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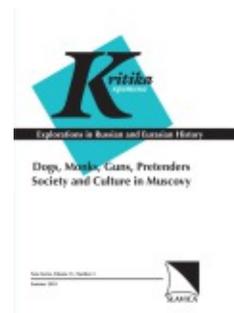
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Modern Times: The Soviet Union and the Interwar Conuncture*

Stephen Kotkin

Eminent European scholars and statesmen had predicted from the early nineteenth century onward the rise of the mass man and the coming of the mass age.

Hannah Arendt

In *Modern Times* (1936), Charlie Chaplin plays a factory worker at the Electro-Steel Company, tightening nuts on a fast-moving conveyor belt. One scene shows a mechanical contraption designed to feed workers lunch while they remain on the assembly line, but it malfunctions, throwing soup in Charlie's face. Other scenes depict a capitalist owner who maintains closed-circuit surveillance over the plant and demands increases in the speed of the line. Unable to keep pace, Charlie falls into the giant gears. He has a nervous breakdown, and loses his job. On the street, he's mistaken for a communist leader and arrested. He accidentally prevents a jailbreak, is pardoned and released, but with his old steel plant idle, Charlie cannot find employment, and begins to long for the shabby security of incarceration. The political message of "Modern Times" would seem unmistakable.

* This essay was first developed in a seminar on Soviet history in 1990 that I was privileged to teach as an adjunct at Columbia University, where some one dozen advanced graduate students and I read only monographs that were not about the Soviet Union. I am extremely grateful to the participants, most of whom have since made their mark with important articles and books. At Princeton, I have often taught graduate seminars in 20th-century European history, once with Philip Nord, and I am very grateful to him, as to our Princeton graduate students. My colleagues Anson Rabinbach, Laura Engelstein, Hal Foster, Shel Garon, and Dan Rodgers also shared ideas and suggestions. Many of my arguments were refined in discussions over the years with Mark Mazower, a former Princeton colleague now at Birkbeck College, London. David Hoffman, co-editor of *Russian Review*, encouraged me to write this essay, which is complementary to his own work. Two anonymous reviewers for *Kritika* offered trenchant comments and valuable suggestions. Funding for research and writing was provided by Princeton University's Committee on Research and its Center of International Studies. Finally, I offer heartfelt thanks to seminar organizers and participants at Ohio State University, Harvard University, the Lotman Institute for Russian and Soviet Culture at Ruhr University in Bochum, Cornell University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Michigan, for discussions that were intellectually rewarding and enjoyable.

Although apparently intended to be pro-labor as well as anti-assembly line, much of “Modern Times” is dominated by the factory’s automated technology. Against the machine-age backdrop, moreover, the film does not celebrate the heroic march of working-class consciousness but rather what might be called petit-bourgeois dreams.¹ The unemployed Charlie meets an orphaned “gamin[e]” (Paulette Godard), and the two begin fantasizing about having their own home. Charlie lucks into a job as the night watchman in a department store, where after hours his raggedy teenage girlfriend luxuriates in the store’s clothing inventory. When, however, Charlie spontaneously assists unemployed steel plant workers whom he recognizes in a robbery of the store, he is fired. The final scene shows the couple walking down a deserted road, but arm in arm. The “little man” is beset, yet undaunted, even triumphant.²

Rumored to have originally been entitled “The Masses,” “Modern Times” spotlighted and juxtaposed two dominant symbols of the modern age: the mechanized factory and the equally capacious department store, selling mass-produced consumer products. At the same time, the very medium in which these images were delivered – cinema – was itself a symbol and force of modern times. When caught in the gears of the factory machines, Chaplin wended through like film through a projector.³ His movie, like cinema, enjoyed fantastic popularity in Stalin’s Soviet Union. From the communist standpoint, Chaplin could be said to have satirized the Depression-era capitalist world and championed the proletariat.⁴ Beyond its purported ideological acceptability, the film’s automated factory setting, including the speed-ups, and its hero’s petty-bourgeois dreams, struck a deep chord in the Soviet Union. Chaplin depicted an interwar conjuncture that the Soviet Union could claim as its own. No less than the United States, though in different ways, the Soviet Union embraced mass production, mass culture, and

¹ Chaplin shares something with Jacques Rancière, *La nuit des prolétaires* (Paris: Fayard, 1981), translated as *The Nights of Labor: the Workers’ Dream in Nineteenth-Century France* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

² Here Chaplin’s film echoed the popular interwar novel by Hans Fallada [Rudolf Ditzen], *Kleiner Mann, was nun?* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1932), translated as *What Now, Little Man?* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1933). Whereas Fallada lamented the impotence of the little man’s private dreams, and thus his susceptibility to authoritarian demagoguery, Chaplin highlighted the force of private dreams and their inescapability for any modernity project.

³ Dan Kamin, *Charlie Chaplin’s One-Man Show* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1984), 114.

⁴ Boris Shumiatskii (1886–1938), then head of Soviet cinema, visited the U.S. in July 1935 as part of a world tour of the film industry and was shown a rough cut of “Modern Times,” which he praised. B. Z. Shumiatskii, “Za sovershenstvo masterstva,” *Iskusstvo kino*, no. 7, 6, 8 (1936); *ibid.*, “Charlie Chaplin’s New Picture,” *New Masses* 24 (September 1935), 29–30. See also Charles J. Maland, *Chaplin and American Culture: The Evolution of a Star Image* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 145–46.

even mass consumption. But the USSR claimed that dictatorship, not parliamentarism, constituted the most effective form of mass politics.

In this essay, I attempt to restore the interwar Soviet experience to its comparative context or conjuncture. My point is a simple one: namely, that the Soviet Union was unavoidably involved in processes not specific to Russia, from the spread of mass production and mass culture to the advent of mass politics, and even of mass consumption, in the decades after 1890.⁵ World War I – during which the Russian revolutions took place – vastly deepened and broadened these trends among all the combatants. In Russia, the autocracy and empire gave way to a far more vigorous dictatorship and to a quasi-federal Union committed to a vague, ambitious, war-conditioned vision of anti-liberal modernity.⁶ Over the next two decades, that vision acquired institutional forms which had some important resemblances to, and many important differences from, both liberal projects, such as the United States, Great Britain, and France, and other forms of anti-liberal modernity, such as Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and imperial Japan.

The interwar period was shaped by the experience of World War I, especially the unavoidability of taking account of the mobilized masses in society and politics; by new technologies (assembly lines, radios, motion pictures, telephones) and attempts at their application in industry, culture, and politics; by a deepening turn toward social welfare as a worldview and mode of governing; and by ongoing formal empire as well as heightened national claims. These interrelated trends together furnished a broad landscape of possible and occasionally even necessary action for competing great powers. Nothing was inevitable, however. Nor did any of the major countries have a free hand to create themselves completely anew, or in a way that entirely suited their leaders and publics, not even the Soviet Union. There is no agency independent of structures, just as there are no structures independent of agency. Each major power had long-established political institutions, cultural traditions, social and economic arrangements, territorial configurations, and patterns of international relations.⁷

Yet each in its own way became caught up in the new “age of the mass” made irreversible by total mobilization, and in exploring the integrating mecha-

⁵ In this regard, see Evelyn B. Davidheiser, “The World Economy and Mobilizational Dictatorship: Russia’s Transition, 1846–1917,” Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1990.

⁶ Appreciation of the importance of the war for Russia and its revolutions continues to grow. See *Rossiiā i pervaiā mirovaia voina (materialy mezhdunarodnogo nauchnogo kollokviuma)* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 1999). Detlev Peukert probably goes too far in asserting that Nazism mostly presided over ongoing social changes, rather than initiating them, but his cautionary note is well taken. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987; German-language original, 1982).

⁷ An overview is provided in J. M. Roberts, *The Twentieth Century: The History of the World, 1901–2000* (New York: Viking, 1999), book 1 and book 2.

nisms provided by varying forms of mass production, mass politics, mass consumption, mass culture, social welfare, and imperial/national projects. In other words, each major country – since none relinquished its great power ambitions – became involved in a competition for articulating a mass-based version of modernity, which gave a new impetus and form to its geopolitical rivalries. In line with the specificities of agency prevalent in each case, various actors – dictators, elected leaders, functionaries, civil servants, property-owners, mass organizations, civic groups, intellectuals, propagandists – praised each other or denounced each other, imitated each other or discontinued (or concealed) some of their practices when others took them up.⁸ Some organizations and individuals, rather than advance the collective trends of modernity, resisted them, however unsuccessfully, and some who supported the general cause interpreted it in ways at odds with the majority or the authorities. Modernity was an arena of contestation within countries as well as among them.

My aim in emphasizing the existence of a specific interwar landscape of possibilities and challenges, made operable not solely by choice but by geopolitical competition, is not an impossible attempt to suggest some equivalence of the Soviet Union with the U.S. and Britain, nor even with Nazi Germany. The mutual challenges sometimes did bring related responses because of the nature of the phenomena and the range of possible actions (a kind of isomorphism), and because countries closely studied each other.⁹ But the liberal versus anti-liberal divide was enormous, and there were significant variations among democratizing parliamentary countries and among mobilizational authoritarian regimes.¹⁰ In arguing that there was an interwar conjuncture, of which the Soviet Union formed a part, I intend to suggest that only by means of comparisons can the Soviet Union's specificity be fully appreciated. I would further suggest that un-

⁸ Two recent nominally comparative works are disappointing for their near absence of comparison, let alone any analysis of mutual influence, borrowing, and isomorphism – and this is for countries that have a long history of being lumped together. Richard Bessel, ed., *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Comparisons and Contrasts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Ian Kershaw and Moshe Lewin, eds., *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Particularly disappointing is the latter book's neglect of the manifestly different political dynamic of the Nazi party and Soviet Communist party.

