissance of civil society, no burgeoning of social movements, no traces of a quiet revolution, no working-class opposition. To the contrary, we find a city clinging to the past, obstructing perestroika, without vision of an alternative world. Connor's argument does not hold: (1) economic crisis does not lead to a consolidated and mobilized expression of grievances but to the intensification of an atomized, relentless day-to-day struggle for existence, and (2) political decompression and glasnost do not lead to the organization of opposition but to general demoralization and despair.

Kotkin describes a shortage economy out of control, in which shopping becomes scavenging because shops are empty and rationing becomes meaningless because there are no rations. Stealing or connections are the only way to keep alive. He describes the meager size of apartments, exacerbated by the growing shortage of housing; the shortage of medical facilities and medicines and the crumbling of the urban infrastructure. The shortage economy engenders a shortage society—an aggressive scramble for everything, whether in shops or private markets, on the bus or in schools and hospitals. Alcoholism spreads with despair, and women assume the impossible burden of feeding and clothing their families. This is more than the intensification of an old order, since it has lost its essential stability in which people knew what to expect and how to cope: "Life was hard and tense but somehow manageable, and further sustenance was derived from the belief that however hard your lot, your children would live better by benefiting from your sacrifice" (p. 155). But few believe that now. Instead they ask: "Is life going to go on like this forever?"

Pessimism about the future began with glasnost, which shattered the illusions nurtured by the regime and in broad outline believed by the population. Glasnost in Magnitogorsk was defended and pursued by the local newspaper, which left no stone unturned in debunking the Soviet regime. It hammered away at the gap in living standards between West and East, which inevitably called into question the entire socialist project. So long as the population didn't know the details of life in the West, it could repress the possibility that all the sacrifices were in vain. That was no longer possible. In the summer of 1988 an exhibition by the United States Information Agency on life in America was greeted with disbelief and humiliation. People faced the past without any vision of a better future. Glasnost was not an alternative, and perestroika had led to increasing economic chaos and falling standards of living.

What about new political openings? What has been the fate of the party? In 1989 the party still maintained a stranglehold on local politics. To be sure there were one or two opposition movements, but they seemed to be carefully orchestrated to give a show of pluralism, though without its substance. The elections that Kotkin observed saw the party officials continuing to control the outcome. If the local power structure remained largely unsullied, still divisions did emerge between the minority, centered on the editor of the newspaper, who supported the reforms promulgated in Moscow, and the majority, who were threatened by them. If one wonders why perestroika was not more successful, then one

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has only to put oneself in the place of local apparatchiks who were the targets of those reforms—they were being asked to commit suicide and they naturally refused.

Kotkin's description ends in the spring of 1989. What has happened in such communities since then? On the basis of my own research in two different cities in Northern Russia—Syktyvkar and Vorkuta—the collapse of the party and the aftermath of the August putsch have not given rise to the "revolutionary" changes heralded in the Western press. Already before August, party officials had seen the writing on the wall, had evacuated their positions and parachuted into commercial or governmental structures. The attempted coup came too late to be successful or to make much difference. Yeltsin's victory became the occasion for the parachutists to declare themselves anticommunists, wholeheartedly behind the new regime, and to cut themselves off from the lower-level apparatchiks they had left behind. As a result there have been no remarkable changes in the way cities are run or indeed in the people who run them. In Russia they say, "You can't turn a pigsty into a palace without getting rid of the pigs."

Such similarities among cities notwithstanding, we are left wondering how typical Magnitogorsk is. If Connor's analysis is plagued by its generality, Kotkin's diametrically opposed picture is plagued by its particularity. Rather than considering how Magnitogorsk compares to other Soviet cities, Kotkin concludes by moving to the higher theoretical ground of criticizing the optimism of modernization theory, as found in the work of Moshe Lewin—although it could just as easily have been Connor. To focus on the support perestroika received from a rising urban, professionalized, educated population, as Lewin does, is to overlook the resistance of organs of local power. For this reason, Kotkin is pessimistic about the prospects for a more just, prosperous, and stable order to emerge from the ashes of the old. As if to highlight the enormity of the task ahead, Kotkin turns the spotlight on Gary and capitalism's capacity to restructure itself. However, in arguing against the optimism of modernization theory, he is still trapped by its generalities, by its manichean view of the future, either capitalism or barbarism. In moving so rapidly from the very specific to the most general, *Steeltown, USSR* fails to shed light on the order that is actually emerging.

