

## October 1917 Revisited

N.G.O. Pereira

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N.G.O. Pereira

Roy, A Medvedev, *The October Revolution*, trans. George Saunders (New York: Columbia University Press 1979).

———, *On Stalin and Stalinism*, trans. Ellen de Kadt (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1979).

T.H. Rigby, *Lenin's Government: Sovnarkom 1917-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1979).

Albert Szymanski, *Is the Red Flag Flying?* (London: Zed Press 1979).

IT IS A SORT OF back-handed compliment to Lenin, the Russian Revolution, and (one suspects especially) the super-power status of the Soviet Union that the literature on Soviet socialism continues to flow from all quarters unabated. If prior to the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1956 and the ensuing break with Mao's China, there had been more or less<sup>1</sup> two camps — the Soviet Union and its ideological allies juxtaposed against the rest of the world led by the United States — in the interim, and certainly since the Chinese allegation in 1967 that the Soviet Union was turning back to capitalism, there has emerged a third camp, which is critical of CPSU policies but from the left. Perhaps the two key and related questions which emerge from the literature in general as well as the books under review at this time are the quality (legitimacy, inevitability, timeliness) of the Russian Revolution of October 1917, and the nature of the Soviet society which grew out of it. This plus the lack of reliable sources has led western "Sovietologists" to an almost exclusive reliance on what Stephen Cohen calls "régime studies," and specifically under that rubric the study of the relationship of Stalinism to Leninism. Here again three camps have developed: those who condemn the Russian Revolution *tout court*; as a rule, they see little difference between Lenin and Stalin, tend to underplay elements of discontinuity, and discern the roots of all subsequent developments to lie in the period 1917-22, that is the years of Lenin's effective rule; they include not only three generations of émigrés, spanning White Guards officers to Solzhenitsyn, but also the bulk of western specialists, from academic Cold Warriors like President Carter's national Security Advisor Brzezinski to the relatively neutral Rigby. Secondly, there are those who while generally sympathetic to the original revolution feel that something went fundamentally wrong along the way; they see both quantitative and qualitative differences between Lenin and Stalin manifested in a change of course at some point during the decade 1924-34, that is between

<sup>1</sup> A third, critically supportive, position emerged with Trotsky's exile in 1929. See *Biulleten' oppositsii* [in Russian] (New York 1973), vols. i-iv; also Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Outcast: Trotsky 1929-1940* (London 1963).

Lenin's death and Kirov's assassination; these include the Princeton group around Robert C. Tucker and his most brilliant student Stephen Cohen, as well as the leading Leninist dissident among Soviet historians, Roy Medvedev. Thirdly, there is the position of those who whole-heartedly endorse the events of October 1917 and feel obliged to defend almost all that followed as both necessary and desirable; like their antagonists in the first group, they see no basic divisions in the policies of the CPSU under Lenin and Stalin, but of course they regard that as a good thing; their number is made up of all official Party historians as well as a much smaller number of independent (though rarely mainstream) scholars like the Columbia-trained Szymanski.

The place to begin, obviously, is the October Revolution itself. Unlike its predecessor of February 1917, its spontaneity and popularity were called into question immediately, and on all sides, including within the Bolshevik ranks themselves. Only very recently has there been any support in western scholarship for the long-standing Soviet claim that October was a genuine proletarian revolution, and not merely a Bolshevik *coup d'état*.<sup>2</sup> But if there still may be doubt whether left to themselves the workers and soldiers of war-torn Petrograd would have acted as effectively and decisively as they did under the direction of Trotsky and the Petrograd Soviet's Military-Revolutionary Committee, there can be little question that the popular mandate of the Provisional Government had expired in bankruptcy and chaos, with the most likely alternative to the Bolsheviks being a right-wing dictatorship under the military, and almost nobody wanted that. Nevertheless, the consensus of western scholarship has been solidly against the legitimacy of October, pointing