⁹ On the deep Soviet fascination with America, see the highly popular travel account, Il'ia Ilf and Evgenii Petrov, *Odnoutazhnaia Amerika* (Moscow: Khudozestvennaia literatura, 1937), translated as *Little Golden America* (New York: Farrar and Reinhart, 1937).

¹⁰ Some socialists outside the Soviet Union imagined that they could be non-liberal without being illiberal. For a recent discussion of this trend and its contradictions, at the municipal level, see Eve Blau, *The Architecture of Red Vienna, 1919–1934* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999). After World War II, non-Soviet socialism was essentially absorbed into democratizing liberalism, even as it was often equated with Soviet socialism.

derstanding the Soviet Union within the interwar conjuncture enables a better understanding of its long-term trajectory and fate after World War II.

Having won World War II, the Soviet Union reconstructed its utterly devastated country largely to prewar specifications. The Soviet leadership in the late 1940s and 1950s fell back upon familiar patterns and institutions from the interwar period that the victory had seemed to legitimate, and that to them seemed best suited to rebuild the country quickly in the face of the new, heightened geopolitical pressures. By contrast, all other anti-liberal, mobilizational-style projects, less devastated than the Soviet Union, were defeated in the war. They joined the group of democratizing liberal powers, which themselves underwent profound transformation. The mass consumption revolution led by the interwar United States greatly deepened in the U.S. during World War II itself, and an analogous consumer revolution took place after the war in Western Europe and Japan. Social welfare became comprehensive, as well as an integral, defining aspect of democratizing liberalism. Formal empire was discredited and, after failed attempts to reform it, grudgingly or willingly abandoned. Above all, the interwar period's multilateral competition and borrowings became a two-way rivalry, with very unequal sides. The image and reality of "modern times" changed, presenting insoluble problems for the Soviet Union's decidedly interwar variant of modernity, which after Stalin's death continually struggled to "reform" itself to compete in the Cold War, but collapsed.

Mass Production

Beginning in the late 19th century, a second wave industrial revolution took place, driven by the spread of electricity and advances in steel-making as well as in other industrial processes. Manufacturing became more factory-dominated (finally matching experience to image), and factories became larger and more automated. True, the fully automated wonder plant never became as widespread as its proponents (and detractors) proclaimed. But America, the European powers, and Japan were nonetheless swept up in the pursuit of a science-driven as well as scientifically managed industry and in the introduction of what was called mass production. Mass production (made possible by the invention of the electric motor in the 1880s) enacted three principles: the standardization of core aspects of products, the subdivision of work on assembly lines, and the replacement of manual labor by machinery as well as by re-organizing flow among shops. Learning how to mechanize production in concrete cases, however, was easier said than done. Mass production was not readily achieved in some indus-

tries, or even in some countries.¹¹ It was most successful, and visible, in American auto plants owned by Henry Ford, though here, too, there were innovations beyond assembly lines.¹²

Whatever the variations behind the simplified stereotypes, Ford popularized the notion that manufacturing could be revolutionized by large capital investments and superior organization – throwing up a direct challenge for industry throughout the world market economy, and for regimes that would be great powers. Charlie Chaplin, when first contemplating his satire of modern life, visited a Ford plant in Detroit.¹³ So did much of the vaunted German business and engineering elite, even German labor leaders, in search of the secrets of what came to be known as “Fordism.”¹⁴ Germany had become a world leader in technology industries, yet for Germans America stood out, in the words of Mary Nolan, as “a working vision of modernity.” Rather than Ford’s model of high wages, low prices, and consumer-driven expansion, however, German big businesses championed industrial “rationalization,” with which they increased production and productivity per worker, but not the workers’ ability to buy new products.¹⁵ By the time the Nazis took power, rationalization assumed an even

¹¹ Patrick Fridenson, “The Coming of the Assembly Line to Europe,” in *The Dynamics of Science and Technology*, ed. Wolfgang Krohn et al. (Dordrecht, Holland and Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1978), 159–75.

¹² David Hounshell, *From the American System to Mass Production 1800–1932* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984); and James P. Womack, Daniel T. Jones, and Daniel Roos, *The Machine that Changed the World* (New York: Rawson Associates, 1990). See also the critique by Karel Williams, Colin Haslam, and John Williams, “Ford versus ‘Fordism’: The Beginning of Mass Production?” *Work, Employment and Society* 6: 4 (1992), 517–55.

¹³ Charlie Chaplin, *My Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 377–78; Joyce Milton, *Tramp: The Life of Charlie Chaplin* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), 336.

¹⁴ See the important comparative essay by Charles S. Maier, “Between Taylorism and Technocracy: European Ideologies and the Vision of Industrial Productivity in the 1920s,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 5: 2 (1970), 27–61. Maier analyzes the cultural and political appeal of visions of Americanism, rather than specific practices, up to the onset of the Great Depression.

¹⁵ Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), quotation 9. Even German modernizers were anxious about technology’s possible liberation of women from housework. For “rationalization” in France, including a similarly strong association with Americanization, see Richard Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France: Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), esp. 51–92. On the Japanese aircraft industry’s efforts to use flow production, adapted from the Germans, as a substitute for American-style mass production, see Kazuo Wada, “The Emergence of the ‘Flow Production’ Method in Japan,” in *Fordism Transformed: The Development of Production Methods in the Automobile Industry*, ed. Haruhito Shiomi and Kazuo Wada (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 11–27. See also William Minoru Tsutsui, *Manufacturing Ideology: Scientific Management in Twentieth-Century Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

greater emphasis on productionism and enforcing authority over labor (another of Ford's salient lessons). This was similar to the Soviet approach, where Fordism was seen as a method for controlling the workspace, boosting output to increase state power, and breaking the "conservatism" of established engineers, so that in effect they could be replaced by up-and-coming ones, in what proved to be a firmer hierarchy.¹⁶

Soviet mass production is not well studied. An important exception is the work of David Shearer, who has recuperated the 1928–30 Soviet industrial organization debates, including analyses of American and German production experiences.¹⁷ Shearer presents a story of bureaucratic struggle in which commercially oriented syndicates, cartels formed in the 1920s to sell the products of industry, supposedly offered the possibility of "a new kind of market socialist economy" (240). In a power grab, the syndicates were crushed by the statist Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate (Rabkrin), which employed police power and rallied ambitious young engineers to its campaign for headlong modernization.¹⁸ But Rabkrin's industrial modernizers, Shearer argues, "misunderstood" the American system they envied. They concentrated on primary production technologies, ignoring the all-important "auxiliary systems, such as internal factory transport, and managerial and organizational infrastructure, such as accounting and routing systems" (235). Thus, the most-up-to-date Soviet factories required armies of manual laborers, to service the main mechanized shops.

One need not accept Shearer's views on the character and viability of syndicates to welcome his emphasis on agency and contingency in the drive for a planned economy and factory modernization. The industrializers, he asserts, "truly believed in the transforming power of modernization" (238). Indeed they did, though Shearer cautions that "different groups heard different meanings in the often grandiose but vague rhetoric of industrialization and socialist construction" (162). Unfortunately, he does not specify what the parameters of such interpretations might have been. He mostly ignores contemporary attitudes toward property relations, capitalism, and commodity exchange, as well as understand-

¹⁶ Kendall E. Bailes, *Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin: Origins of the Soviet Technical Intelligentsia, 1917–1941* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

¹⁷ David Shearer, *Industry, State, and Society in Stalin's Russia, 1926–1934* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998). For Soviet study of German practice, see A. Z. Gol'tsman, *Upravlenie promyshlennost'iu v Germanii i v SSSR* (Moscow, 1930).

¹⁸ Thus, like the self-styled revisionists, Shearer pinpoints a social base for Stalinism, not in the working class but "within the largely middle-level professional strata of specialists, administrators and planners who worked in the state's industrial-administrative apparatus." That support, moreover, was forthcoming notwithstanding the class war attacks on specialists. Shearer, *Industry*, 17.

ings of socialism.¹⁹ Shearer reminds us that “faith in the liberating power of technology wedded to the state was ... strong throughout post-WWI Europe” (239), yet he does not explain *how it was possible* that the practical application of such faith could go so far in the Soviet case. It was precisely the question he overlooks, the abolition of private property – given the specific nature of mass production – that *enabled* the Soviet authorities to choose the path of becoming the nonpareil arena for a productionist Fordism.

In light of Henry Ford’s emphasis on facilitating consumption, it is perhaps ironic that extensive use of mechanization in industry required a limited range of product models. To put the matter another way, success in mass production depended not merely on getting the mechanics of the production process right, but on the existence of vast unchangeable demand to justify the huge fixed capital investments that mass production entailed.²⁰ An army was the ultimate mass-production customer. By the same logic, centrally planned economies could eliminate competition (domestic and foreign) and manipulate domestic demand, taking similar advantage of assembly lines. Mass production in the populous, demand manipulated Soviet Union could be, and was, taken to an unprecedented extreme.²¹ And even more than in Germany, Soviet mass production was associated with producer (or capital) goods, an association fraught with long-term consequences.²²

¹⁹ Shearer’s main categories are the same as those of the Russian Social Democrats: modernization and backwardness. Like his mentor Moshe Lewin, Shearer writes of “the pathologies” of Stalinist industrial policies, but unlike Lewin he acknowledges that “these policies embodied a technological and engineering rationality that was essentially modern and utopian.” Shearer omits any discussion of ideology, though he writes often of people’s “visions.” He argues that the Soviet Union was not socialist because a hypertrophied state precludes social justice, yet he laments that for his subjects, state aggrandizement “was a sign not of backwardness but of modernity.” Shearer, *Industry*, 239.

