

The Gorbachev interlude

Cornelius Castoriadis

Among all industrialized countries, Russia remains the prime candidate for a social revolution" ¹. What I was writing ten years ago fully retains, to my mind, its relevance. It is the contention of this article that there are only very narrow margins within which the Gorbachev attempts to "reform" Russian society can make some substantial difference without unleashing a grand social, ethnical and political crisis and/or without inducing (in response to or in anticipation of such a crisis) a backlash from the military and the party establishment leading either to an emasculation of the "reforms", or to the appointment of Mr Gorbachev to some hydroelectric plant of the Lena region. To put it in a nutshell: either the people will remain (as they do up to now) passive and the possible effects of the Gorbachevchina will be narrowly limited; or the people will start moving, in which case either things will get out of hand or a (pre-emptive or corrective) reaction — not necessarily successful — will take place, as in China four times running.

The "Gorbachev illusion" is the idea (predominant today in the West, possibly shared by Gorbachev himself) that substantive reforms, in a country like today's Russia, can be introduced strictly from above; that you can order people to be self-active whilst restraining themselves within some vague and undefined (therefore, more threatening) limits, that you can retain the absolutist power of bureaucracy whilst dismantling the social and economic bases of this power — in brief, that — like Descartes' God — you can send society moving with a fillip, and that you can change the system without changing it.

There have been, to be sure, societies and historical periods when a Pharaoh, a Hammurabi, a Roman Emperor, a Peter the Great or a Catherine could introduce *by fiat* substantive changes in important aspects of the legislation and organization of society. End of twentieth century Russia does not appear to lend itself to such a treatment — both — because it is Russia and because this is end of the twentieth century. Because it is Russia: the present mess is

too big, the cumulated remains of Russian history are so many obstacles to any important peaceful reform from Russia, will kiss the attache-case Czar's sandals, whispering — so let it be, since such is your desire.



Any discussion about the present “reforms” in Russia entails a fantastic host of theoretical preconceptions. Many of these are put to test by the current events. In contradistinction to journalistic and impressionistic writing, we should spell them out.

The Social regime of Russia, as it developed after the 1917 Revolution and the subsequent seizure of absolute power by the Bolshevik Party, is a total and totalitarian bureaucratic capitalism². This concept should not be confused with the current versions of the concept of totalitarianism, which present an un-historical essence, both indifferent to “geographical” differences (e. g. as between East Germany and Cuba, Czechoslovakia and Ethiopia, Russia and China), and immune to change. Like any other social-historical regime, and whatever its own aims, the regime is subject to historical change, in the strong and deep sense of the word. Thus, the Khrushchev period expressed an attempt by elements of the Party and the bureaucracy to “reform” the system whilst keeping intact its main characters, above all the centralized rule of the Party. The “reform” had some effects — it is thanks to it, after all, that the regime became “viable” after the wholesale madness of the Stalin period — but in substance failed. Needless to emphasize how heavily the Khrushchev case must weigh, not so much as a “precedent” for the one attempting to analyse the current situation, but as a real factor in the minds of everybody in Russia.

The overthrow of Khrushchev and the Brezhnev period opened the way to what I have called the rise of “stratocracy”³. This concept never meant that a military dictatorship was imminent, or that the Marshals, Admirals and Generals were governing, or truly ruling, Russia. It meant that the Party had failed in its attempts to “reform” itself and to “modernize” Russian Society, that its ideology was dead (the use of ideology for export is another matter), that it was henceforth void of any historical project, and facing an historical impasse.

It meant that the military (the military-industrial complex, with its “separated” economy) was the only “functioning” and “modernized” sector of society (which means that the chaos in Russian military organization and the malfunctioning of Russian military equipment were comparable to the American ones; the same not being true for the non-military organization and production). It meant that the overall orientation of society was in fact

determined by the needs and the objectives of the military sub-society. It finally meant that the military were becoming the only ones capable of carrying out the expansionary policies of the regime, at a time when communist ideology was progressively losing its appeal abroad, when centrifugal tendencies were becoming strong and manifest in other Communist countries



Modernizing Russia

and when, in the Third World, the imposition and conservation of Communist regimes had to be carried out, more and more, through some form of direct Russian involvement.

This view was based on massive positive facts, principally: the separation of military and non-military enterprises in Russia and the resulting huge difference in the qualities of the resulting outputs (Russian H-bombs being exportable, Russian clothes not); the enormous part (approx. 18%) of national output devoted to military expenditures; the “skimming” of the best *cadres* and workers and their co-opting in the military sub-society; the persistent rise in Great-Russian nationalism and chauvinism, making good for the decomposition of communist ideology. But it was also based, negatively, on an analysis of the factors making it nearly impossible (not strictly impossible: this is not mathematics or physics) for the Party to truly revive itself and to impose successfully from above a “modernizing” reform of society. To avoid repetition, I will discuss these factors below, in connection with the current “reform” process.

It is in this context, that I was writing, seven years ago: “In Russia, nothing is done, *nothing happens* ... Against this grey background, the only striking events are the advances in military technology, the deployment and accumulation of weapons, and the international policy moves”⁴. For the period 1964-1985, this was just stating facts.

Now, today things *are* happening in Russia. (The idea that it is all a trick to deceive the West or even that the moves are only cosmetic does not deserve a moment’s consideration). The question therefore arises: *what* and *why*. The two are more than intimately linked. I will rapidly come to the why, but before that a provisional characterization of the what is indispensable. A group of high-level bureaucrats, organized and animated by an undisputably clever and able leader, Gorbachev, has risen to power and launched a “reform process” (up to now, mostly in the form of declaration of intent — but on this later). The proclaimed aim of the process can be summed up with the term “modernization” (certainly not “democratization”). Its means remain vague, but two points are clear. One, is the reestablishment of detente and a halt to the arms race. The other is the attempt to introduce a degree of “liberalization” (mostly cultural), and an undefined dose of market correctives into the centralized command economy.

Now, given the facts of Russian king-making, it is certain that this group and

Gorbachev could not have gained power without, in some cases, strong support, in others favourable neutrality, in others still, prudent wait-and-see on the part of the main depositories of actual power in Russia: the military, the KGB and the highest Party apparatus. Parenthetically, the rise of Gorbachev indicates, once again, the emptiness of the "interest groups" theory concerning Russian bureaucracy. Bureaucratic grouping (and infighting) has been, in all important cases, transversal, cutting across Party, Army, KGB and other apparatuses. In the present case also, no division along "sectoral" lines is apparent. The fault divides "modernizers" and "conservatives" — and this, only at the very thin top of the hierarchy.

Indeed, despite Gorbachev's accession to power, the seeming consolidation of this position and the implementation of some measures certainly most distasteful and disturbing for the conservatives, the basis of his group does not appear to be very large or very solid. And this contributes to account for the slow and cautious pace of Gorbachev's moves. The elements composing his group belong to the upper crust of the bureaucracy, and to this alone. (Moscow intelligentsia will be dealt with below). No sign is forthcoming of any active support from the larger Party. Even the Central Committee has been able up to now to oppose or to delay successfully some of Gorbachev's proposals. The modernizers, among the bureaucracy, look like an isolated collective Enlightened Despot. My guess is that for the time being their most warm supporters must come from the military, who certainly have no vested interest in the stagnation of the Russian economy, rather the contrary; and that their potential constituency lies with parts of the "techno-scientific" bureaucracy all over the country.