to what followed in the wake of that revolution as proof of its undemocratic nature. In this regard, the actions which have come under the greatest fire have been the dispersing of the Constituent Assembly, the formation of the secret police (Cheka), the separate and humiliating Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the banning of opposition parties (including the moderate socialists), forced grain requisitions and strictly centralized control over industry, a burgeoning Party bureaucracy at the expense of the Soviet system of government, and finally a policy of state terror against "counter-revolutionaries." To be sure, there were extenuating circumstances. The new Soviet state was surrounded by enemies, and the survival of the revolution was in jeopardy throughout this first period. Furthermore, many of Lenin's measures were conceived of as temporary and were to be reversed as soon as the emergency passed, much in the way that martial law is used in similar situations in the west. But the tragedy, as some loyal Leninists like Roy Medvedev recognize, cannot be explained away entirely on that basis. Lenin's leadership and especially his relativistic notion of morality as nothing more than a reflection of the Party's needs were also major contributing factors. Even Medvedev is prepared to concede that Lenin's theory "on the overall organization of socialist production and distribution"<sup>3</sup> was faulty and, under the circumstances, inevitably led him to alienate the bulk of the peasantry, polarizing Soviet society with the excesses of War Communism.

All of this could have been avoided, according to Medvedev, had the Bolsheviks "switched in early 1918 to the policy which was later called NEP [The New Economic Policy], a policy they adopted in the much more complicated and difficult situation of early 1921"<sup>4</sup> (that is, in the wake of a bloody foreign intervention and civil war). Why then did they not do so earlier, especially since such a step would

<sup>2</sup> The first important step in this direction was taken by Leopold Haimson in his "The Problem of Social Stability in Urban Russia, 1905-1917," *Slavic Review*, 23 (1964), 619-642 and 24 (1965), 1-22.

<sup>3</sup> Medvedev, *October Revolution*, 89.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

have very likely gained the support of the left wings of both the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks and thereby prevented or at least shortened the civil conflict? At least part of the answer must lie in Bolshevik ideology, which was extremely suspicious of any concessions to the peasantry or its representatives and allies, all of whom it dismissed as petty bourgeois. Another consideration may have been a tactical and strategic reluctance on the part of the Bolshevik leadership to enter into alliance with any other party, especially after the earlier experience with the populist Left Socialist Revolutionaries (SR's).

We will never know what might have been had Lenin survived the civil war period in good health and been able to finish what he had begun. Would he have restored Soviet democracy and cut back the power of the rapidly growing party bureaucracy? Were the relatively liberal policies of the first few months of Soviet rule or the much more extreme measures which followed more indicative of Lenin's ultimate intentions? On two counts the answer seems to favour the more moderate view. Rigby points out that Lenin always regarded his activity as head of the Soviet government, the Council of Peoples' Commissars or Sovnarkom, as his first priority. This would suggest that his role in the shifting of power away from Sovnarkom towards the Party's Central Committee and its Politburo was an unwitting one, or perhaps that he did not take it seriously enough until rather too late. The transformation, however, was striking: Sovnarkom stood at the very centre of power in 1918, meeting almost on a daily basis, but by 1921 it had become little more than a rubber stamp and not a very active one at that.<sup>6</sup>

It is true that Lenin never bothered to

take on any official party posts while he served as chairman of Sovnarkom and of its subsidiary Labour and Defence Council (STO),<sup>6</sup> but then he did not need a position in the party apparatus to control its direction; his personal prestige by itself was sufficient to carry the day in most instances. When in 1921 he did finally recognize the more general danger to good government and attempted to restore the authority of Sovnarkom, the issue was subsumed by more pressing matters such as the Kronstadt Rebellion and the Tenth Party Congress as well as his own failing health. The two chief results of that congress were the consolidation of centralized control within the party and state and, through NEP, an accommodation of the market forces so important to the Russian peasant economy. This critical trade-off, socialism at the top in exchange for a form of free enterprise in the agricultural base of society, needed the overwhelming authority of Lenin to gain the support of the party rank and file, for it was seen by many as a painful retreat from the explicit credo of Bolshevism. The latter, of course, lends credence to the interpretation of conventional western historiography which argues that NEP was merely a tactical retreat, a breathing space before a final assault on the vestiges of capitalism.<sup>7</sup> If that is so, then Stalin's emergence as Lenin's successor, as well as all his subsequent policies, if not behaviour, can be seen as legitimate and, in some sense, inevitable. Which is also why those who are of the opposite view much prefer to explain Stalin's success in terms of such things as his shrewd manipulation of patronage within the Party Secre-

<sup>6</sup> Rigby, 108.