²⁰ Nils Kinch, “The Road from Dreams of Mass Production to Flexible Specialization: American Influences on the Development of the Swedish Automobile Industry, 1920–1939,” in Shiomi and Wada, *Fordism Transformed*, 107–36.

²¹ Mark Harrison writes that “the Soviets, having moved toward an American mass production model in the interwar period,” during World War II “intensified it uncritically.” Mark Harrison, “The Economics of World War II: An Overview” in *The Economics of World War II: Six Great Powers in International Comparison*, ed. Mark Harrison (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 39. Harrison does not emphasize that the American system was based upon mass consumption.

²² Later it became more apparent that mass production without a full mass market – what several Hungarian commentators called the Soviet “dictatorship over needs” – could not be sustained outside the interwar period of total mobilization in peacetime, especially given the post-World War II competition from booming economies that gave themselves over fully to the mass market. But that is jumping ahead. Ferenc Fehér, Agnes Heller, György Márkus, *Dictatorship over Needs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

Interwar Britain, site of the first industrial revolution, provides an illuminating contrast to the Soviet case. By the 1920s and 1930s, British dominance in export-oriented coal mining, iron and steel, shipbuilding, textiles, and mechanical engineering was lost to American and German competition. The British government became preoccupied with amalgamating and restructuring its capital goods industries, which relied on a 19th-century physical plant well beyond World War I. At the same time, though, Britain experienced a boom in domestically oriented consumer goods industries concentrated in a small number of automated plants, many built at green-field sites. The new plants mass produced vacuum cleaners, electronic irons, radios, motor cars, processed foods, and synthetic materials like rayon.²³ Interwar Britain's structural anguish in capital goods put it ahead of the competitive industrial curve. The changes associated with Fordism were connected to broad shifts in the international economy; the same would be true of Fordism's post-World War II demise, which would hit the Soviet Union very late and very hard. By the 1970s, if not before, it became clear that autarky was ultimately an illusion.

Mass Culture

We are, thankfully, beyond the avant-garde martyrology whereby uncomprehending apparatchiks and policemen are said to have killed off an inculpable avant-garde and its "pure" modernist culture, opening the way for a supposedly unrelated flotsam of petty bourgeois and nationalist "kitsch." Scholars now recognize in useful, if overstated correctives, the aggrandizement of the avant-garde, as well as its failures.²⁴ We have also acknowledged, as one scholar of the theater

²³ Miriam Glucksmann, *Women Assemble: Women Workers and the New Industries in Interwar Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 67–92. Wayne Lewchuk has argued for the existence of a specifically British system of mass production, which in comparison to Ford's American system had greater limits to management's control over setting effort norms and organizing the workplace. Lewchuk, *American Technology and the British Vehicle Industry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987). On the Soviet regime's problems with exercising effective control over the labor process, see Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Stalinist Industrialization: The Formation of Modern Soviet Production Relations, 1928–1941* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1986). In Italy, Fiat looked to Fordism as a device for increasing control over workers (and countering the power of the labor movement) as well as a way to achieve production volumes (and market strategies). Stefano Musso, "Il cottimo come razionalizzazione. Mutamenti organizzativi, conflittualità e regolamentazione contrattuale del rapporto tra salario e rendimento nell'industria meccanica (1910–1940)," in *Torino fra liberalismo e fascismo*, ed. Umberto Levra and Nicola Tranfaglia (Milan: F. Angeli, 1987), 119–235.

²⁴ Boris Grois, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992; German-language original, 1988); Katerina Clark, *Petersburg. Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995). See also Paul

has written, that the avant-garde “existed for the most part outside a commercial enterprise system,” so that its productions were dependent on the state budget and hence the political authorities.²⁵ And we have acknowledged that the avant-garde insistence on having an elite guide matters of culture was in fact upheld by the political authorities, who substituted themselves in that guiding role for some of the artists.²⁶ Yet so much of the discussion of culture in the Stalin period is still confined to state-intelligentsia relations, and inclined to a separation of “high” modernism from “low” popular culture.

Popular culture, of course, had a long history, but in the 19th century, one of its main modes of transmission, large-circulation newspapers, had not gone much beyond cities. World War I gave a tremendous boost to mass entertainment, and to a new medium, cinema.²⁷ During the 1920s and 1930s, something new – mass culture – began to take shape in many countries simultaneously. Newspapers expanded not just in circulation but also in geographic distribution. More than that, the cinema, along with another new technology, the radio, created truly mass audiences for the first time in history. What was called “broadcasting” involved the transmission of programs far and wide to millions of listeners.²⁸ By the second half of the 1930s, Germany had more than 9 million radio receivers. Czechoslovakia and Sweden had more than 1 million radio receivers;

Wood, “The Politics of the Avant-Garde,” in *The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915–1932* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1992), 1–24. In places where authoritarian regimes did not exist to enforce an artistic orthodoxy, we see that the modernist avant-garde underwent stylistic developments not unfamiliar to the Soviet case. In France, for example, renowned avant-garde painters, reacting to World War I, voluntarily turned to neo-classicism, without relinquishing their claims to being modern. Later, in modernist Nordic architecture, the development of regional and ethnic motifs was not unusual, let alone reducible to political impulses. In other words, modernism is antithetical neither to neo-classicism, nor to nationalism and folk trends (and colonialism). In fact, the idea of an antithesis between modernism and traditionalism is a trope of modernism that modernism in practice contradicts. Kenneth E. Silver, *Esprit de Corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War, 1914–1925* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Nightlands: Nordic Building* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).

²⁵ Nancy van Norman Baer, “Design and Movement in the Theater of the Russian Avant-Garde,” *Theater in Revolution: Russian Avant-Garde Stage Design, 1913–1935* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 34–59, quotation 57.

²⁶ Jeffrey Brooks, “Two Tandem Revolutions in Russian Culture: Modernist and Pop,” *Common Knowledge* 7: 3 (1998), 139–55.

²⁷ Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites, eds., *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment, and Propaganda, 1914–1918* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1999).

²⁸ Susan Douglas, *Inventing American Broadcasting, 1899–1922* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

Italy had just under 1 million.²⁹ In 1926, Great Britain had 3,000 cinemas, and in 1938 5,000; in 1934, there were 964 million cinema admissions, or 22 for every person in Britain. Radios jumped from 3 million in 1930 to 9 million by the end of the decade – three of four British households – while the number of listeners increased from an estimated 12 million in the 1920s to 34 million in 1939. Similar data trace a sharp rise in the readership of newspapers, with greatly extended regional and social penetration.

For many contemporaries, such as the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, born in the 1880s, the “arrival of the masses” threatened to ruin civilization by instituting a dictatorship of the commonplace.³⁰ In fact, during the interwar period the grip of the narrow elite that had long dominated British culture was shattered by the advent of mass newspapers with photographs and eye-catching typography, motion pictures, the gramophone, the radio, and other forms of mass communication. New media, as Dan LeMahieu shows in a breakthrough book, augmented the audience for and the process of cultural production. Once the marketplace rather than the opinions of intellectuals became the principal determinant of success, some of the threatened cultural arbiters retreated into isolation. Others fought back, polemicizing against the new means of communication, or scrambled to adapt themselves by using the new media to promote “uplift.” But even figures opposed to commercial culture could not escape its influence. Artists and intellectuals who refused to bow to mass tastes could have their efforts produced only with state subsidies, such as was the case with the BBC, though here, too, the impact of mass culture was unmistakable. In short, “cultivated” elites continued to assert their disdain for the public, while becoming dependent upon that mass public.³¹

In Russia, the number of cinema “installations” expanded from 1,510 in 1914 to 7,331 in 1928 and to nearly 30,000 by 1940, according to official statistics; most dramatic was the increase in the countryside, from 142 in 1914 to 17,571 in 1940. Total cinema admissions grew from 106 million in 1914 to

²⁹ Raymond Williams, *Communications*, 2nd ed. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967).

³⁰ José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1932). See also Patrick Brantlinger, *Bread and Circuses: Theories of Mass Culture as Social Decay* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

³¹ Daniel Lloyd LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultural Mind in Britain Between the Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988). For mass media in Japan, and provocative comparisons presented within the framework of a general increase in state power, see Gregory J. Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). Kasza argues that despite Japan’s extension of censorship in the early 20th century, its controls over the media as late as 1937 were not qualitatively different from those in Britain or France. He also shows how closely the Japanese studied Nazi media policies.

nearly 900 million by 1940.³² Radio receivers numbered 7 million in 1940, including 1.6 million in rural areas. Daily newspaper circulation rose from 3.3 million in 1913 to 9.4 million in 1927 and 38.4 million by 1940 (or 245 million, if one includes journals).³³ Even allowing for gross exaggeration, these data indicate a profound development. Of course, radio in Britain and radio in the Soviet Union were not the same. In Britain one could tune in to several stations, including some that originated from abroad. That was true in Nazi Germany, where people could listen to broadcasts from BBC London or from Prague (before the 1939 annexation), though the Nazi authorities tried jamming.