Still, the fact remains that — contrary to what appeared, and myself thought, virtually impossible in 1981⁵ — a group of modernizers has emerged, and that they have been able to capture the direction of the Party and the State. Why? External and internal factors have obviously been intimately linked in bringing about this result. The external factors seem to have been paramount in this case — as in most if not all cases of reform from above in Russian history. By external factors I mean the pressure which their world power position, as they see it ("perceive" is the current word, "imagine" is the correct one), exerts on the Russian leadership. Poland has been in a turmoil — and the other East European countries can less and less be taken for granted. Afghanistan turned out to be a half-defeat with, on balance, adverse effects on Russia's international position. (Had the Polish people kept quiet since 1979 and had the Afghans accepted the *quisling* regime, developments in Russia may have been different). The overseas satellites have proven an increasing burden.

(Russian aid to Nicaragua has been stingy even before the present detente). The American re-armament may well be, as Edward Luttwak has called it, a “cultural” rather than a strategic phenomenon; the SDI may well be a technological dream and a waste of money⁶. We are not dealing with reality, but with “perceived” reality, that is, with images, and there is no reason to think that the Russian brass are less prone to the technological delusion — the new gimmick that will solve any and every problem — than their American counterparts and models. They obviously entertained a strong belief if not in the total feasibility of SDI at least in some effects of it, and particularly in its possible partial fallouts.

The significance of all these facts can be summed up in one word: over-extension. (One may remember that the US military experts, who twenty



The Russian Hercules

years ago were boasting that they were able to fight two and a half wars, had to cut subsequently their estimate to one and a half wars, and in fact were unable to prove that they were able to fight a quarter of a war). Given the internal Russian situation, to which I shall revert presently, the "rational" answer was to cut down commitments, reduce the extreme strain on resources, and buy time to catch up with technological and industrial inferiority by means of some internal "reconstruction".

This part of the Gorbachev strategy is straightforward, probably the least opposed internally, and has been carried out, up to now, effectively and brilliantly. Needless to comment at length on what is — or should be — well known about the political and diplomatic gains reaped thereby: not only the new image of "peace loving Russia", but the renewed strains within the Western Alliance, where the specter of an American retreat from Europe looms everyday larger. Less clearly understood is the net gain for Russia of the currently negotiated agreements. To sum up the position: 1) There is no elimination of the risk of a nuclear holocaust. Even if the "strategic" arsenals of the two superpowers were cut, not by 50% but by 95%, the remainder would suffice to reduce the Northern Hemisphere to a moonscape. 2) If all nuclear arms were eliminated, Russia would emerge as the undisputed military dominant power over the Eurasian landmass. 3) Therefore, nuclear deterrence will remain the basis of the world balance of power for the foreseeable future. 4) In the labyrinth of madness which is the essence of today's strategic situation, the existence of intermediate nuclear weapons contained in germ the very high probability of escalation if they started being used; in this sense, they were adding an epsilon to deterrence. Their elimination would leave, in case of acute crisis, the US facing the dilemma: total nuclear war or retreat to "fortress America". If our brains were not sufficient, we have the word of Nixon and Kissinger for that: no American President would risk the annihilation of New York in order to save Bonn, Amsterdam or Paris. On balance, the negotiated agreements increase the potential of Russian pressure on the Europeans; and make it possible to halt the rise in Russian military expenditures and/or to restructure these in favour of increased sophistication of the conventional weapons.

The external policies of the Gorbachev group embody the realization that the overall Russian resources were out of proportion with the over-extended Russian commitments (the same is true for America), that what had been sufficient up to now — the development of an efficient military industry by means of a strict organisational separation of military plants from the rest, of skimming of the best human and material resources, and of devoting to this

industry a big share of the national output — was not sufficient anymore, and that with a virtually stagnant economy and very low standards of living for the working population, further increases of the part of resources absorbed by the military sector were becoming difficult. This obviously must also have been the reasoning which carried most weight among the heads of the military establishment.

A temporary “truce” — or “correction of the front” — was becoming more and more advisable. This can be easily understood if one is clear about the whole scheme and tempo of Russian expansion. This was never a one-year affair. (Marx: “Woe! The Russians are advancing westwards at the rate of a hundred miles per century”. One among his few diagnoses which the twentieth century has fully born out). Westerners are prone to judging Russian policies by their own temporal yardsticks, by which a four-year continuity in policies looks a miracle. It is perfectly within the logic of the Russian regime to calm down things for ten, twenty or thirty years, if it is necessary and if it can afford it. This is not due to any superintelligent long-term planning: it is — and has been for centuries the Russian construction of social-historical time, supported in the field of external relations by the geo-strategical position and advantages of Russia.

So, the “external” condition for the Gorbachev turn is the increasing difficulty for the Russian economy to continue to support, to an ever-expanding scale, the aggressive power policies of the 1965-1985 period. But this factor, taken in itself, is insufficient to explain the whole gamut of policy measures implemented, proposed, hinted at, or vaguely talked about. The external turn could have been negotiated without attempts at internal change — or with much more trivial ones. True enough, the detente and the halt in the arms race would at any rate give to the Russian industry a much needed breathing span of time; they would not, in, themselves, alter the fundamental position, the weakness and backwardness of the overall Russian industrial base. A modernization of industry, especially in the face of rapidly accelerating technological progress abroad, appeared more and more necessary. But the modernizers obviously aim at something larger, even if it remains vague. Otherwise it would not be understandable why they embarked upon the “liberalization” measures, however limited and hesitant these may be.

To this, only an “internal” factor can give the answer. And this internal factor, clearly, is not to be searched in any social pressures in Russia. It is to be searched in the group of modernizers themselves. The modernizers are obviously “under influence” — under Western influence. They are the part of

the dominant oligarchy (whether Party, Army, or other) which strongly wish for Russia to become "like" a Western country. They want Russia to enter the class of "civilized" nations — though of course they never would accept this formulation. This goes from good manners to encouraging rock music or tolerating modern art, from Cardin's and Saint-Laurent's fashion shops in Moscow to the spreading of personal computers, from TV-supported public opinion seduction and theatrization of "politics" to the widespread absorption of Western technology, from "free discussion" of (not quite all) items to insistence in the observance of "legality". After the protracted agony of communist ideology, and the ensuing all-pervading cynicism, parts of the Russian bureaucracy were no more shielded against the influence of modern world culture, and we know the same is true for large sections of the urban youth.

This is of course a story with very old, and almost permanent, antecedents, in Russia: Peter, Catherine, pro-occidentals against slavophiles, etc. The historical condition for the periodical resurgence of these tendencies is that Russia never went through a Renaissance or an *Aufklärung* never really entered the Western historical path and that, through unexpected ways, the 1917 Revolution, "intended" to modernize Russia, has destroyed most of the westernization (or europeanization) taking place between 1850 and 1914 and threw Russia back to its "asiatic" past — plus electrification. Whatever the industrial or scientific developments, the essential Russian-asiatic situation remained: nothing could exist independently from the State — the monstrously blown-up and "modernized" Party-State.