Kotkin misses the opportunity to use his rich case study to examine variations within the Soviet Union. He devotes a mere two pages to the obvious question: Why do steelworkers seem so different from the miners. His three answers are brief and unconvincing. First, paternalistic policies assured the steelworkers of basic goods, but this was equally true for miners, another privileged group of workers. Second, steelworkers didn't see the point of strikes; instead their mood was of despair and cynicism. But why should the miners be any different? Third, steelworkers feared management's reprisal against militants, but the same threats hovered even more closely over the miners. Kotkin seems to have made no theoretical mileage from his case study to shed light on the variation between cities, between fractions of the working class.

So how does Magnitogorsk differ from the mining centers of the Donbass, Vorkuta, or the Kuzbass? Why was Connor wrong to generalize the militancy of the miners to other sectors of the working class? This is an intriguing puzzle for theorists of social movements. The obvious first point is that miners are always different, consisting of the most militant workers, owing, so it has been said, to the isolation and homogeneity of their communities, the close connection between work and community, and the character of work itself, which encourages the formation of solidary groupings, faced with dangerous working conditions. Still, steelworkers of Magnitogorsk are not so different in these regards and certainly not so different as to explain their extraordinary different political mood, particularly in 1989 and 1991.

Perhaps the divergence should be located in the specific way state socialism, as a political and economic order, creates different conditions for different sectors of the working class. In the same way that conditions is an economic sector within capitalism are determined primarily by relations to the market, so the conditions in branches of a state socialist economy are in large part shaped by relations to the state. Thus, the mining sector was regarded as key sector for primitive socialist accumulation, and the miners were rewarded accordingly with high status and high standards of living. However, with the rising

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importance of other energy sources, the economic position of miners fell considerably. Steel, an equally strategic sector, did not experience the same decline. However, such "relative deprivation" can always be found in any group and as an explanation for insurgency it has been thoroughly discredited.

Combining relative deprivation with the more fashionable resource mobilization theory, the argument might be as follows. A shortage economy is constrained from the supply side, so that those who produce basic "goods" and require few scarce inputs also command more power with the state. However, all this began to change with the economic reforms of perestroika, which gave enterprises the autonomy to increase prices and sell their products once a minimal level of state orders had been fulfilled. The mines suddenly found their position to be still strong but nevertheless weakening as their autonomy was more restricted. They produced a single product subject to compulsory state orders and a product, moreover, whose price was strictly controlled. While steel is an equally basic good, it depended on a variety of scarce inputs. If steel's dependence was always greater, it also lost less ground with perestroika because its wide-ranging product profile could take advantage of enterprise autonomy. Although such an explanation is more structural, it still fails to recognize the distinctively political dimension of working-class militancy.

A third alternative would be to combine the deprivation and resource models with an analysis of political process. A shortage economy engenders worker control over production, owing to shortages of materials and weakness of management. This autonomy assumes an exaggerated form in coal mining, where technology and danger create additional requirements of self-organization and worker solidarity. In an attempt at circumscribing their autonomy and as a legacy of the gulag, miners were subordinated to management by a strict disciplinary code, known as the code of serfdom (*krepnostnoe pravo*). No such system existed in steel, where technological developments if anything reduced worker autonomy. The social contract, which bound miners to managers in a pact against the state, was effectively weakened by perestroika and was certainly much more fragile than in steel. Therefore, sustained strikes against local managers and local authorities were more likely in mining than steel. Furthermore, because they exercised so much autonomy in production and indeed in relation to the rest of the economy, miners found bondage to the state that much less bearable, engendering deep hostility to the state as a parasitic and exploitative bureaucracy. The state appeared as a colonizing power that freely expropriated the fruits of mine labor, in the same way that the Soviet Union appeared to the working class of Poland. That the movement did not develop like Solidarity but instead moved into decline can be attributed to the distinctive working conditions miners faced; to the effective isolating tactics of the state—a combination of political and economic concessions; to the exodus of the movement's leaders into new political and economic positions; but also to the myopic, self-aggrandizing, superior attitude of miners toward other workers. How different from the shipyard workers of Gdansk!