Soviet “radio” often meant not a wave receiver but a cable, or wire, tuned to the two official stations.³⁴ Likewise, whereas British cinema often celebrated British institutions, it no less often mocked them. Soviet cinema by and large mocked only what the censors sanctioned to be mocked, such as bureaucrats in scapegoated agencies like housing supply.³⁵ The same can be said for Soviet mass newspapers and journals. Telephones in the Soviet Union were far fewer than in other large countries, and concentrated within the government, which viewed the telephone as a means of state administration, rather than of private communication.³⁶ And yet, the impact of the new media technologies in the Soviet

³² *Kul'turnoe stroitel'stvo SSSR* (Moscow, 1956), 300–1, reproduced in *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents, 1896–1939*, ed. Ian Christie and Richard Taylor (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 423; *Narodnoe obrazovanie, nauka, i kul'tura v SSSR* (Moscow: Statistika, 1971), 20.

³³ *Kul'turnoe stroitel'stvo SSSR*, 322; *Narodnoe obrazovanie, nauka i kul'tura v SSSR*, 20. In the early 1920s, around 90 percent of journals published in Soviet Russia were subscribed to in Moscow and Petrograd. Of the several hundred thousand copies of *Pravda* and other central newspapers printed daily, only a few thousand went beyond the two capitals and the three or four biggest regional centers. This, too, would change.

³⁴ The 1932 Second Five-Year Plan envisioned production of 14 million wave radio receivers, but in 1937 only 3.5 million were in operation. Soviet industry could not manufacture sufficient quantities of vacuum tubes. Cable or wire remained the dominant form of Soviet radio for a long time, still accounting for two out of three radios into the 1950s. N. D. Psurtsev, ed., *Razvitie svyazi v SSSR* (Moscow: Svyaz', 1967), 221–27.

³⁵ Foreign films were shown in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, but their number decreased for both budgetary (hard currency) and ideological reasons. Richard Taylor, “Ideology as Mass Entertainment: Boris Shumyatsky and Soviet Cinema in the 1930s,” in *Inside the Film Factory: New Approaches to Russian and Soviet Cinema*, ed. Richard Taylor and Ian Christie (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 193–216. The useful work by Peter Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society, 1917–1967* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 133–34, does not mention “Modern Times” among the foreign films shown in 1936.

³⁶ Having been in 1917 at a low relative density to population, the number of telephones in the Soviet Union declined in the first decade after the revolution, but rose in the 1930s. Different ministries developed their own networks, so bureaucrats came to have numerous phones. Steven L. Solnick, “Revolution, Reform and the Soviet Telephone System, 1917–1927,” *Soviet Studies* 43: 1

Union should not be underestimated. Well before the concept of “niche markets” was articulated, the Soviet Union published newspapers geared to industrial workers, women, farmers, national minorities, youth, party members, state functionaries, engineers, and others.³⁷ One need only compare the spread of the news of the October seizure of power in 1917, or the sorry state of communications during the famine in 1923, to the Union-wide daily tracking of Aleksei Stakhanov’s feats in the 1930s, to see the communications revolution that had occurred here, too.³⁸

LeMahieu argues that commercialized mass media, for self-serving reasons (profit), made Britain a more egalitarian culture. He concludes that commercial mass culture is the only option for a pluralistic society.³⁹ What about a non-pluralistic society, with state censorship and agitprop? The explosive growth of new media gave the dictatorship qualitatively powerful means not just for suppressing certain kinds of information in the Soviet Union but also for the tireless promotion of other kinds of information, even though, with the persistence of rumors and other forms of popular communication, some kinds of information

(1991), 157–76. Frederick Starr has asserted that the Soviet authorities encouraged only vertical systems of communication, not horizontal ones, like the telephone. S. Frederick Starr, “New Communications Technologies and Civil Society,” in *Science and the Soviet Social Order*, ed. Loren Graham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 19–50. The United States led the interwar world in private telephone subscribers. For comparisons, see Ithiel de Sola Pool, ed., *The Social Impact of the Telephone* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977).

³⁷ In the 1920s, Peter Kenez writes, most Soviet newspapers were visually unimpressive, dull in format, and repetitious in content. The number of newspapers and their circulation declined in the 1920s. Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917–1929* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 224–38. By the 1930s the look of Soviet newspapers was much changed. Mathew E. Lenoe, “Stalinist Mass Journalism and the Transformation of Soviet Newspapers, 1926–1932,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1997. See also Jennifer Gibbon, “The Soviet Press and Grassroots Organization: The Worker Correspondent Movement, NEP to the First Five-Year Plan,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1993; and Julie Kay Mueller, “A New Kind of Newspaper: The Origins and Development of a Soviet Institution, 1921–1928,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1992.

³⁸ Roger Pethybridge, *The Spread of the Russian Revolution: Essays on 1917* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1972), 179–200; *ibid.*, *One Step Backwards, Two Steps Forward: Soviet Society and Politics under the New Economic Policy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 121–44; Lewis Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935–1941* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 181–82.

³⁹ Compare this approach with the treatment of the “culture industry” by the Frankfurt School, which essentially equated American mass culture (“stylized barbarism”) with Nazi (and Soviet) totalitarianism. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), esp. 120–67. The German original, published in 1947, was written in 1944 in California.

could not be easily suppressed or promoted.⁴⁰ LeMahieu further notes for Britain that by the end of the 1930s, the new mass media made possible “a common culture” that, notwithstanding the inclusion of foreign content, “provided a shared frame of reference among widely divergent groups” in Britain.⁴¹ This raises the question of a possible shared culture, also with some foreign content, across much of the Soviet Union – what might be called, picking up from LeMahieu, “a culture for authoritarianism.”

Over and above the fact that the Soviet authorities discovered that they could not (and did not want to) fully suppress foreign mass culture, they also fostered the development of a Soviet mass culture. Richard Stites has for years been emphasizing the diverting and entertaining qualities of interwar Soviet mass culture.⁴² He and many others have analyzed the Soviet cinema.⁴³ We know less about the context of film viewing, of reactions to the political newsreels invariably shown prior to all films, of the experience of viewing light entertainment in cinemas built in the form of tractors or with names like “Shock Worker.” Also unclear are the content and impact of radio programming, where one suspects a similar amalgam of hard news framed by party directives, agitprop (effective and otherwise), edifying popularizations of specialized knowledge, and unapologetic amusements.⁴⁴ Soviet newspapers, writes James von Geldern in the introduction to a mass culture anthology co-edited with Stites, “printed both obsequious flattery and pointed satire; [Soviet film] studios produced Hollywood-style musicals and Civil War pictures; the airwaves carried industrial marches and melancholy

⁴⁰ Soviet censorship is well documented, but the analysis of it remains largely unconnected to the commensurate dissemination of vast information. See *Istoriia sovetskoi politicheskoi tsenzury: dokumenty i kommentarii* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1997); and A. B. Blium, *Sovetskaia tsenzura v epokhu total'nogo terrora 1929–1953* (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2000).

⁴¹ LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, 4.

⁴² Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society Since 1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). See also James von Geldern and Richard Stites, eds., *Mass Culture in Soviet Russia: Tales, Poems, Songs, Movies, Plays, and Folklore, 1917–1953* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

⁴³ For example, Jay Leyda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Denise Youngblood, *Movies for the Masses: Popular Cinema and Soviet Society in the 1920s* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and many others, too numerous to list.

⁴⁴ *Istoriia Sovetskoi radiozhurnalistiki: Dokumenty. Teksty. Vospominaniia. 1917–1945 gg.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1991); T. M. Goriaeva, *Radio Rossii: Politicheskii kontrol' Sovetskogo radioveshchaniia v 1920–1930-x godakh. Dokumentirovannia istoriia* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2000). Goriaeva provides an extremely valuable discussion of destroyed and surviving source materials, including recordings, but says little about the content of radio.

crooners.” Von Geldern concludes that alongside falsification, an effort “to satisfy public tastes was apparent,” and often successful.⁴⁵

Much the same has been recognized about cultural production and consumption in Nazi Germany. Nazi authorities, even as they sought to enforce state regulation of radio and cinema, promoted mass culture, which was consumed in varied ways by the mass audience. Like the Soviets, the Nazi authorities encouraged a state-owned film industry in imitation of Hollywood as well as Hollywood-style stars and film techniques; indeed, only the war put an end to Nazi approval for showing Hollywood films themselves (as was the case also in Japan).⁴⁶ Almost half of the approximately 1,100 original Nazi-era films were comedies and musicals; hundreds more were melodramas, detective films, and adventure epics, sometimes framed by approved values, racial stereotypes, and the regime’s political goals, but almost always light entertainment.⁴⁷ Nazi-era radio featured popular music and comedy as well as anti-Semitic speeches. “Disney, Dietrich and Benny Goodman,” writes Anson Rabinbach, “shared radio time with Goebbels, Göring and the Führer.” Entertainment played a complex role in politics, while also informing the boundaries of the political and the supposedly non-political.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ James von Geldern, “Introduction,” in *Mass Culture in Soviet Russia*, xvii–xviii, xxvii. Jeffrey Brooks (with a nod to Regine Robin) has noted that socialist realism acquired popular and syncretic qualities. He acknowledges the mutual influences between official and popular culture, as well as the persistence of modernist idioms, yet nonetheless draws an implausibly sharp dichotomy between official and popular culture, and questionably attributes unique “libertarian” power to modernism. Brooks, “Two Tandem Revolutions”; Robin, “Stalinism and Popular Culture,” in *The Culture of the Stalin Period*, ed. Hans Günther (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 15–40. See also Vera Dunham, *In Stalin’s Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990); and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), which portrays culture in the Stalin period as in part an expression of the lowbrow tastes of communist party officials.