<sup>5</sup> Rigby, 65. For a discussion of the early period, especially with regard to foreign policy, see Richard K. Debo, *Revolution and Survival: The foreign policy of Soviet Russia, 1917-18* (Toronto 1979).

<sup>7</sup> See Adam Ulam, *The Unfinished Revolution* (New York 1960); also for leading examples of the "continuity" thesis, see Waldemar Gurian, *Bolshevism: An Introduction to Soviet Communism* (Notre Dame, Indiana 1952), Naum Jasny, *The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR* (Stanford 1949), and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Permanent Purge: Politics in Soviet Totalitarianism* (Cambridge, Mass. 1956).

ariat and his proximity, on both ideological and cultural grounds, to the general party membership.<sup>8</sup>

In any event, Stalin's victory came in three stages: first, the outflanking of both the Left and the Right Oppositions within the Politburo; then the brutal collectivization and rapid industrialization of the "revolution from above" in 1929-30; and finally, the blood purges of 1936-39. Medvedev's explanation for the whole phenomenon is *ad hominem*: it was all "prompted by Stalin's inordinate vanity and lust for power: he was determined to be in a position of absolute control."<sup>9</sup> Medvedev does mention Mikhail Agursky's theory that the purges were a kind of popular revenge against the Old Bolshevik intelligentsia of "foreigners and Jews." There is unfortunately something to this notion; it harkens back to another great peasant leader, Emilian Pugachev, who also came from the south, knew how to tap the elemental roots of popular revulsion against an élitist westernizing "court" and its esoteric and costly notions of social engineering, and would be king. Surely it is not an accident that of all the top contenders for power at Lenin's death, Stalin stood out least from the common man. His opponents mistook that bland exterior for a lack of intelligence, and they were dead wrong.

Yet the questions remain about his qualifications for leadership, his ideology and programme, and, most of all, his tactics and motivations. In one sense the answer to all these questions is obvious. As one of Lenin's closest collaborators over the whole course of the revolutionary struggle, there can be no serious doubt regarding Stalin's credentials, despite allegations by Solzhenitsyn and others that he

was a tsarist double agent.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, until 1924 at least, in most ways he followed Lenin's footsteps more faithfully, if not creatively, than any of the others. And if it is true, as Medvedev argues, that "Lenin believed that centralism was (only) indispensable for the success of the socialist revolution, but he never maintained that the organizational principles of the Party were appropriate for a socialist society,"<sup>11</sup> Stalin was certainly not alone in failing to understand that distinction; indeed, Rigby's evidence suggests that within the Party as a whole that fine line became blurred shortly after the seizure of power, making Stalin representative in this instance too.

But if centralized organizational principles were one thing, surely Stalin's "revolution from above" and the purges were quite another. Even at his most high-handed moments it is difficult to imagine Lenin undertaking the latter policies or carrying them to such unconscionable extremes. Therefore, the argument made by such leading western specialists as Gurian, Jasny, and Ulam that Stalinism resulted inevitably from the original nature of Bolshevism under Lenin is not convincing on at least two important grounds, despite the clear links which do exist. These are, following Medvedev and (explicitly) Cohen, that "Bolshevism also contained other important, non-Stalinist 'seeds'; and, equally, . . . the 'seeds' of Stalinism are also to be found elsewhere — in Russian historical and cultural tradition, in social events such as the Civil War, in the international setting, etc."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> A. I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, I (New York 1974), 76-81.

<sup>11</sup> Medvedev, *On Stalin*, 188.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen F. Cohen, "Bolshevism and Stalinism," *Stalinism, Essays in Historical Interpretation*, edited by Robert C. Tucker (New York 1977), 13. Medvedev admits to having been influenced by Cohen's work (*On Stalin*, 196), and it is particularly evident in the more critical treatment of Lenin, who nevertheless remains his great hero.

<sup>8</sup> See Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography* (New York 1967), which remains the best general treatment; and for the early years Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary* (New York 1974).

<sup>9</sup> Medvedev, *On Stalin*, 111.