We see how the systemic features of state socialism manufactured different class identities, class opposition, and even a sense of totality in different sectors of the economy. Still this diversity developed within a highly ambivalent working-class consciousness engendered by a state-regulated economy legitimated in the name of the working class. Miners embraced neither the command economy of the past nor any future market economy. Turning the dominant ideology against its perpetrators obstructed the emergence of alternative visions. Even more important, alternative ideologies require a material or institutional basis for them to take root. In Magnitogorsk, at least, the steel magnates and the local party bureaucracy, supported by popular mood, colluded to ensure that no such alternative arose, particularly independent private enterprise.

Even though Kotkin has a more realistic sense of the forces at work in Soviet society than Connor, his analysis is still caught in a confrontation between modernity and tradition: Gorbachev versus the local apparatchiks, perestroika versus the steel cage, glasnost versus Marxist-Leninism, truth versus falsehood. This framework of modernization obscures the distinctive class structure and systemic features of state socialism which shaped and continues to shape the destiny of what was the Soviet Union.

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Sowing the Seeds of Capitalism

Where Kotkin is pessimistic about the possibilities of capitalism, Anthony Jones and William Moskoff are much more optimistic. Their *Ko-ops: The Rebirth of Entrepreneurship in the Soviet Union* is devoted to the growth of small-scale private enterprise in the four years from 1987 to 1990. Jones and Moskoff continue Sovietology's fascination with informal economic activities, variously called the underground, illegal, black, or second economy, which supposedly demonstrated the impossibility of planning. In the world of pushers, private producers, and black marketeers, Sovietology identified the rudiments of private production and market exchange, irrepressibly developing at the interstices of planning. The rapid growth of cooperatives—a code name for small-scale private enterprise—in the period of perestroika demonstrated the existence of "a reserve of entrepreneurial talents ready to be liberated" (p. xv). Although nominally in private hands, cooperatives were closely tied to the state sector, dependent on state enterprises for materials, technology, and for orders. In 1989, "80% of all cooperatives either were physically located within state enterprises or operated under the umbrella of one" (p. 40).

Much of *Ko-ops* is devoted to the resistance of the party state, whether in the form of bureaucratic interference, legal restrictions, or public opinion hostile to the development of cooperatives. In this heroic struggle, which parallels Connor's account of the rise of the Soviet working class, the entrepreneurs take advantage of the more open civil society to organize themselves politically, and by the end of 1990 they secured themselves a permanent place in the Soviet economy. The obstacles placed in their path led cooperatives to adopt all sorts of nefarious, illegal, unethical, and even mafia-like activities. But, say Jones and Moskoff, there is nothing in this unique to the Soviet Union: "The emergence of robber barons is not restricted to one society. The lesson of history, though, is that this is a stage that gives way to a more legally based and acceptable system" (p. 129). History is on the side of the Soviet Union. It is only a matter of time before it will make the transition to modern capitalism. According to Jones and Moskoff, the major obstacle to progress is the absence of a managerial and market culture.