And here is the rub. The Europeanization of Europe (as the development of the United States) did not take place by *fiat* of the State. The whole European development is characterized, from the thirteenth century onwards, by the emergence of a social life, social poles of power and institutions to a large degree independent from the State and often opposed to it. (That the attempts to do away altogether with the State, to re-absorb political power within society on the whole, failed is the limit of the emancipatory and democratic movement, up to now, in the European social-historical domain). This development has been the result of powerful and uninterrupted social-historical movements, the first and longest of which is embodied in the emergence of the cities and the bourgeoisie. And these movements have been effective, *inter alia*, because the existing power they were confronting was divided between three poles bitterly fighting each other: the Church, the feudal nobility, the rising monarchic State. The modernizing role of the State itself — long before the Enlightened Despots of the eighteenth century — has in turn been possible



The drunkard

because the State — the Monarch — has been able, in many occasions, to use a part of the growing forces of “civil” (i.e. bourgeois) society. The absence of an absolute, unique and undisputed pole of power has been the most important positive condition for the emergence of this second miracle — the European social, historical, political, cultural polyphony.

The recurrent attempts at reform from above in Russia have always succeeded in modernizing the military apparatus, and basically failed for the rest. (The 1850 - 1914 period is the only one where a, of course Western-influenced but nevertheless endogenous and separated from the State, social change starts taking place). Their almost permanent character (with, as a main exception, the ill-fated attempts of Stolypin) has been the tendency to prevent the formation of a “political civil society”, of any “intermediary” social force able to play an independent political role⁷. Russian absolutism has always wanted to have its cake and eat it too: the programme has been, persistently, to reform society *in absentia* of society. This is neither “racial”, nor “ethnic”, and the “Slav soul” has nothing to do with it. It is a heavy social-historical legacy, permanently reproducing itself in the “Russian individual” as social-historical product, and can be overcome only by a social-historical *creation* — which entails a radical break with this legacy.

And now we have a country where everything independent from the Party-State has been systematically destroyed and uprooted for seventy years — and a group of enlightened bureaucrats attempting to modernize the country by using the Absolute Party-State, the main obstacle to their proclaimed aims. I order you to behave spontaneously. This is the essential antinomy of the Gorbachevchina.

I revert now to the discussion of the factors which, in my opinion, make it nearly impossible for a *substantial* reform from above to succeed.

Any such reform would require *ideas*, and *new* ideas, at that as to what and how is to be reformed. (Renewed tinkering with centralization and decentralization, endemic since Krushev years, would not lead very far). No such ideas have been forthcoming up to now. And ideas are never just “ideas”. Ideas are the more or less clearly expressible part of a magma of social imaginary significations. Not the slightest index of a process of creation of such significations transpires from Gorbachev’s rhetoric. All there is, is an *eklektische Bettelsuppe* where one can fish, within a diluted “marxist-leninist” liquid, chunks of advocations of “democracy”, of “market” ideology, of unspecified criticisms of the past, of appeals to responsibility and discipline — the whole under the catch-all name of “reconstruction”. Reconstruction of

what exactly; towards exactly *what*? Especially when one limits oneself to the “narrow” economic field — which is, in fact, not narrow at all, since you cannot juxtapose *any* economic system to *any* social and political system: the economy is not a “determinant”, but an organic part of any social regime — it is even impossible to see what these ideas could consist in. I will come to this at length later.

Socially and historically, a substantial reform is not and cannot be a list of measures on paper. The idea that you can sit at your desk, decide “rational” reforms and have them carried out without further ado is a typical autocratic-bureaucratic delusion (largely shared also by the Western establishment, in their case with some excuse).

For a reform to have substantive and real effects, even considering things from a narrow, “administrative” point of view, would require in the case of Russia that a very important proportion of the bureaucracy, say of the order of fifty per cent, would actively and enthusiastically support, implement, complement, concretize in the battlefield the decisions taken at the top. But we must see the question in a broader perspective. There is no *social-historical movement* in Russia today supporting the “reforms”: no substantial, numerically important groups of people, with a modicum of existing social links (of whatever nature: economic, religious, ideological, cultural etc.) ready to fight for reform and invent on the innumerable spots of life whatever is necessary for its successful implementation. The only exception is a part of the group which is, up to now, the only beneficiary of the internal “liberalization”: the intelligentsia and the cultural circles. I will come to this later. For the rest, all the evidence — starting from Gorbachev’s own speeches — points to a deep, stubborn resistance among the bureaucracy (except the very top). Given the nature of the system, and of any conceivable “tasks” for the reform, this resistance takes the most effective form: passive resistance, procrastination, inertia. In the same way, one cannot detect the slightest sign of a popular support.

The reasons for this behaviour only need a summary recalling. Most of the bureaucrats can very well see what they stand to lose with any substantive reform of the system; very few can imagine what they could gain. The same is true for the overwhelming proportion of wage and salary earners. Most of them have managed over the years to entrench themselves into positions where a slow rhythm of work and a lackadaisical performance, plus black or grey work of various shades, compensate for their miserable levels of pay. Gorbachev’s slogan directed to them is: more discipline, more productivity. Anyone, even faintly familiar with the working class movement and with

industrial relations, knows beforehand what the reactions of a workers' collective to such a rhetoric — and even more, to actual measures tending to implement it — would be. (Establishment students of industrial relations have euphemistically called this "workers resistance to technical change"). Workers have always responded to this type of management efforts following the well-known proverb, "better a devil you know than one you don't"; and they have excellent reasons for doing so. The only exception to this may be the peasants, about whom later.

But there is much more than security of tenure and material interests involved. (N.B.: in the case of the threatened bureaucrats it is not only "material interests", it is there whole *social existence* which is at stake). All social-historical movements have been, and are by necessity, defined and hold together by a new magma of social imaginary significations, created by and creating the movement. (Think again of the proto-bourgeoisie or the "classical" bourgeoisie, of the worker's movement — or even of the dedicated bureaucracies, mostly of bourgeois origin, surrounding "enlightened despots" in the eighteenth century). What is called "ideology" is only the "rational" and rationalizable dimension of these significations. There is nothing in today's Russia giving the slightest hint that the process of constitution of such a movement and of creation of new significations is under way. The whole enterprise, in this respect, consists in a renewed and stale attempt to prostitute the term democracy — without giving it the slightest content. At the same time all the verbal hangover of "socialism", "marxism", "leninism" persists, and nobody dares to take a stand in relation to it. What is to be done of this monstrously inflated re-edition of the Augean stables: "socialism", Marx, Lenin, the *kulaks*, the Trials, the Gulag, the subjugated nations, the East European countries etc? Empty sloganeering, abundant double-talk and materialized hypocrisy: this is all the leaders can offer. How could a quasi-autocrat, surrounded by second-rank autocrats, be believed (in Russia, I mean; there are, of course, enough Jerry Houghs this side of the Curtain to "believe" him) when he talks about "democracy" and even about *glasnost* ("publicity" rather than "transparency")? Not only one cannot detect the slightest capacity to produce anything new; the basic *duplicité* and *cynicism*, characterizing the regime since at least Stalin, have only taken on a new form.