Many of Stalin's policies went well beyond anything that could reasonably serve as precedents from the Lenin period; in fact, some were a direct reversal of earlier Bolshevik principles. Perhaps the best example of this was the revival of Great Russian chauvinism, especially during and after the war, with all the ugly attendant implications for national minorities, but especially for the Jews and the Crimean Tartars. More subtle and difficult to demonstrate, there seems to have been a gradual erosion of the fundamental egalitarianism of early Bolshevism, with Lenin's famous dictum that a government minister should not make more than the charwoman who cleans up his office giving way under Stalin to the official position that the levelling of salaries was a form of petty bourgeois industrial sabotage. The big lie, which, with the exception of Kronstadt, had never been used by Lenin, became Stalin's stock in trade. Finally, "no other Bolshevik leader or faction had ever advocated anything akin to imposed collectivization, the 'liquidation' of the kulaks, breakneck heavy industrialization, and a 'plan' that was, of course, no plan at all."<sup>14</sup> Paradoxically, this may make Stalin's "revolution from above" rather more original than has generally been recognized.

Szymanski's book challenges most of the foregoing analyses and assumptions. It is an informed attempt, in the western scholarly context, to rehabilitate the historical reputation of Stalin and to demonstrate the legitimacy of contemporary Soviet socialism which he more than anyone else helped create. The author began his political life as a member of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), which, as a charter organization of the American New Left in the 1960s and 1970s, was very critical of the Soviet Union for its alleged betrayal of Leninist norms (in large part as interpreted by Chairman Mao). Despite an unfortunate proclivity for trendy sociological jargon as well as the neologisms of

<sup>14</sup> Cohen, 24.

Marxist splinter-groups active at that time on the campuses of the major North American universities (especially Columbia and Berkeley) Szymanski's approach has merit. Its operative premise is that socialism means working-class rule, a nice shading away from the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Soviet Union qualifies because, in addition, market laws do not control the economy, there are no significant class divisions, decision making (both on the job and in the community) is democratic and open, the economic priorities of the government are shared and widely supported by the people, and Soviet foreign policy is not "social imperialist,"<sup>14</sup> although in isolated instances it has been "hegemonistic."<sup>15</sup> In sum, Szymanski argues that "the Soviet Union is a socialist society, albeit a technocratic state socialism in which a new petty bourgeoisie of scientists, economists, technicians and other professionals play a disproportionate role in comparison with the manual working class."<sup>16</sup>

The chief problem with Szymanski's approach, apart from his highly selective use of sources — none are in Russian, and he simply ignores the few which do not conform to his conclusions — is a certain nominalism which seems to be characteristic of all sides of the debate. For instance, Szymanski seems quite satisfied that as long as "wage labour is [not] the primary form by which the producing population is exploited by the owning and controlling class,"<sup>17</sup> and that *by definition* is so in the Soviet Union, it cannot be capitalism. Is it not more important to determine whether exploitation occurs in the Soviet Union in

<sup>14</sup> The term "social imperialist" may be taken to mean imperialism clothed in socialist and fraternal rhetoric. It has become the favourite Chinese term of abuse for the Soviets.

<sup>15</sup> "Hegemonistic" refers to foreign policy which attempts to control the political configuration of allied states, as in the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine.

<sup>16</sup> Szymanski, 10.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

any form and under whatever name? All available evidence suggests that, by comparison with the west, Soviet (especially non-industrial) working conditions are markedly inferior and material rewards for the labour are also significantly less. The argument that the Soviet workers willingly sacrifice present consumption for the building of socialism is belied by both the growing official concern (reflected in the last two Five-Year Plans) for the need to develop light industry, and the unofficial black market in scarce and especially imported goods. Yet it remains difficult to agree with Andrei Sakharov's convergence theory, which sees Soviet socialism and American capitalism coming together.<sup>18</sup> Whatever basis there may have been at the height of the so-called Kosygin Reforms in the mid-1960s to think that some form of market forces was coming back into play, that has clearly not proven to be the case.