Just when sociologists thought they had buried modernization theory, Sovietology resurrects its crudest form—development through stages held back by cultural lag. It is important, therefore, to take a closer look at these cooperatives and their institutional context. The majority of cooperatives, outside the construction industry, are of two types. First, they are ways of organizing production within state enterprises that circumvent wage regulations and state orders with the goal of giving incentives to workers and profit to the enterprise. They continue the Soviet tradition of illegal production of goods—bartered for goods that were in short supply or otherwise needed by the enterprise. Now such production is legal and often turned over to cooperatives. The second type is the trading cooperative that mediates relations among state enterprises, doing what the party and the various pushers (*tolkachi*) did before. Neither type of cooperative is new. They are the inevitable product of a shortage economy based on physical planning. It is hard to see them as the harbingers of a modern capitalist order. Rather they work on principles more akin to those of adventure, speculative, or merchant capital.

Just how much Soviet cooperatives are part of the old order can be seen by comparing Soviet cooperatives with the Hungarian equivalent—the economic work partnerships. Enough of these were genuinely productive enterprises, operating within or outside the state sector, to make a significant contribution to the national economy and, since 1988, became the basis of private limited companies. If in Hungary there are grounds for skepticism about a transition to modern capitalism, then we should be that much more skeptical about the prospects of any such transition in Russia. These Hungarian forms of second economy are worlds apart from the Soviet cooperatives. The reasons are not difficult to see—twenty-five years of Hungarian reforms replaced physical planning with fiscal planning, created a consumer market, a money economy based on prices that in part reflected demand, and a space for independent private enterprise.

If in the Soviet Union cooperatives are old institutions in a new guise, what are we to make of the conflict between them and the

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party state? In part Jones and Moskoff's emphasis reflects the sources they rely on, particularly newspapers, which stress the scandalous and the illegal, as well as the public outcry against cooperatives. But in part the conflict reflects a real struggle over the control of resources in a shortage economy. Still, Jones and Moskoff overlook the heavy involvement of the party itself in the cooperative movement. Here careful case studies of regional or local economies instead of reliance on statistics about national trends would have paid off. When the politburo instructed the party to get out of the economy, my own studies indicate that leading members of the all-powerful regional party headquarters left to become directors of enterprises. Similarly, party officials joined the cooperative movement when it became part of the economic reform program. As leaders of the cooperatives, party officials undertook the same regulatory, mediatory function, but now as "businessmen" rather than as "communists." In Syktyvkar, capital of the Komi Republic, by the end of 1990—that is almost a year before the Moscow putsch—three-quarters of the party secretaries in local organizations were involved in cooperatives. A typical example was the creation of a sociological cooperative called "prognosis" headed by the ex-first party secretary for ideology. The shift from Marxism-Leninism to sociology obscured the continuity of function and personnel. In short, cooperatives were usually new bottles for old wine, since the exigencies of the shortage economy had not been altered, indeed had been exacerbated.

Here we come to the greater myths perpetrated by the legacy of Sovietology and reincarnated as modernization theory. By focusing on the superiority of liberal democracy and the free market over the party state and the centrally planned economy, it assumes that the disintegration of the latter creates opportunities for the rise of the former. But that simply attaches too much importance to the political—always a pronounced tendency within Sovietology. The disintegration of the party state leads neither to chaos nor to successful economic reform—what David Stark has aptly called "designer capitalism"—but to an economy based on monopoly, barter, and worker control. Rather than moving toward modern capitalism, the economy exaggerates pathologies of the old system. No longer restrained by the state, monopolies become stronger. As shortages become more severe and enterprises become more autonomous, barter becomes more important. As managers have to devote more attention to garnering supplies, as the party is no longer available as a tool of discipline, as enterprises can offer less to their labor force, worker control over production becomes stronger.

Shock therapy exacerbates the pathologies. If prices are liberalized, inflation and debt reproduce each other in an intensifying spiral. Everyone is forced into a bazaar economy with whatever they have to sell. The streets are lined with peddlers, kiosks, and commercial stores—in the words of Oleg Kharkodin, a flea market rather than a free market. Trade becomes generalized without altering production. It is commodification without capitalism. If the country is opened to free trade, outsiders plunder Russia's resources without corresponding investment. If the economy is privatized, the country is handed over to the apparatchiks or, more likely, managers who strengthen the monopolies they inherit.