In fact, even posing the question seems outlandish. In a period of world history when all ideas are in a shamble, all "values" devalued — except this contradictory couple: well-being and the Nation, when marxism is an unburied corpse and liberalism a grinning automated skeleton haunting the Stock Exchanges, can one seriously expect that a bunch of *attache-case* modernized

Cornelius Castoriadis is founder and editor of the journal *Socialisme ou Barbarie* (1949-65). He is presently Director of Studies at the "Ecole des Hautes Etudes" in Paris and a practicing psychoanalyst. Main works include: *L' institution imaginaire de la société*, Le Seuil, Paris, 1975; *Les Carrefours du Labyrinthe I & II*, Le Seuil Paris, 1986; *La Société bureaucratique*, UGE, Paris, 1973; and *La Société française*, UGE, Paris, 1979.

communist executives would create the ideas, the feelings and the passion capable of shaking out of lethargy a society which has undergone. What the peoples of Russia went under for the last eighty-five years? More narrowly: how and why could Russia "modernize", when "modernization" is in crisis all over the world and only goes on where it had already taken place, by virtue of its acquired autonomus momentum? What meaning can we give to the sentence: "Russia will create a modern industry", when countries like France, Britain, and even the United States are undergoing a tremendous process of de-industrialization?

Let us again narrow the scope of the discussion and focus on this, supposedly, more easily definable problem: the economy. What are the ideas? Where is the blue-print? How does one go about in order to "modernize" Russian economy? For a long time, unrepentant ex-fellow travellers and other well-wishers have been pointing to the Hungarian model. This is to forget that the Hungarian model is now in full crisis in its country of origin, and that it has been abuntantly financed by the West (what would be the scale of required financing for Russia? And would the capitalists, *pace* Mr Samuel Pizar, be willing to provide the rope?). And, above all, this is to forget that the ultimate guarantee that the Hungarian process would not get out of hand were the Russian divisions in Hungary and the additional ones immediately available. That the Russian Army and the KGB are the guarantors of last resort of the Russian regime as well, no doubt. But if a process of "reforms" were to get out of hand — and assuming the Army remained totally immune to what might stir the society — would the Army be content with preserving Gorbachev's and his group's places?

Let us look at the question afresh. All the micro-measures taken up to now, and the intentions proclaimed, point to an attempt to introduce a dose of "market mechanism" into the functioning of the Russian economy. One has to go down to fundamentals, and ask; irrespective of the current rhetoric, and beyond minor

concessions (such as the partial legalization of the "black" economy), what would these "market mechanisms" consist in, and up to what social and political stability? I will deal with only a few of the numerous points these questions raise.

To "rationalize" Russian industrial and similar enterprises by means of "market mechanisms", i.e. by allowing firms to compete among themselves, would entail to give the firm's management the right to hire and fire labour. From all we know, we may safely say that an enormous proportion of workers in Russian industry is, potentially, "redundant". (A significant proportion of workers in the West is now steadily becoming "redundant", year in year out). To increase productivity means, tautologically, to have the same output produced by a lesser number of hands. This is much more dramatically true today, when "modernization" of a plant means mostly automation — that is, massive redundancy of the existing labour force. Supposing that such a measure were introduced tomorrow, a huge army of unemployed would start building up. Would these people keep quiet, waiting for the reform to produce its "beneficial" effects?

It may be argued that the dismissed workers would be rapidly re-employed elsewhere. This would require additional equipment. Now it is well known that Russian industry is characterized both by a hunger for (modern) capital goods and by a redundancy of (obsolescent) capital goods. This means that re-employment of the fired workers would be possible mostly on obsolescent equipment, thus lowering rather than, as aimed at, raising overall productivity. All this does not mean that there is not ample room for decreasing the maladjustment between equipment and labour⁸. It means that this can only be done, if at all, along a protracted and very painful process. In the meantime (and/or failing that), some extra effort may be extracted from the Russian workers, with the stick of possible firing and the carrot of increased wage differentiation — *provided* there are no reactions on their part.

Second, a relative "rationalization" of Russian production and allocation of resources would entail an unimaginable upheaval of the whole structure of the price system. This structure is violently absurd by any conceivable standards — a fact repeatedly recognized and exposed by the economists of the regime even before Gorbachev, and, recently, by Gorbachev himself. But it is characteristic that Gorbachev limited himself to the prices of a few basic food items.⁹ The real problem, of course, is not to raise the official price of bread and meat, or even rents (I am leaving aside the possible social and political effects, see Poland). It is to have the firms, throughout the economy, fix their selling prices and bargain for their procurement prices. If such a measure were to be

applied overnight, or even along a relatively short period of time, chaos would be the result. And it is the nature of the case that, were its application to be spread over a long period, this would only replace some of the existing absurdities of the price system by some others. The measure would, of course, render practically superfluous the Gosplan and the "Economic" Ministries in their present size — that is, it would entail the dismissal of a huge part of the State *and* the Party bureaucracy. It would also almost certainly induce a strong upward adjustment of the price level — how else can you eliminate queues? — and thus again presupposes that a big part of the population which would, at least in the medium term, bear the brunt of the adjustment through even lower standards of living, would keep quiet, meditating on the virtues of the "market mechanisms" and possibly studying F. von Hayek, translated, at long last, in Russian.

In macro-economic terms, the translation of all this is as follows: during an undetermined, but certainly lengthy period, a huge redistribution of income and re-allocation of resources would have to take place, severely hurting (through unemployment and higher prices) many strata of the working population and bringing to big parts of the non-military bureaucracy loss of economic, social and political privilege — nay, even loss of identity. And this in an already overstrained country, where there are no stocks whatsoever (in the most general sense of the word), which lives from hand to mouth. The only



margin available, on paper, would be a decrease in military expenditures. (As already said, the wish to avoid an increase in these expenditures has certainly been a strong motivation for Gorbachev's detente policies). But how far could such a reduction go, that is, how far could Gorbachev take along with him, in this road, the military sub-sector, and what difference could it make; how rapidly, if at all, SS-20s could be changed into ploughshares and laser-guided weapons into textile machines; these questions remain widely open. On this account again, one can see masses of losers, and hardly any winners.

Allowing firms to fix levels of employment, output and prices would entail practically, as I said, dismantling of "central planning" — that is (for there never was any real "planning" in Russia) ending central decisions about allocation of productive resources and, to a large extent, uses of output. This would raise problems for the separate military subsector of the economy (and society). To be sure, a Government can raise through taxes or otherwise 15% or even 45% of the national income and spend it on the Army. But it is hardly conceivable that the military would accept the dismantlement of the big sector of production they control, and smilingly adopt "market procurement" procedures. The peaceful co-existence between the "closed" (military) and the "open" (non-military) sectors of the economy is not easy to visualize under the hypothetical new conditions — especially if the non-military firms become able to compete successfully in the markets for skilled and technical labour, machinery and rare materials, with the military ones, as *should* be the case if the "reforms" were to be effective.

Before going further, two important qualifications have to be stressed, lest the reader draws the erroneous conclusion that I am defending an "all or nothing" position.

First, the almost total unlikelihood of a successful substantial global reform does not entail that numerous measures which would have some effect cannot be taken. As Vassili Gondicas has repeatedly pointed out to me, the extent of chaos and waste in Russia is such that even "second order", fragmentary measures — provided they are not contradictory — may make an important difference. I had discussed myself, in *Devant la guerre*¹⁰ the obvious example of increasing the "private" plots of the peasants (to stress that though harmless to the system, such a measure was not even envisaged).