⁴⁶ Thomas R. H. Havens, *Valley of Darkness: The Japanese People and World War Two* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1978), 24. Soviet films were banned in Japan much earlier.

⁴⁷ Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996). Innumerable Nazi-era films, like Stalin-era films in Russia, enjoy wide dissemination today in Germany on television and at film festivals.

⁴⁸ Anson Rabinbach, “The Reader, the Popular Novel and the Imperative to Participate: Reflections on Public and Private Experience in the Third Reich,” in *History and Memory* 3: 2 (1991), 5–44; quotation 7. Rabinbach properly rejects the supposed dichotomy between official/public culture and private escape, instead analyzing that dichotomy as an artifact of Nazi ideology. See Hans Dieter Schäfer, *Das gespaltene Bewusstsein: Deutsche Kultur und Lebenswirklichkeit 1933–1945* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1981). For an analysis of the reader under the Stalin dictatorship, see Evgenii Dobrenko, *Formovka sovetskogo chitatelia: sotsial’nye i esteticheskie predposylki retseptsii sovetskoi literatury* (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 1997), translated as *The Making of the*

Soviet mass culture – a mixture of heavy-handed direction and indulging popular tastes – need not be set against the culture of avant-garde modernism. On the contrary, Margarita Tupitsyn shows how prominent members of the Soviet photographic “avant-garde” eagerly embraced mass media, mixing so-called high with low.⁴⁹ Photographers (and filmmakers) in the Soviet Union, at a time when the manipulation of images began to acquire far greater sophistication and application across many countries, explored montage and other techniques in a mass culture with political purpose.⁵⁰ Here we can note another of LeMahieu’s insights, namely that “as new technologies helped create audiences of enormous size, the most effective strategy of communication [became] personal, intimate, and subjective.” Thus, he writes, “the mass media often created strong bonds between a communicator and millions of individual consumers” (43). LeMahieu’s chief example is Chaplin, who through mastery of the new media became famous well beyond his native Britain, or his adopted home, the United States.

Chaplin’s image was everywhere, and could be used to sell anything: there were Chaplin books, toys, dolls, ties, shirts, cocktails, and of course Chaplin imitators. What LeMahieu does not point out is that the new media and image dissemination techniques could popularize political ideas and transform political leaders into “stars.” From Atatürk, Gandhi, and Roosevelt, to Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin, the age of the masses was also the age of the leader. Stalin’s and Lenin’s images, names, and words – along with other anointed persons and themes – were everywhere, including usable or displayed household objects, industrial goods, films, plays, recordings, and restaurant menus. This led many contemporaries to conclude that in the exploitation of the new media and mass culture, the balance between dictatorship and democracy tilted toward the for-

State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of the Reception of Soviet Literature (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

⁴⁹ Margarita Tupitsyn, *The Soviet Photograph, 1924–1937* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996). See also John Bowl, “A Brazen Can-Can in the Temple of Art: The Russian Avant-Garde and Popular Culture,” in *Modern Art and Popular Culture: Readings in High and Low*, ed. Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1990), 135–58. “If kitsch is the official tendency of culture in [Nazi] Germany, [fascist] Italy, and [Soviet] Russia,” wrote Clement Greenberg in 1939, “it is not because their respective governments are controlled by philistines, but because kitsch is the culture of the masses in these countries, as it is everywhere else.” Greenberg, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” reprinted in his *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 3–21, quotation 19.

⁵⁰ Tupitsyn, suggesting that socialist realism triumphed because it was popular with the masses, equates mass tastes in culture with informing and police work during the purges, and reductively explains the preference for mythography as a way to neutralize the pain of reality (174). On photography, see also Rosalinde Sartorti, *Pressefotografie und Industrialisierung in der Sowjetunion: Die Pravda 1925–1933* (Berlin: O. Harrassowitz, 1981).

mer. Yet though the Soviet merger of mass culture with mass politics seemed successful during the interwar years, that appeared less so in the decades after World War II, especially as building socialism (or communism) lost its luster for postwar generations and, in a related development, more and more of the content of mass culture became foreign (American). For a dictatorship, mass culture was unavoidable, and very useful, but also, in a new post-World War II geopolitical context, highly corrosive.

Mass Politics

Mass production and mass culture grew out of new technologies – but not automatically, and not the same way in all places. What was common across the great powers was the sense that the world had entered a new mass age, that both the object and the subject of the new age was the masses. This was especially notable in politics. The advent of a new mass politics – outdoor rallies, an expanded franchise, re-invention of the political party as vote-generating machine – was widely remarked beginning in the 1890s and early 1900s, usually as a threat.⁵¹ But here, too, the Great War's mobilization constituted a qualitative transformation.⁵² Peasants from widely dispersed villages were collected at the fronts and in the garrisons, dwarfing the oft-noted concentration effect brought about by large factories. Almost the whole young adult male population of Europe fought in the war, nearly 70 million men. In peasant Russia, the figure was 15 million.⁵³ The nature and duration of the war, as well as the character of warring political systems and societies, led to the politicization of the collectively assembled masses. The terms of politics and political participation varied greatly among the belligerents, but across them all it is hard to imagine a greater device for “organizing the masses” than World War I armies.

George Mosse has argued that the massification of politics threatened anarchy, but that the masses were shaped into a manageable political body by nationalist symbols and liturgy. During the interwar period, symbolic politics did take

⁵¹ Moisei Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties* (London and New York: Macmillan Co., 1902).

⁵² Marcus L. Kreuzer, “Party Development and Democratization: Institutions, Party Politics and Political Innovation in France and Germany,” Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1995. On the war's effects, see also James L. Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California, 1998).

⁵³ *Rossiiia v mirovoi voine 1914–1918 godov (v tsifrakh)* (Moscow: Tip. M. K. Kh. imeni F. Ia. Lavrova, 1925). From 1914 to 1918, 13.1 million men served in the German army, including 10.6 million in the field, almost one-fifth of the 1914 population. In Britain, 5.25 million men, almost half the prewar population of men aged 15–49, fought. In France, around 8 million were mobilized, close to 80 percent of the prewar male population aged 15–49.

on heightened significance because of the heightened challenges of mass society and the new possibilities of the new mass media. But making myths operative through monuments and festivals was not simple. Mosse himself points to the failed workers' mass spectacles in Weimar Germany.⁵⁴ Jeffrey Schnapp, similarly, observes that Italian fascist mass spectacles, such as 18BL – the featured event at Italy's 1934 youth Olympics of art and culture – also failed to capture people's imagination. He concludes that the "vacuum" was filled with a revival of imperial Roman symbols and a cult of the dictator.⁵⁵ Schnapp is perhaps too skeptical of the fascist symbolic aura, from the black shirted uniforms, dagger salutes, and aviation feats to colonial exploits (not to mention the international resonance of "corporatism").⁵⁶ But much of fascist symbolic politics did revolve around the duce, who spoke to the people from balconies and in regular radio addresses, a practice others imitated.⁵⁷ Regarding Hitler, Ian Kershaw has argued that the cult "compensated" for the unpopularity of the Nazi party,⁵⁸ though here, too, the situation was surely less than "either-or."

Achieving effective symbolic politics in the mass age was critical for each of the powers. In the United States, machines and machine age imagery were assiduously promoted by advertising and private firms, and as a result technology

⁵⁴ George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (New York: New American Library, 1977), 175.

⁵⁵ Performed at night before 20,000 spectators in Florence, 18BL was an ode to the machine that spotlighted a Fiat truck. In act 1, the war is lost. In act 2, the fascists appear, wearing black shirts and singing hymns; they knock around some leftists. In act 3, land is reclaimed for productive agriculture and new towns are built. Jeffrey T. Schnapp, *Staging Fascism: 18BL and the Theater of Masses for Masses* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

⁵⁶ Claudio Segré, *Italo Balbo: a Fascist Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Emilio Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

⁵⁷ Franco Monteleone, *La radio italiana nel periodo fascista* (Venice: Marsilio, 1976). Images of Mussolini, according to Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, were more ubiquitous than those of Lenin or Atatürk – an unsubstantiated assertion that calls attention to the need for comparative analysis. Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). Images of Mussolini over the two decades of his rule accounted for between 2 and 7 percent of government and party produced postcard series, but between 12 and 24 percent of private sector postcards issued in response to popular (market) demand. Enrico Sturani, *Otto milioni di cartoline per il Duce* (Turin: Centro scientifico editore, 1995). Stalin is thought to have asked the Italian ambassador for film of the 1932 tenth anniversary celebration of the March on Rome.