Between the collapsed party state and a modern capitalist economy is not a cultural lag but a real revolution that would have to turn monopolies into competition, barter into markets, and worker control into managerial control. Who will lead such a revolution? Certainly not workers, who want to keep their jobs and what little security they have. Certainly not the ex-communists, who are doing quite well at the helm of the new order. Certainly not the intellectuals, who are more interested in expanding their public role than in running a private economy. Certainly not cooperatives, which are busy lubricating the arthritic joints of this shortage economy. Who is left?

Is it Russia's fate to be beholden to ideologies that are unrealizable? In 1917 no major Marxist thinker—from Bernstein to Luxemburg, from Kautsky to Trotsky, from Lukács to Lenin—claimed that Russia could make a successful transition to socialism by itself. The conditions could not have been less propitious—a war-wrecked, largely agrarian economy that had barely emerged from feudalism and was surrounded by hostile capitalist countries. As Luxemburg said, it was the Bolsheviks' destiny to place social-

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ism on the agenda of world politics in the most adverse circumstances. But, she added, they should beware of making a virtue out of a necessity. Her warning went unheeded, and the Bolsheviks dug an ever-wider gap between socialist promise and Soviet reality, doing untold damage to the socialist ideal.

The task now of making a transition to capitalism is if anything more daunting. The surrounding world may be capitalist, but that does not mean it is any more friendly. Internally, the irony is that a transition to a centralized command economy, based as it is on direct control, is probably easier to engineer than to a market economy, which requires fine-tuned, indirect mechanisms of control. As Karl Polanyi, as well as historical example, has taught us, only a strong state can establish market institutions—a strong state that must also abstain from undue interference. Contrary to the optimistic theories of modernization, there is no market road to a market economy. Nor is there a democratic road from a centralized to a market economy. Liberal democracies are anemic. They reproduce rather than transform economic orders. They follow rather than precede capitalism—if they appear at all. The spate of presidential and parliamentary decrees that satisfy now this interest group, now another, do not constitute the stable rule of law that the genesis of capitalism requires.

The collapse of the Soviet party state and the paralysis of its successor spell the downfall of the only mechanism that could possibly induce a market economy. It is no accident that market institutions are much more advanced in a country such as Hungary. There they were able to grow under the protection and prodding of the party state. For a quarter of a century the Soviet Union sheltered the development of capitalist institutions in Hungary by providing favorable terms of trade and a more flexible political regime. Today Russia cannot provide itself with such a protective umbrella as it tries to accomplish even bigger transitions overnight, and moreover in circumstances of rapid economic deterioration and political ineffectiveness. If the internal conditions are difficult enough, the external ones are even more forbidding—a capitalist world which demands that the Commonwealth of Independent States operate immediately as fully fledged capitalist economies.

To demonstrate their commitment to the capitalist project, the one transition leaders have engineered is ideological. May Day in Red Square becomes a carnival to celebrate capitalism; the television becomes a panegyric to Americana; Marx, Lenin, and Stalin are replaced by Smith, Hayek, and Sachs. But ideology is required not only to "pass" in the world of international capital; it is a necessity for a leadership that has leant on ideology so heavily in the past. Once more it becomes a key instrument for convincing followers that things will eventually get better—that shock therapy is not "all shock and no therapy." Just as socialist ideology plotted a natural evolution from war communism to the socialist dream, from reality to promise, so now capitalist ideology does the same. It obscures the yawning gap between adventure, speculative, or merchant capitalism and modern bourgeois capitalism by presenting the transition from one to the other as natural and inevitable. If Marx and Weber agree on one point, it is that such a transition is far from "natural" and "inevitable."