Second, agriculture indeed is obviously a sector where, the absurdities of the existing system being probably the greatest, there is room for important changes. Certainly also, the resulting increases in agricultural output would be of immediate and obvious political benefit. Also, among all the sections of

bureaucracy, the agrarian bureaucracy is, politically, the most expendable. It is however remarkable that, up to now, only very limited measures have been taken in this field (having the peasants have a personal stake in increased kolkhoz production appears to be in "experimental" application in a few parts of the country). Beyond that, one may ask if there are not, in the *Russian* (as opposed, e.g. to the Chinese) framework, some rather narrow political limits to the possible changes. Is a dismantling of the kolkhoz etc conceivable? Would the industry be able to balance increased agrarian incomes with an ampler supply of manufactured goods (the old NEP problem)? And, last but not least, could any such measures stop and reverse what has been for years now the plight of Russian agriculture — the abandonment of the land by the peasants moving to the cities?

I come back to the central economic problem. One can draw on paper — I have been told that W. Brus used frequently to engage in this solitaire game — a scheme of apparently consistent transformations. State property — "people's property" — would be retained on "big" enterprises — employing above x people, or "capitalized" at more than y roubles. Managerial staff, and even wage-earners, would be allowed to take care of the rest. A Central Bank and a Finance Ministry would control overall equilibrium through interest and taxation rates. Various Investment banks would fund long-term investment projects, with profitability the sole (or the main) criterion. Prices and wages would be left to clear the markets for goods and labour. The State would raise through taxation whatever revenue it needed for general administration, "public services" and military expenditures. Note that the economy would need, for a very long period, to be shielded against international competition — the, only form of competition which today retains some meaning, that is — and, since the elimination of central economic controls would entail the elimination of the State monopoly of foreign trade, the scheme must be accompanied by a huge devaluation of the rouble and/or a high tariff wall.

If the dreaming economist is completely doped by "economic theory" (e.g. by neo-neo-classical "economics"), he may even indulge in some calculus to prove that there must exist a "smooth" and "optional" path, leading from here to there, from actual Russia to the Russia of his scheme. In fact, and abstracting from all "non-economic" (i.e. from all real) factors, this fictitious situation could only be reached after long years of high unemployment, reduced real incomes for most of the population, and social-geographic dislocation.

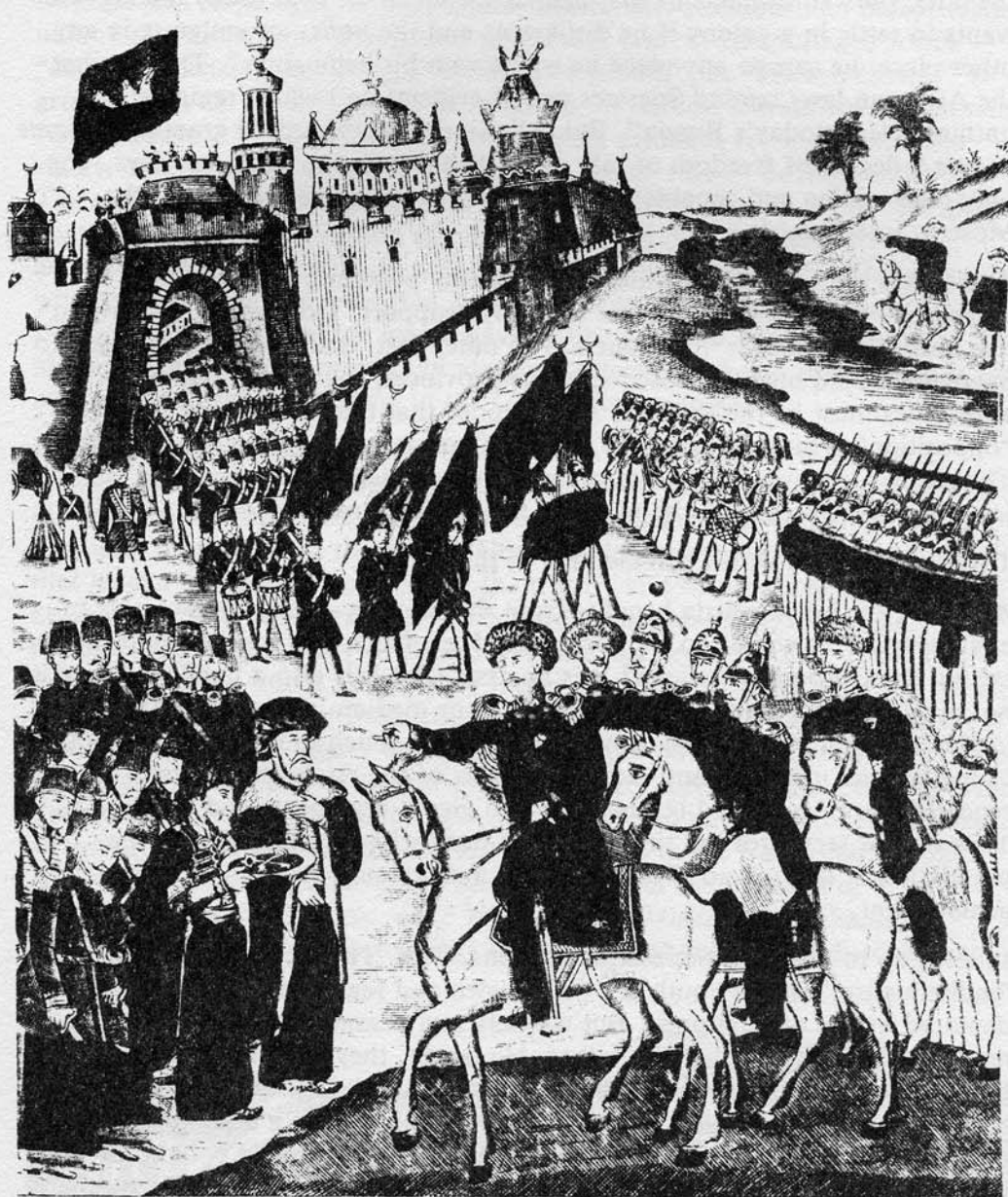
But even the final dreamland, once reached, would not prove to be much of a dream. One sees no reason why, in such circumstances, Russian unemployment

would not fluctuate between 6% (US rate) and 11 to 12% (EEC average), — and rather beyond the latter: nor why the Russian Central Bank and Finance Ministry would be more successful than their Western colleagues in fighting inflation. Once again, the mythology of the market and the prevalence of the “liberal” rhetoric over the last ten years make people forget that the “market mechanisms” — though undoubtedly much less wasteful than the bureaucratic command economy — are themselves in a big mess. Just look around.

But the benevolent economist's pipe dream suffers from other more important, indeed fatal, flaws. It is politically and sociologically incoherent and inconsistent. Not only would the envisioned process, as soon as it started materializing, unite against it almost everybody — the quasi-totality of the bureaucracy and most of the wage and salary earners. It is impossible to see in what kind of society, and what type of political structure, it could be fitted in. This brings me to the last aspect of the Gorbachevchina: the steps toward a cultural and “political” liberalization.