⁵⁸ Ian Kershaw, *The "Hitler Myth": Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Cf. Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983); and James L. Heizer, "The Cult of Stalin, 1929–1939," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1977.

came to legitimate American political power and institutions.⁵⁹ In a brief overview of the Nazi Bureau of the Beauty of Labor, Anson Rabinbach analyzes the attempts to legitimize political rule through technological symbolization under the Nazis. Rabinbach goes beyond the well-known examples of mass festivals or public architecture, singling out Nazism's cult of industrial productivity and technical campaigns around the factory beginning in 1936. "Nazi modernism," according to Rabinbach, came to combine functionalism for factories and *völkisch* monumentalism in public buildings. He invokes "Nazi *Sachlichkeit*" to describe the embrace of elements of modernist style, as the Nazis "caught up" with the Italians and the Soviets in the worship of the machine.⁶⁰ The attention paid to the production space, and the complexity of Nazism's relationship to modernism, he concludes, resulted from an internal evolution as well as the impact of the Soviet example of mobilizing technological legitimation via aviation feats, hydroelectric dams, and the production of machines by machines.⁶¹ The Nazis, in other words, notwithstanding the distinctiveness of their ideology and many of their practices, were part of an international conjuncture, and compared themselves to others.

The new media and communications improved the capacity (and perhaps the desire) of experts and political leaders to observe their counterparts in other countries. The Soviet-watching Nazis suppressed existing trade unions, and sought to organize their own new ones; the Japanese, watching the Nazis, would do the same.⁶² Though these Nazi unions, unlike Soviet trade unions or Japanese

⁵⁹ Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (New York: Praeger, 1960); John M. Jordan, *Machine-Age Ideology: Social Engineering and American Liberalism, 1911–1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

⁶⁰ Anson G. Rabinbach, "The Aesthetics of Production in the Third Reich," *Journal of Contemporary History* 11 (1976), 43–74; quotation 43. Rabinbach cautions that as late as 1939, one-third of German industrial workers worked in enterprises of fewer than ten persons. On the *völkisch* dimension of Nazi iconography, Robert Taylor argues that there was no single, unified Nazi style in architecture, but a mixture of recurrent motifs, a worship of monumentalism and neoclassicism combined with imagined medievalism and ruralism. Observing that many structures built during the Nazi era remained in use after 1945, Taylor wonders how "Nazi" the structures built during the Nazi era were, beyond the Chancellery and a few other buildings. Robert Taylor, *The Word in Stone: The Role of Architecture in the National Socialist Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

⁶¹ Bailes, *Technology and Society*, 381–406. See also John McCannon, *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932–1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); and William Wolf, "Russia's Revolutionary Underground: The Construction of the Moscow Subway, 1931–1935," Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1994.

⁶² Sheldon Garon, *The State and Labor in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), chap. 6. The Nazi and Italian fascist examples loomed very large among Japanese bureaucrats and intellectuals. Fascist visions, along with Marxism (which grew in force during anti-

“industrial patriotic associations,” failed to take root, another Nazi labor organization, the German Labor Front (DAF) – modeled in part after the Italian fascist “*Dopolavoro*” movement⁶³ – grew from 7.8 million members in mid-1933 to 16 million by 1935, and eventually to 20 million members. Tim Mason has argued that DAF’s “Strength through Joy” organized leisure program did not raise the workers’ Volk spirit.⁶⁴ (Nonetheless, some 7 million people took “Strength through Joy” subsidized vacations by 1939.) More interesting is Mason’s contention that “in terms of labor law, social policy, and ideology, the ‘factory community’ (*Betriebsgemeinschaft*) was the heart of the New Order.”⁶⁵ The notion of a factory-based community, of social and political life *organized* by and for the factory, was the cornerstone of Soviet mass society.⁶⁶ Michelin tried something similar at Clermont-Ferrand, one French city.⁶⁷

communist crackdowns), competed with notions of Japanese exceptionalism and anti-Westernism, which, however, professed some of the same views on the role and nature of the state and social organization. In many ways, Japan furnishes the best mirror of interwar modernities in its consideration of any and all models as potential sources of adaptation. See William Miles Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order: Intellectuals and Fascism in Prewar Japan* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Peter Duus and Irwin Scheiner, “Socialism, Liberalism, and Marxism, 1901–1931,” and Tetsuo Najita and Harry D. Harootunian, “Japanese Revolt against the West: Political and Cultural Criticism in the Twentieth Century,” both in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. Peter Duus, vol. 6 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 654–710 and 711–74, respectively.

⁶³ Victoria de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of and Leisure in Fascist Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

⁶⁴ Tim Mason, *Social Policy in the Third Reich: The Working Class and the ‘National Community’* (Oxford: Berg, 1993). Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wipperman write that “it is incorrect to depict the Nazi regime solely in terms of its infinite capacity for systematic brutality. The Nazis were well aware that terror alone would not suffice as a means of pacifying the working class and then integrating it into the ‘national community.’ To this end, they built up a state-controlled, emasculated alternative to the proscribed labor movement, and pursued social and economic policies which were both attractive and successful, even if, paradoxically, the working class were not always the beneficiaries.” Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany, 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 284.

⁶⁵ Mason, *Social Policy*, 103. Mason’s insistence that “the working masses were from the beginning either indifferent or hostile to the new regime” (151) derives from his sense of what their objective “true” interests were, rather than from an examination of workers. He is better on Nazi fears of workers than on workers themselves.

⁶⁶ Kenneth Straus, *Factory and Community in Stalin’s Russia: The Making of an Industrial Working Class* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997). For Japan, see Andrew Gordon, *The Evolution of Labor Relations in Japan: Heavy Industry, 1853–1955* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), esp. chap. 6.

⁶⁷ Michelin’s tire and rubber plant was enveloped in a panoply of concerns thought to affect production, from directed leisure to affordable housing, medical care, and education. André Gueslin, “Le système social Michelin (1889–1940),” in *Michelin, Les hommes du pneu: Les ouvriers Michelin*,

As we take the full measure of the critically important interwar factory communities, we should also not forget that no matter how odious the values it promoted, the Communist Party, too, was a mass organization, and that Soviet socialism, like Nazism, organized society much more than it had ever been organized before. Generally, the effective organization of society is viewed only in terms of self-organization (non-state). For example, Robert Putnam has argued that the decline of bowling leagues in America indicates a loss of community, and helps explain political apathy. But as Sheri Berman points out, civic organizations served as an important vehicle for the spread and institutionalization of the Nazi movement, while bowling leagues did not cease to exist under the Nazis.⁶⁸ Much the same can be said for all manner of activity under the Soviets, not just organized leisure. In fact, the vastly increased organization of society under Stalin is one of the main reasons for the marked increase in the state's capacity.⁶⁹

Some specialists in Soviet history, pointing to declassified archival materials, continue to emphasize the limits to the state's powers.⁷⁰ All states are limited. The limitations of the interwar Soviet state appear extraordinary mostly in light of its impossibly ambitious, unrealizable aims (which themselves added in a complicated way to the state's increased capacity). But the "collectivization" of agriculture, the deportations, the forced industrialization, the spread of mass propaganda to remote corners of the realm in an array of languages, the mapping and surveying of the Soviet space and peoples, are all striking from a mobilization, state-capacity point of view – and far beyond the tsarist-era construction of the Transsiberian railroad or 1897 census. Outside Russia before World War I, few of the Soviet state's undertakings would find state-capacity parallels any-

à Clermont-Ferrand, de 1889 à 1940, ed. Lionel Dumond et al. (Paris: Editions de l'Atelier, 1993), 73–154. After World War II, the Michelin plant prospered while shedding workers (e.g., from 30,000 to 16,000, in the decade up to the mid-1990s). It also discontinued programs for company housing, recreation, schools, hospitals, and sanatoria. Marlise Simons, "In French Factory Town, Culprit is Automation," *New York Times*, 12 May 1994.

⁶⁸ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of Community in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000); Sheri Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," *World Politics* 49: 3 (1997), 401–29.

⁶⁹ One of the principal arguments of my book *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), that rather than destroy society, Stalin created a new society, seems to have largely escaped critics. Note that in his critique of the authoritarian state's utopian aspirations, James Scott writes about the failure of society to resist, rather than about its organization and participation in state-led crusades. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 89.

⁷⁰ See, for example, the introduction and some of the contributions in J. Arch Getty and Roberta Manning, eds., *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

where, except perhaps for some of the brutal mobilizations in Europe's African colonies. After World War I, of course, not all states sought or felt impelled to enact violent crusades (to catch and leap beyond competitors). And the Soviet state's ability to regulate itself and the behavior of its own officials fell far short of what liberal states accomplished. In comparison with the liberal state *over the long term*, the Soviet state's *modus operandi* can be seen as especially "limited."⁷¹ But the interwar leap in mobilization and state capacity was striking.

Not everything in the Soviet mass repertoire revolved around industrialization and politics. Rosalinde Sartorti points to a tradition of "Soviet carnival" that took the form, beginning in the July 1935 celebration of the Soviet constitution in Moscow's Central Park, of a variety show around the theme that life has become joyous, with jugglers, costumed figures taken from fairy-tales, confetti, and dance bands. Orchestras played tangos, fox-trots, waltzes and jazz, as the propagandists trumpeted the activism (*samodeiatel'nost'*) of the masses.⁷² True enough, but amid the pursuit of pleasure, the celebration of socialism and the denigration of capitalism were never far off. The meeting of mass culture and mass politics – so characteristic of dictatorships – could be found in fashion, school assignments, the naming of newborns, and circus routines that made reference not just to Lenin and Stalin but to the civil war in Spain, or the Italian war in Abyssinia. The Soviet public space was both very broad and very image-saturated, particularly with didactic images of the outside world. A few contemporary foreign observers noted the obvious falseness of many Soviet public claims, and the population's passivity, while others, such as the American journalist Eugene Lyons, remarked of the Communists' slogans that "these boys are geniuses for advertising."⁷³ The key point, of course, is the extent to which a specific vocabulary,

⁷¹ For insights into the Soviet state's endemic difficulties in "controlling" itself, and a strained effort to adduce these difficulties as an explanation for the Great Terror, see Gábor Rittersporn, *Stalinist Simplifications and Soviet Complications: Social Tensions and Political Conflicts in the USSR 1933–1953* (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991). For the influence of X-rays on the interwar obsession with "unmasking" and "laying bare," see Yuri Tsivian, "Media Fantasies and Penetrating Vision: Some Links Between X-rays, the Microscope, and Film," in *The Laboratory of Dreams: The Russian Avant-Garde and Cultural Experiment*, ed. John Bowlt and Olga Matich (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 81–99.