Capitalism is not being restored in the Soviet Union and, for better or worse, Szymanski is right when he maintains that "the plan . . . remains the guiding principle of Soviet economics."<sup>19</sup> That this is always in the best interest of the workers, however, ought not to be taken for granted. It needs to be demonstrated. Unfortunately the only way to do so is on the basis of official Soviet statistics. They show that in terms of salaries, housing, and other basic indices, Soviet society is much more egalitarian than any of the even advanced capitalist welfare states. But there are important things which these statistics do not measure, such as access to commodities and services. What matters in the Soviet system often is not so much the money to buy something, but the privilege of having *entrée* to the special stores which stock the deficit, quality items so difficult to get otherwise. Indirect corroboration of this can be seen in the strictly hierarchical prerequisites attached to the different posts

within the *Nomenklatura* structure, the secret Table of Ranks of Soviet society.<sup>20</sup> If Szymanski is aware of this system, he attaches little importance to it. What matters for him is that the basic institutions of the society fall into traditional Marxist categories. Being good nominalists themselves, the Soviets have always understood the importance of calling things by their proper names. Thus, as an important example, strikes are declared to be illegal because in the Soviet Union they can only be misguided and "objectively" against the interest of the working class, their only purpose to confuse and to divide the working class against itself, or to gain advantage for the more organized elements at the expense of the less organized. Szymanski finds that since "the Soviet Union is really a socialist society in which the working class rules and benefits, the Soviet theory makes considerable sense."<sup>21</sup> But that is to assume what needs to be proved.

How is one to know whether the Party does represent the genuine interests and aspirations of the broad masses of the people, or that the vanguard notion itself is valid? On the basis of the billboards proclaiming the undying unity of the Party and the populace? By sampling the letters to the editor published in the controlled Soviet press? Or by using common sense criteria that would be applicable to any other situation? For instance, why is it that nearly two-thirds of a century after the revolution the regime still does not permit the people to mix freely with foreigners, much less travel abroad at will? What kind of socialism is it that must hide its face? If all that Mr. Szymanski says is true, there would be every reason to prove to the working class of the world just how much better things are in the Soviet Union, and vice versa. The recent wave of labour unrest in the Urals and central Asia suggests that things may not be as rosy as official statistics and Olympic triumphs

<sup>18</sup> See A.D. Sakharov, *Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom* (London 1969).

<sup>19</sup> Szymanski, 46.

<sup>20</sup> For a good journalistic account see Hedrick Smith, *The Russians* (New York 1976).

<sup>21</sup> Szymanski, 53.

suggest, after all.

Whatever the true domestic situation (and we outsiders, with our limited experience of only the major Soviet cities, may never get beyond educated questions), Szymanski is on much stronger ground when he defends Soviet foreign policy, especially its aid programme to the Third World, both socialist and non-socialist. Comparisons with the United States are inevitable. The Americans give much more, but their terms are both more onerous and calculated to keep the recipients in a state of dependence. Even with her eastern European (Comecon) allies, Szymanski argues — again on the basis of official Soviet statistics which tend to undervalue east European exports while overvaluing the Soviet — her partners have invariably gained more than the Soviet Union from their relations. Indeed, according to Szymanski, "Eastern Europe has consistently had the highest rates of economic growth and industrialization of any region in the world."<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, and this is not a small point, especially in light of the rapprochement between the United States and China, the Soviet military stands as the only countervailing force to the Americans. Much more often than not, that force has been on the side of the better (if not the good) guys. This has been so in Asia, Africa, and in Latin America. What is surprising is not that there have been several instances of opportunism and even adventurism (most recently in Afghanistan), but that in retrospect the Soviet record looks as good as it does. If she is to be judged by her chief allies in the Third World, she does not come off badly. Ho Chi Minh, Castro, Lumumba, and Allende — as a cross-section — are much more appealing than their opposite numbers: Diem, Batista, Mobutu, and Pinochet. To be sure, the Soviets have had their share of scoundrels, but the balance is clearly in their favour; even Karmal is probably preferable to

Marshal Zia, not to mention the Shah.

In its essentials, Soviet foreign policy has been defensive, its chief concern to protect Soviet territory from attack. Like its imperial Russian predecessor, the Soviet Union regards contiguous states, especially on its western and southern frontiers, as part of its basic security zone. This is the main reason why, despite binding mutual defence treaties, the Soviets did not intervene militarily in the Korean and Vietnamese conflicts, but have done so in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and, most recently, Afghanistan. A secondary motivation has been the concept of "proletarian internationalism," that is, solidarity with the working-class movement throughout the world. Szymanski, however, would have it the other way around. According to his view, the reforms of the Prague Spring, for example, were essentially economic and not really political or civic. Once again he relies on Soviet and related sources which see the Dubcek regime as representing the vested interests of a new managerial, economic élite at the expense of the Czech working class. If true (and it does not seem to be so on the face of it), this would constitute some ideological grounds for the Soviet action, although Szymanski is forced to acknowledge that the intervention was not widely popular in Czechoslovakia. Memories in eastern Europe are not short; 20 years earlier it was a very similar line that Stalin used to try to discredit the Tito leadership in Yugoslavia. The Brezhnev Doctrine, thus, is nothing very new, but it has made more explicit the limits upon the sovereignty of all countries within the Soviet Bloc, and, much like the American Monroe Doctrine, is an attempt to pre-empt the intervention of anyone else. The logic of the argument rests on a bipolar vision of the world, which, in turn, may be traced back to Lenin's other famous dictum that those who are not with us are against us. But there was nothing in Lenin's foreign policy to suggest that he would approve of armed intervention in the affairs of a fraternal socialist state; on the