In this field, the situation is certainly in flux at the time I am writing (mid-October 1987). Every week, there are some news referring to liberalization measures — and at least one step backwards. A typical case: editors of *samizdat* papers are not harrassed anymore (or less than in the past) — but the last “issue” (70 copies!) of Grigoryants' *Glasnost* has been confiscated and two persons connected with it arrested¹¹. A Pan-Union Trade Congress has, a year ago, voted a resolution approving “democratic reforms” and Gorbachev by a ... 100% majority. National activists are sometimes allowed to demonstrate — to be arrested or harassed immediately afterwards. After the demonstration in Riga, June 14, 1987, commemorating the victims of the massive deportations which followed the 1941 annexation of Latvia, eleven demonstrators were arrested¹². One could go on for pages.

Certainly, most of these cases express the “lower echelon” bureaucracy's stubborn resistance to Gorbachev's measures. But the measures themselves have an extremely narrow scope. Freedom of talk and possibility of publication are always the monopoly of the authorities; any measure of departure from this monopoly is granted *ad hoc* and regulated by them. Everybody in the West is frantically discussing the possibility for Jews to emigrate, and demanding it. Fair enough. But what about the Russians themselves? It seems as going without saying to the Western “liberals” that the Russian State is proprietor of its citizens, body and soul. “... We have declared that, whoever among the Athenians would desire it, once he has reached his civic maturity and has seen the public life of the *polis* and known us, the laws, has the right, taking with



Иск. И. Род. Казань

Рис. М. М. М.

ВЗЯТИЕ КРѢПОСТИ КАРСА 1855 ГОДА.

him his possessions, to depart and go where he likes. And no one among us, the laws, puts an obstacle to that neither forbids that, if anybody among you wants to settle in a colony if he dislikes us and the *polis*, or emigrate in any other place, he can go any place he wants with his belongings". That is what the Athenian laws remind Socrates as self-evident: and which remains unthinkable in today's Russia¹³. But still: Gorbachev is indeed granting to *some people* a degree of freedom of talk unthinkable since the Khrushchev days. The only ones willing and capable of using it, up to now, is a fraction of the Moscow intelligentsia.

And this is the only group which has evidently benefited from the Gorbachev policies. These people certainly "support" Gorbachev, and would like him to go "further". But one has to note, first, that this does not seem to have much echo outside Moscow; in the provinces, the fear of the local authorities must be the greatest. And second, that the conservative "opposition" is already vocal. In the last *Ogonyok* meeting, in the Oktiabr Theater in Moscow, an important part of the audience was protesting, and insulting the "liberals" in the name of the glorious tradition of the Party¹⁴.

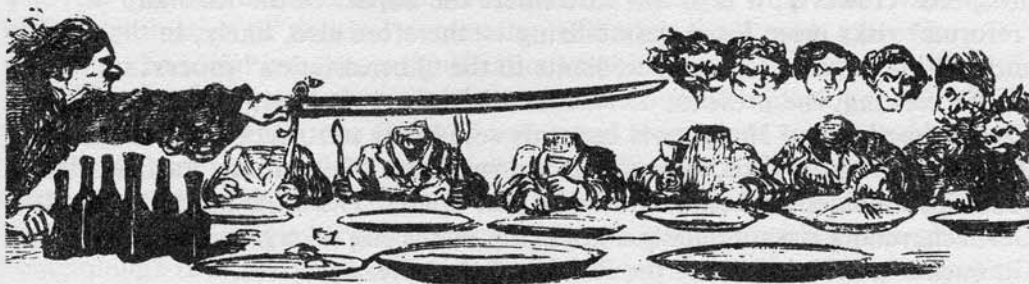
Three points seem worth commenting in this respect.

A part of the intelligentsia benefits from the reforms — and, irrespective of any "benefit", is willing to support them. How much real weight could this put behind the Gorbachev policies? It is an asset. But it is also a liability. There is not much these people can do, in the short or medium run, to help the implementation of a reform movement. There is much they are already doing to irritate and upset the anti-Gorbachev part of the establishment (see, the repeated warnings from Ligachev), and to give it arguments and weapons. They do not seem, for the time being, to meet with a response from the population at large. And if they did, this again would be a double-edged achievement.

Indeed, up to now, the population remains silent. The privatization and "individualism" of the youth are well known and regularly denounced or deplored by the official press. But workers and peasants do not seem to be much interested in Gorbachev, either. No doubt, they have learned through bitter experience that heads of the Party are not to be trusted. No doubt also, the comical ring of appeals to "democracy" coming from a man appointed to quasi-dictatorial powers by a self-co-opted oligarchy and who could only be removed by this same oligarchy reminds them that double-talk is always there, and encourages them to suspect that any seed of "change" in the Gorbachev movement is already rotten before it is planted. But also, what would happen

if people all over the country started demanding real freedom of speech? If workers and employees, in some place, attempted to establish an independent union? If citizens tried to organize politically, even in camouflaged forms — of “correspondence committees”, “societies of friends”, or “Herzen circles”? If groups from all the dominated nationalities — Baltics, Ukrainians, Caucasians, Asian Moslems — started openly formulating demands for more extended rights, decentralization, internal autonomy, home rule — or independence? The main guarantee for Gorbachev that this will not happen is the widespread apathy among the population (though *not* among non-Russian national activists), an apathy certainly enhanced by the knowledge that nothing among what is happening is irreversible, and by the fear of a backlash. But it is precisely this apathy which would have to be overcome, if the “reform” attempts were to have more than marginal effects. As I said before, this is the core of the internal antinomy in the Gorbachev enterprise.

I will start the discussion of the third point with an apparently unrelated remark. Quite likely, *glasnost* is also a weapon in Gorbachev’s hands against his political enemies within the bureaucracy — against the conservatives. But in this case, more than all the others, Gorbachev seems to be under the illusion that he can unleash a “research for the truth”, and control it or stop it where he chooses. Would it ever be possible, *under the present regime* to start discussing the true history of Russia over the last seventy years? Is the real question whether Stalin killed thirty rather than twenty or sixty million people — or is it how and why Stalin could exercise such a power, and what the hell was the “communist” party doing during this period? And does the story stop with Stalin — or have we to fear that some crazy historian may come up with Kronstadt, Makhno, the terror against mensheviks and Socialist-revolutionaries already from 1918 onwards, the 1920-1923 events in the Caucasian region? And what about the Hitler-Stalin pact, what about the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, *etc. etc.*? Why are our divisions in Afghanistan? What if economists and sociologists start talking about income distribution,



social groups and classes, *etc.*? Would a philosopher be allowed to write that *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* is just silly? This last is an ethereal, and really uninteresting question. But here comes comrade Gorbachev and declares in Prague: "no party detains the monopoly of the truth". Really? Then why not many different parties?

Here again, the potentialities of the situation are deeply ambiguous. At present, most of the population probably would not give a kopek to learn if the terror started with Stalin or with Lenin. But no one can neglect the virulence of ideas if they start circulating — and particularly so, in a period of tension and increasing material difficulties. Comrade Ligachev, in his warnings, has a very strong point indeed.

This consideration is particularly relevant in relation to the nationalities within the "USSR", on the one hand, and to the East European satellite countries, on the other. What is the "reform" to do, what could it do in respect to oppressed nationalities within the Empire? How could *glasnost* and freedom of expression be reconciled with the increasing aspiration of many among these towards autonomy? What would the reactions of the military establishment be if the Baltics, the Ukrainians, the Caucasians, the Asian Moslems, started loudly claiming a status different from the present one?