⁷² Rosalinde Sartorti, "Stalinism and Carnival: Organization and the Aesthetics of Political Holidays," in *Culture of the Stalin Period*, ed. Günther, 41–77. See also Karen Petrone, "Life has Become More Joyous, Comrades': Politics and Culture in Soviet Celebrations, 1934–1939," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1994.

⁷³ Lyons was most impressed with the pithy slogans, such as "Five-in-Four," which he noted was instantly understood to refer to the Five-Year Plan and its early attainment, and judged "as effective as our 4-out-of-5 for toothpaste." Eugene Lyons, *Moscow Carrousel* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1935), 209.

categories of thought and ways of looking at the world became commonplace, even among those who resisted them.⁷⁴

Hannah Arendt has written that the goal of Soviet (as well as Nazi) propaganda was not persuasion but organization – a nice recuperation, paraphrasing a Soviet slogan, of a point lost in the preoccupation with brainwashing. Of course, persuasion remained important alongside organization, but Arendt's characterization of these regimes as almost condemned "to organize everyone and everything within its framework and to set and keep them in motion" is apt.⁷⁵ Everything in the Soviet Union was indeed a mass mobilization: the Soviet Five-Year Plan, collectivization, the "building of socialism" in the republics, the waxing and waning anti-religious campaigns, the anti-illiteracy campaigns. One could also point to the media and public "discussions" of the new constitution in 1935–36 and the single-candidate elections to the new Supreme Soviet in 1936 as mass mobilizations. Mass campaigns were conducted to "control" the operation of the trade network, or of the entire state bureaucracy. The differing verifications and purges in the party, trade unions, and professional associations, and the notorious campaign against enemies of the people, all involved wide participation, though the terms of that participation were for the most part non-negotiable.⁷⁶

Take the issue of female suffrage, which came earlier in Soviet Russia (1917) than in the United States (1920), Great Britain (1928), Germany (1928), France (1945), Japan (1945), or Italy (1946). The revolution appeared to hold

⁷⁴ Another of the principal arguments of *Magnetic Mountain* (see footnote 70) is that authoritarian state power, no matter how much police repression it can muster, is most effective when it is reproduced in people's everyday lives and identities. On this point, see the tour de force by Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

⁷⁵ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973), 361, 326. See also Michael Geyer, "The Stigma of Violence, Nationalism, and War in Twentieth Century Germany," *German Studies Review*, special issue on German identities (Winter 1992), 75–100. On the relationship between "brainwashing" and the goal of total integration, in the Japanese case, see Richard H. Mitchell, *Thought Control in Prewar Japan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976).

⁷⁶ Formal organization – as opposed to ongoing or periodic mobilization campaigns – was achieved in a Soviet civil defense league called the Society of Friends of Defense and Aviation-Chemical Construction (Osoaviakhim), founded in 1927. Its claimed membership in the 1930s of 13 million was criticized as eyewash, but the organization did have substantial personnel and community reach. William E. Odom, *The Soviet Volunteers: Modernization and Bureaucracy in a Public Mass Organization* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973). Osoaviakhim was disbanded in 1948. Three successor organizations were combined in 1952 to form a less robust organization with similar goals, DOSAAF.

out great hope for women's emancipation.⁷⁷ But Elizabeth Wood, who examines gender categories and stereotypes in relation to party organization, shows that demoralization overtook Bolshevik female activists already during the NEP years. Of course, in countries where gender hierarchies were unsettled not by the Bolshevik revolution but by World War I, one also sees the deep demoralization of women activists. For France, Mary Louise Roberts claims that by killing millions of men, the war greatly raised the general level of male anxiety, which adversely affected women's efforts at public self-assertion.⁷⁸ For Italy, Victoria De Grazia highlights how the fascist regime was forced to face the advent not just of radio and the cinema, but also of the department store, women's magazine, and *la maschietta* – the *garçonne*, flapper, or *mōdan garu* (in Japan) – with short skirts, bobbed hair, and freer sex.⁷⁹ Beyond Catholic Europe, there were fierce battles over the terms of women's entry into the age of mass politics, and who had the right to set them. In Japan, women working outside the home, let alone those campaigning for equality, elicited anxious public debate.⁸⁰ Even in Great Britain, which had a strong feminist movement, advocacy for women's rights hit a wall. Susan Pedersen shows that interwar feminism – which she sees as essential for securing women's rights – was counterproductive, because it scared men, and mobilized opponents of female emancipation.⁸¹

Alongside these heightened struggles over women's appearance in public growing out of World War I, the interwar period was also characterized by national campaigns targeting women in order to encourage thrift, hygiene, and especially reproduction. Thus, the much-remarked Soviet pronatalist policy shifts of the 1930s, discussed by Wendy Goldman, among others, can also be placed in

⁷⁷ Female suffrage was granted in Weimar Germany in 1928, France and Japan in 1945, and Italy in 1946.

⁷⁸ Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917–1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). See also Laura Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality: Gender Division in the French and British Metalworking Industries, 1914–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); and Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁷⁹ Victoria de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 7.

⁸⁰ See the essays by Margit Nagy, Barbara Molony, Miriam Silverberg, and Yoshiko Miyake in *Re-creating Japanese Women, 1600–1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 199–295. On the gendered nature of the category “modern” (*mōdan*) in interwar Japan, see Miriam Silverberg, “The Café Waitress Serving Modern Japan,” in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 208–25.

⁸¹ Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France 1914–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Pedersen's book appeared during the backlash against feminism in the United States in the 1980s and early 1990s.

a wider context, as David Hoffman shows.⁸² De Grazia notes that World War I convinced the fascist regime “that women performed an absolutely central, yet strikingly complex role in sustaining state power.” Thereafter, she concludes, “every aspect of being female was ... held up to the measure of the state’s interest and interpreted in light of the dictatorship’s strategies of state building.”⁸³ Whatever the internal political dynamic over female gender roles, geopolitical competition appeared to necessitate the mobilization of the female body for state power, a goal that the dictatorships were able to pursue vigorously, and that presented some difficulties for the democracies – unless they could draw on a large flow of immigrants. Among dictatorships (or for that matter democracies), the Soviet authorities proved far more willing to accept female labor outside the home for the national economy, though some occupations were restricted and pay was far from equal.⁸⁴

Mass politics and mobilization under authoritarian regimes, especially their symbolic dimensions, presented major challenges to liberal democracies. It was not that parliamentary regimes were unable to allow for mass politics. World War I, as noted, broke down hierarchies and the resistance to involvement in politics for many previously excluded groups, from women to Catholics.⁸⁵ But as Mosse has written, “parliamentary republics were naturally unable to construct effective representations of themselves, just as they failed to create national festivals.”⁸⁶ British media popularized a number of images of the country, including monarchy, high finance, and empire, none of which served as particularly effective symbols internationally for the cause of liberal democracy.⁸⁷ France, too, with its symbols of luxury goods and colonial primitivism, not to mention near-permanent political upheaval – it went through more than 20 governments between 1929 and 1939 – had a hard time developing effective slogans and inte-

⁸² David L. Hoffman, “Mothers in the Motherland: Stalinist Pronatalism in its Pan-European Context,” *Journal of Social History* 34: 1 (2000), 35–54. See also Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917–1936* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁸³ De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, 7.

⁸⁴ Melanie Ilić, *Women Workers in the Soviet Interwar Economy: From “Protection” to “Equality”* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999).

⁸⁵ Martin Conway, *Catholic Politics in Europe 1918–1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997). See also Susan Brewster Whitney, “The Politics of Youth: Communists and Catholics in Interwar France,” Ph.D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 1994.

⁸⁶ Mosse, *Nationalization*, 72.

⁸⁷ In Britain, government information bureaus and sponsored publicity campaigns (for sexual education, drinking milk, etc.) came to be regarded as a legitimate pursuit of a democracy, but liberal democracy itself was rarely “marketed” as a superior way of life to the rest of the world. Mariel Grant, *Propaganda and the Role of the State in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

grating strategies for mass democracy.⁸⁸ What *were* the symbols of democratic modernity? They were largely American.⁸⁹ Interwar America stood for a generally plebeian democracy, whatever its exclusions, as well as a rough, dynamic capitalism. It was the quintessential producer and consumer of mass commercial culture, from Hollywood to the mesmerizing Sears Roebuck product catalogue, and it suffused the venerated European traditions of high culture and the avant-garde inside mass culture. America also upheld mass consumption as at least equal to mass production. These and other aspects of the image and actualities of American modernity were resisted by the European democracies, while being selectively co-opted in the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and imperial Japan.