Marxism-Leninism and capitalist ideology are both expressions of modernization theory—they both assume that history's conclusion is already contained in its origin. In its capitalist variant, modernization theory assumes that, because markets (of a sort) coexist with democracy (of a sort) in the West, they can be introduced simultaneously in the East. However, for a state socialist society only now entering the capitalist world system, they are mutually incompatible. So either democracy once more turns to dictatorship, with the likely reassertion of central control over the economy, or political democracy languishes as an irrelevant talking shop. In the latter case the state becomes ever-more remote from society, and the economy operates according to its own laws. But the laws will not be the laws of modern capitalism but, more likely, of a merchant capitalism or some might say of a feudal capitalism—ploughing a third road to the Third World. By denying its own internal contradictions, modernization theory conspires in obscuring the ever-widening gap between ideology and reality. It fosters a false optimism about the future that could lead to a tragedy even greater than the one we associate with Marxism-Leninism.

Such a bleak prognosis stems in large part from the loss of any confidence in alternatives

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to capitalism. Under the sway of modernization theory, socialism has been so profoundly discredited and democracy so firmly wedded to capitalism that it takes great courage or naïveté to defend democratic socialism. But there are reasons for doing so. First, if I am correct that capitalism and democracy are incompatible in post-Soviet society, then those who place a higher value on democracy will have to find an alternative to capitalism. Ipso facto, rethinking the meaning of socialism will once more become a relevant activity. Second, as we are already seeing, unconstrained by internal opposition or external competition, capitalism will deepen the divide between rich and poor, devastate the environment, and breed uncertainty and insecurity for all. By digging an ever-wider chasm between ideology and reality, between promise and actuality, capitalism will once more fertilize the socialist imagination.

In short, the conditions that have called forth the renaissance of modernization theory will just as surely call forth the renaissance of socialist theory. But what form that renaissance will take cannot be prefigured. Each historic phase of capitalism has thrown up its own distinctive socialism—utopian socialism, guild socialism, council communism, and then the towering presence of Chinese and Soviet communism. Postmodern capitalism will inspire its own socialism, which is likely to adopt as its antipode the Soviet Union—a quintessentially "modern" form of socialism. Indeed, in the long run, the rapid and unexpected dissolution of the Soviet Union has probably performed the greatest possible service not only for Marxism but also for socialism.

The Continuing American Dilemma: Race, Poverty, and Social Policy

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Rethinking Social Policy: Race, Poverty, and the Underclass, by **Christopher Jencks.** Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992. 280 pp. $27.95 cloth. ISBN: 0-674-76678-4.

Few social scientists are as thoughtful, perceptive, and wide-ranging as Christopher Jencks. *Rethinking Social Policy* addresses the contemporary social science and social policy controversies surrounding affirmative action, the War on Poverty, crime, the urban underclass, and welfare reform. Four of the essays critically review important social science best-sellers—Thomas Sowell's *Ethnic America* (1981) and *Markets and Minorities* (1981), Charles Murray's *Losing Ground* (1984), James Q. Wilson and Richard Herrnstein's *Crime and Human Nature* (1985), and William J. Wilson's *Truly Disadvantaged* (1987).

Any reader who skips the endnotes will not realize that the essays were previously published, as Jencks begins with a brilliant introductory essay that sets the theme that is woven throughout the chapters. He argues that social science theory too often reverts to untestable hypotheses and ideology when it confronts the difficult issues of race, poverty, and the underclass. As a result, liberals and conservatives alike tend to attribute a complex social problem to some single cause. Social scientists who analyze the causes of poverty, or joblessness, or out-of-wedlock births, or welfare dependence, or crime, or the effects of affirmative action tend to dichotomize the world and come down on the side of either culture or structure, nature or nurture, lack of jobs or unwillingness to work, and so on. Typically, conservatives select that side of the dichotomy that finds fault in the individual, while liberals fault the social system.

Jencks does now eschew theory, but he objects to the tendency of social theorists to promote these dichotomies. In Jencks's world, there are no simple explanations for complex social problems: "These six essays all try to

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