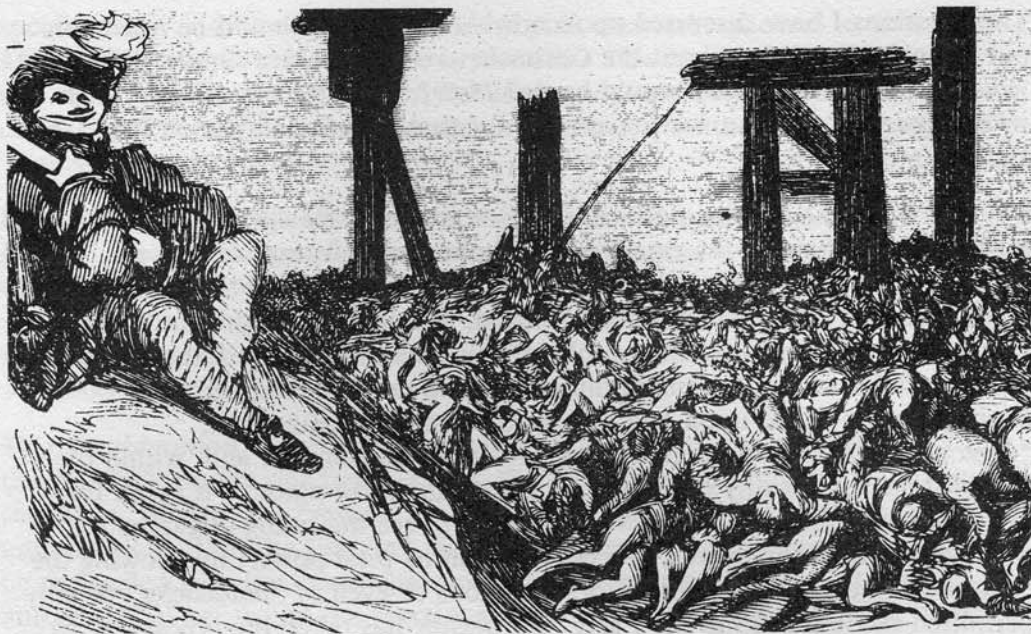
As to Eastern Europe — where the chaotic impact of the Gorbachevchina is already obvious, — the prospects are even more sombre. The "opposition", in these countries, is already using intensively Gorbachev's calls to fight the ruling Communist Parties. This is indeed the only part of the wider Empire, where the Gorbachev rhetoric is amplified by social resonance, and for obvious reasons. An additional factor of tension here is that the proclaimed aim of the Russians to "marketize" the COMECON seems calculated to extract additional economic advantages from these countries. The variety of national circumstances (from Romania at the one end to Hungary and Poland to the other) is such as to preclude any general statement about the situation and the prospects. However, it is in this case where the impact of the Russian "reforms" risks more being destabilizing — therefore also, likely, in anticipation of that, to put strict limits to the "liberalization" process in Russia. Second, the presence of Russian divisions in Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary is certainly something not negotiable for the Russian — military (nor, indeed, for the "national" Communist Parties of the countries considered, Romania being a case apart). Thus, the impact of the Gorbachevchina risks inducing a gradually increasing divergence between Gorbachev and the views of the Russian Grand Headquarters.

The questions I have discussed up to now — and which should be insistently put to anybody talking about the Gorbachev reforms — are simple. *Who would do it? What exactly would he do? How? Supported by whom? With what impact on Russian society, on the dominated nationalities, on East European countries?*

I have left for the end the political question properly speaking, to which I now turn briefly. Whatever the extent of the economic “reforms” and of the cultural thaw, the political dimension is simply ignored in all the rhetoric about “restructuring” or “reconstruction”. Indeed, nothing is changing and nothing is supposed to change: the same people (at this level, we are not interested in the musical chairs among the ruling oligarchy), the same organs, the same institutions are called upon and supposed to behave, henceforth, “democratically”. The absolute power of the Establishment, and, within the Establishment, of a tiny oligarchy not only remains in place: it is taken for granted, and granted for ever. Very difficult to see the ruling oligarchy divesting itself, willingly and peacefully, from its total power, by allowing the creation of independent political organisations or even of “tendencies” (legally permitted factions) within the Party. Gorbachev has taken the precaution to warn that “Marxism-Leninism” remains the limit of *glasnost*. In his Newspeak, “Marxism-Leninism” means the power monopoly of the party and the “centralized” organisation of the Party itself¹⁵.

A success, even partial, of the “reform” would in this case also contain the germs of new contradictions. Its effect would be that some important groups — managerial and techno-scientific personnel, skilled workers, part of the peasantry and the intelligentsia — would rise to visible social existence, would experience a rise in economic power, welfare and social role, whilst deprived of any possibility for political expression. In the absence of democratic institutions and *mores* this would call for an *increased* not a lessened, power of the summit — lest the whole edifice starts disintegrating.

The real question lies at a deeper level. It is the question what Max Weber has called legitimation of political domination and what I call, with a broader meaning, the social imaginary significations holding a society together. The manifest content of this, under Stalin, contained one fifth ideology, one fifth social promotion, and three fifths of terror and repression. Under Brezhnev, the blend changed: one fifth repression, one, fifth nationalism, and a three fifths of apathy and cynicism. This was, of course, a totally novel historical experience: how long a society dominated by cynicism and apathy can go on functioning? (For the Westerners: *de te fabula narratur*, also). The Gorbachev



enterprise intensifies the existing disarray and chaos. It eliminates, potentially, whatever remained of “communist” ideology — even as coded language for the bureaucracy. It tends to destroy the myth of the Communist Party’s history. It risks (if cultural “liberalization” is left to run its course), destroying the myth of Russian history itself: Russian history after 1917. The resulting wounds may well prove as bleeding — though of course of a different nature — as those of the German people caused by the Nazi period. Who are we? We are the nation which, in a ten-century history, managed to get some freedom only for five short months (February to October 1917). And what is offered now is more than incoherent. We believe in market mechanism; then why “socialism”? We believe in “democracy”, then why the dictatorship of small group? If the central idea is going to be: *enrichissez-vous* (get rich), and the proclaimed means to that end the same as those used by the Americans, the Japanese and the Western Europeans, then why call the country “Union of *Socialist Soviet* Republics”? It is next to impossible to envision a coherent complex of significations holding the country together, animating institutions and activities of people, and “legitimizing” its political regime.

One may remark that the situation is not all that different from this point of view in the West. Sure. But Western societies are themselves in a state of historical crisis — and in their case, privatization and apathy are “supported”

by the standards of living and the consumerist derivation¹⁶. And here one can imagine, theoretically, a very narrow pass for the Gorbachev movement: if the "reforms" could bring some rapid and substantive results and/or if the population remains quiet, there would be for the regime a non-zero chance of transforming survival apathy into acquisitive apathy.