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.



contrary, he deplored Stalin's high-handed treatment of his native Georgia, which was, after all, a proper part of the Soviet state, unlike Czechoslovakia. Needless to say, any claims on behalf of Moscow as a Communist "Third Rome" would have deeply embarrassed Lenin. The ex-seminarian Stalin, however, never appeared to mind, as reflected in Comintern policy and elsewhere.

This brings us to the most provocative part of Szymanski's book, his defense (at first indirect, but finally quite explicit) of Stalin. Part of the American New Left rejoins the Old as Szymanski returns to the traditional view that there was really no historical alternative to Stalin. That is, in the first place, his leadership was the decisive factor in defeating Hitler's Germany. Secondly, without the purges — "excessive as they were"<sup>23</sup> — there would not have been the degree of unity and popular support for the war effort. (Evidently ignorant of the existence of General Vlasov, Szymanski is confident that there were no Soviet Quislings or Vichy types.) After all is said, however, it is not at all certain that Stalin's terror united the people, except in a nightmarish fear of arbitrary authority, especially in the form of the NKVD (the secret police successor to the Cheka and predecessor of the present KGB). And such unity as there was had old-fashioned Russian patriotism for its source, as Stalin himself recognized by resurrecting such anachronisms from the pre-revolutionary past as religious ikons and tsarist banners.

It is even less clear that Stalin's leadership deserves credit for the "great advances of the Soviet Union in the 1920s to 1950s period."<sup>24</sup> Unless one is to give credence to the findings of the Show Trials, there has never been any evidence that the other leading Old Bolsheviks would have diverged from the path of socialist construction. Therefore, there is

every reason to believe that with their help Soviet achievements in the interim could have been far greater. So how does one explain the bloody purges and the wholesale assault upon key Party personnel as well as innocent bystanders? Was it all a terrible mistake, the result of foreign agents working to sow confusion among the beleaguered guardians of Soviet security, as Szymanski believes? Or was it, as Deutscher suggests, Stalin's way of eliminating any alternatives to his government? My own guess, following Moshe Lewin,<sup>25</sup> is that much of his policy stemmed from panic and improvisation, fueled by an extraordinary personal sense of paranoia.

All we know for certain, according to Szymanski, is that the Soviet Union did survive under Stalin's stewardship, which was by no means a sure thing when he took over from Lenin. Stalin's ultimate justification can only be that his actions were dictated by "the imperative of preserving Bolshevik rule . . . [and] had little or nothing to do with [his] personality."<sup>26</sup> If there really was no alternative to Stalin, it can be argued that any means would be appropriate to extirpate even the slightest threats to his rule, since his direction represented the only historically sound course and all others would have led to disaster. But even if the Soviet Union is today genuinely socialist — by which I mean a society which is structurally more egalitarian than its western counterparts — and that is due in large part to Stalin, it has not been shown that his was the only, much less the best, way to do it.

Thus, all rationalizations for Stalinism will always appear to be incompatible with the (dare I use the word) spirit of socialism. If socialism does not stand for democratic process and human dignity, it loses all meaning. The most hopeful recent development then is that there are signs of

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>25</sup> See Moshe Lewin, *Political Undercurrents in Soviet Economic Debates: From Bukharin to the Modern Reformers* (Princeton 1974).

<sup>26</sup> Szymanski, 209.

change in the Soviet Union. Perhaps most symptomatic of that change are the Medvedevs, who never could have survived in

the pre-Khrushchev period, and are the best proof that what we have today is not merely Stalinism without Stalin.

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