The Western mythology has it that each and every country will, sooner or later, reach the marvellous "natural" state of "market" economy plus "liberal" institutions. To its holders, this stage seems so natural indeed that they think it could and should be reached whatever the ways taken, e.g., through "reform" from above. The only element of reality in this myth is that Western history has exerted for centuries now an unprecedented influence all over the Earth — which, however, has not at all implied that the Western "model" was adopted everywhere; on the contrary, the places where it reigns represent a small minority among the Earth's population. As I said before, in today's Russia the "Western" influence is very strong but, as is also the case elsewhere, this is not the West of 1776 and 1789, of 1848 and 1871, of 1963 and 1968. It is the West of gimmicks and gadgets, easy living and privatization, rock stars and TV politicians. With some luck, Gorbachev may lead Russia to a low grade of a TV society under absolutist rule.

It is indeed possible, even likely, that for some time the Gorbachev group will be able to tread a very narrow "Neo-NEP" path, legalizing more or less the "parallel" economy, relaxing the grip of the State over the peasantry, eliminating some of the more blatant absurdities from the functioning of the economy, "liberalizing" information and culture. Present-day China shows that some such accommodation is perfectly compatible with the absolute rule of the dominant apparatus — though, on innumerable counts, the conditions of such a process are more adverse in Russia. Some real differences may result, both as to levels of output and as to the general conditions of life of the people. It will be nice, while it lasts. But it cannot last very long, without destabilising the very conditions which made the process possible.

The idea of the "reform" is to introduce substantial changes into the system, which would make it more functional, ("modernized"), while leaving its essence unaltered. What is the essence of the system? It is *not* "communist ideology", to be sure. It is what holds together the dominant groups, the institutional and social mechanisms whereby these groups keep their power and channel the society's resources (most of the "surplus") towards their "ends". And what are these "ends", beyond the self-conservation and self-preservation of these groups? It is the accumulation of force in view of external expansion, or:

Russia as a dominant world power. Anything which might endanger the pursuit of this aim or its conditions would trigger mechanisms bringing the system back to a new variant of its old ways.

Beyond the short-term horizon, I can see only three possible outcomes. Either the Gorbachev group pushes on with more substantial reforms — and, at some point in time, the apparatus reacts and deposes him and his partisans; or they are gradually forced, by the reaction of the bureaucracy and the stubborn facts (Lenin's phrase), to water down more and more their reforms; or finally, at a certain stage, a break, a rupture, a crisis explodes, the social forces break loose and the population enters the stage. An open intervention of the military becomes then a quasi-certainty; beyond that point, reasonable discussion stops.
(Paris, October 14, 1987)

References

1. "The Social Regime of Russia" (1977), reprinted now in my *Domaines de l'homme — Les Carrefours du labyrinthe II*, Le Seuil, Paris, 1986, pp. 174-200. A (very poor) translation of this text appeared in *Telos*, no. 38 (Winter 1978-79).
2. I have developed this point of view since 1946 in numerous texts, the most important of which are now appearing in English in my *Social and Political Writings*, University of Minnesota Press, *forthcoming*. A compact summary is given in "The Social Regime of Russia", *cit.*
3. See my book *Devant la guerre*, Fayard, Paris 1981. The gist of the argument, which I shall not repeat here, is available in English in "The Destinies of Totalitarianism", *Salmagundi* Nr. 60, Spring-Summer 1983, and in the (very inadequate) translation of the first chapter of *Devant la guerre* "Facing the War", in *Telos* no. 46, Winter 1980-81.
4. *Devant la guerre*, *cit.*, p. 216.
5. *Ibidem* p. 160.
6. E. N. Luttwak, "Le navalisme dans la politique de défense du Président Reagan" in *Strategie navale et dissuasion*, Editions du C.N.R.S., Paris 1985. Michael Howard, of Oxford University: "A great deal of American military capability is irrelevant to the requirements of American policy". (*International Herald Tribune* henceforth quoted as *IHT* Oct. 9, 1987). A "senior French policy maker" is quoted in the same article of *IHT* as saying: "The U.S. and the Soviet Union have in common high performance military industries operating in troubled economies". The Reagan rearmament has been indeed, for a good part, not only a strategic, but an economic bluff (of which SDI forms the climax).
7. Good old Leon Davidovitch was perfectly clear about that. Despite an attempt to dissociate himself from the "liberal" historian Miliukov (who had committed the unpardonable sin of writing that "in Russia it is not the classes that produce the State, it is the State, that produces the classes"), the first 50 pages of 1905 show that cities and bourgeoisie (other than merchants) were in Russia administrative *ad hoc* constructs of Government action, and that up to the mid 19th century the *only* driving force behind whatever industrialization there was, was the military confrontation with the technologically much more advanced Europeans.

8. It would of course also entail that the workers thus hired would be paid a sub-standard wage, or that the firms hiring them would accept a lower profitability, contrary to what is supposed to be the whole spirit of the "reform". One can see in an article by one of the leading "theoreticians" of the Gorbachev's movement, Nicolay Schmelyov, in *Novy Mir* (important excerpts of which can be found in the main American newspapers of July 3, and in the *IHT* of July 4-5, 1987) the solemn rehabilitation and glorification of the "profit motive", similar to the silliest analogous pronouncements by Western neo-liberals, in which not the slightest mention is made of the impact of the actual functioning of the "profit" mechanism on prices, employment, public goods, the environment *etc.*

9. Murmansk Speech of October 1 (*IHT*, Oct. 3, 1987, pp. 1-3). It is also characteristic that in this very same speech Gorbachev alluded to a compensation for the planned rise in (state-controlled) food prices in the form of increased health and education services, i. e. — of state-dependent and bureaucratically managed services. It did not cross the mind of this new enthusiastic adept in "market philosophy" that this "compensation" could take other forms, allowing the consumers to decide on what they would like to spend money. Obviously, a rise in food prices accompanied by an increase in "public services" like health and education would diminish the effectively disposable income of the population, and therefore the demand for manufactured goods.

10. *Op cit*, pp. 156-158.

11. It is certainly no accident that the confiscated issue was dealing with the question of nationalities in the "USSR".

12. *Le Monde*, July 5-6, 1987.

13. Plato, *Crito*, 51 d-e. It is noteworthy that when in 1935 the Russia Government, reneging on his promises, retained in Russia, against his will, Peter Kapitza, during one of his up to then regular trips from Cambridge to Moscow, all the British establishment (physicists, lawyers and politicians), took it for granted that the Russians could retain at will any British subject. See Lawrence Badash, *Kapitza, Rutherford and the Kremlin*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1985. So much for the "resorption" of the individual by the State in the democratic Greek *polis*.

14. *IHT*, Oct. 2, 1987. The meeting took place on September 30, in a packed theatre. The questions to the podium have always been posed through slips of paper, nobody of course daring to stand up and speak out. And the anti-anti-semitic writer Vosnensky lost his temper when questions about anti-semitism were raised. No question seems to have been put about the role of the party, or the legitimacy of Gorbachev himself.

15. The latest Gorbachev speech in Leningrad (Oct. 13, reported in *Le Monde*, Oct. 15, 1987, p. 4) amply corroborated this. Amidst the renewed accusations against the inertia of the bureaucracy everywhere, Gorbachev declared that "unprecedented effort must be deployed in order to mobilize all creative forces. This only our Party, the Marxist-Leninist Party, can do".

16. See my texts "Modern capitalism and revolution" in the *Social and Political Writings*, *op. cit.* and "La crise des Sociétés occidentales" (1982); English (poor) version in *Telos*, no. 53, Fall 1982.