In sum, before and especially after World War I, the bases of *national* politics moved beyond royal palaces, houses of parliament, or backrooms to army barracks, public squares, factories, sports stadiums, and the female body. Anti-liberal regimes, with varying degrees of efficacy, energetically deployed symbolic politics, mobilization campaigns, and mass organizations in mass-based dictatorships. It was a form of mass participation largely without political power, but not without substance or consequence. Gregory Kasza has written of a post-World War I trend in Italy, Japan, the Soviet Union, and elsewhere of a kind of civilian mobilization.⁹⁰ To be sure, whereas the fascist regimes glorified violence as a mode of politics and cleansing the nation far more in their rhetoric than the Soviet regime did, Soviet mass politics involved significantly greater violence in practice – a circumstance derived from entrenched patterns of state behavior, the experience of Civil War on top of World War I, a long-standing urge to over-

⁸⁸ On the reproduction of political divisions within culture, see Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy, 1934–1938* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

⁸⁹ Kendall E. Bailes, “The American Connection: Ideology and the Transfer of Technology to the Soviet Union, 1917–41,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23: 3 (1981), 421–28. See also Jeffrey Brooks, “The Press and its Message: Images of America in the 1920s and 1930s,” in *Russia in the Era of NEP*, ed. Alexander Rabinowitch, Richard Stites, and Sheila Fitzpatrick (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 231–53.

⁹⁰ Gregory J. Kasza, *The Conscripted Society: Administered Mass Organizations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). Japan alone among the dictatorships did not have a single mass party (until a nominal amalgamation in 1940), and its emperor in the “emperor system” was never a dictator, but the Japanese state managed to effect a far-reaching coordination (*Gleichschaltung*) of businesses and organizations under “control associations” and of farmers, youth, women, and artists under “patriotic associations.” Yet Kasza argues against the reduction of “administered mass organizations” to the state. For further comparisons, see Paul Brooker, *The Faces of Fraternalism: Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). For an analysis of the Japanese efforts to move structurally toward a Nazi-style political system around 1940, and of the complexities of Japanese inter-elite conflict throughout the period of authoritarianism, see Gordon Mark Berger, *Parties out of Power in Japan, 1931–1941* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

come the predominant peasant nature of the country, and an understanding of economic and political problems as matters of belief, among other factors. Both the extremely violent and the less violent various forms of Soviet mass politics drew in millions of people. Barrington Moore has noted the coincidence in Soviet politics of heavy coercion and grass-roots activism, particularly the continuous campaigns for democratization and popular monitoring (control) that were both manipulative and real.⁹¹ Yet like much else that characterized the Soviet Union, mass mobilization proved to be unsustainable soon into the new epoch that was opened by the transformations wrought by World War II.⁹²

Mass Consumption

“The necessary, precedent condition of mass production,” wrote Henry Ford, “is a capacity, latent or developed, of *mass consumption*, the ability to absorb large production. The two go together, and in the latter may be traced the reasons for the former.”⁹³ Mass marketing, the supermarket, chain retailing, advertising, and the installment plan helped create an America in which the distribution of goods was “mechanized” – so much so that during the first half of the 20th century, popularizers wrote of mass consumption as the new basis of civilization, and of achieving higher levels of civilization by means of higher levels of consumption.⁹⁴ Lizabeth Cohen has argued that even the Great Depression accelerated America’s interwar shift from emphasizing producers to emphasizing consumers in eco-

⁹¹ Barrington Moore, *Soviet Politics – The Dilemma of Power: The Role of Ideas in Social Change* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), 403. See also Michael Gelb, “Mass Politics under Stalin: Party Purges and Labor Productivity Campaigns in Leningrad, 1928–1941,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1987. Cf. Raymond A. Bauer, Alex Inkeles, and Clyde Kluckhohn, *How the Soviet System Works: Cultural, Psychological, and Social Themes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956).

⁹² Postwar surveys of Soviet émigrés showed that “mobilization” (defined modestly as attendance at meetings) was increasingly rare. William Zimmerman, “Mobilized Participation and the Nature of the Soviet Dictatorship,” in *Politics, Work, and Daily Life in the USSR: A Survey of Former Soviet Citizens*, ed. James Millar (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 332–53.

⁹³ Henry Ford, “Mass Production,” *Encyclopedia Britannica* (13th ed.), vol. 15, 38–41.

⁹⁴ For example, most famously, Simon N. Patten, *The New Basis of Civilization* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1907); and Hazel Kyrk, *A Theory of Consumption* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1923). Victoria De Grazia writes of a “Fordist” mode of consumption in America, several decades before the advent of Fordism. De Grazia, “Changing Consumption Regimes in Europe, 1930–1970: Comparative Perspectives on the Distribution Problem,” in *Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Susan Strasser, Charles McGovern, and Matthias Judt (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 59–83. See also Martha L. Olney, *Buy Now, Pay Later: Advertising, Credit, and Consumer Durables in the 1920s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

conomic thinking and in government policy. “The consumer viewpoint,” she concludes, “became institutionalized even though concrete achievements toward protecting consumers’ rights and needs were often limited.”⁹⁵ Salesmen armed with mass marketing techniques usually discovered that the emerging national market was best addressed in segments. But the push towards mass consumption in America, as Roland Marchand demonstrates, was heralded as the path of modernity.⁹⁶

Notwithstanding the devastation of the Great Depression, America continued to project an image of cutting-edge modernity.⁹⁷ Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal transfixed Europeans, particularly the British.⁹⁸ But large swaths of the public in Britain, as in France, continued to view America with ambivalence, seeing a threat, rather than an ally in a common struggle against the interwar tide of authoritarianism.⁹⁹ European liberal democracies, hewing to balanced budgets, could not match the expenditures, let alone the rhetoric and vision, of the

⁹⁵ Cohen, “The New Deal State and the Making of Citizen Consumers,” in *Getting and Spending*, 111–26, quotation 119.

⁹⁶ Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity 1920–1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). See also Daniel Horowitz, *The Morality of Spending: Attitudes toward the Consumer Society in America, 1875–1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989); T. J. Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

⁹⁷ Perhaps the best encapsulation of interwar America is Paul Johnson, *Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Nineties*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1991), chap. 6 (“The Last Arcadia”). See also David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945* (New York: Harper Collins, 1999).

⁹⁸ John Dizikes, *Britain, Roosevelt, and the New Deal: British Opinion, 1932–1938* (New York: Garland, 1979). On the cautiousness of America’s use of its power into the early Depression years, see Frank Costigliola, *Awkward Domination: American Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919–1933* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); and Ian Jarvie, *Hollywood’s Overseas Campaign: The North Atlantic Movie Trade, 1920–1950* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁹⁹ The choicest quotations can be found in the influential Georges Duhamel, *Scènes de la vie future* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1930), a winner of the French Academy’s grand prize; it was translated as *America the Menace: Scenes from the Life of the Future* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931). On France, see also Marc Martin, “Structures de société et consciences rebelles: les résistances à la publicité dans la France de l’entre-deux-guerres,” *Le mouvement social* 146 (1989), 27–48; and Ellen Furlough, “Selling the American Way in Interwar France: *Prix Uniques* and the Salon des Arts Menagers,” *Journal of Social History* 26: 3 (1993), 491–519. On continental Europe more broadly, see Victoria de Grazia, “Mass Culture and Sovereignty: The American Challenge to European Cinema, 1920–1960,” *Journal of Modern History* 61: 1 (1989), 53–87; and Rob Kroes et al., eds., *Cultural Transmissions and Receptions: American Mass Culture in Europe* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1993).

American response to the Depression. This seems ironic, given the extent to which New Deal ideas and practices were adapted from Europe, part of a long transatlantic dialogue (though the New Dealers, sensitive to charges of un-Americanism, preferred to conceal their foreign inspirations and cosmopolitanism).¹⁰⁰ The general estrangement or distancing between America and Western Europe contributed to the British and the French squandering, in the new conditions after World War I, much of the huge capital they had built up in their hard-won liberal parliamentarism.

The “tiredness” of European liberalism, moreover, became the stalking horse for authoritarian regimes upholding a model of managed economies and mass mobilization, with grudging acceptance of mass culture (which was at least partially directed by means of censorship and official propaganda). Under authoritarian regimes, the avant-garde impulse of cultural guidance was wholeheartedly accepted, though specific individuals were replaceable as the arbiters. Machines and images of industrial prowess were promoted by the state. In matters of consumption, the commodification of desire was greeted with suspicion or derision, though partially practiced; in parallel, there was a strong push via consumption to inculcate values of hierarchy, obedience, and patriotism as well as subordination to the collective. Worshiping industrial modernity and strengthening authority and hierarchy were not seen as contradictory. Indeed, fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, the socialist Soviet Union, and imperial Japan all responded with some degree of approval for what each understood to be American “modernity.” Many Nazis, who admired America for its *de facto* racial apartheid, equated the “productionism” of America and the Soviet Union.¹⁰¹

While American productionism was much admired by Japan and by Europe’s varied authoritarian regimes, even more than by parliamentary ones, the authoritarians, like the parliamentary countries, looked askance at full

¹⁰⁰ Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998). Rodgers notes that “the Depression triggered among the key players in the North Atlantic economy much common watchfulness of each other’s policy moves and a wide array of common responses” (416–17). But he also observes that “in no other nation in the North Atlantic economy was the progressive response to the world Depression of the 1930s as vigorous as in New Deal America. ... European progressives, by contrast, stumbled through the hard times of the 1930s with considerable difficulty” (411).

¹⁰¹ Nazi admiration for many aspects of the Soviet Union could be found among the highest ranks, and persisted within the blanket condemnation of Judaeo-Bolshevism. For example, Joseph Goebbels, the propaganda minister of Hitler’s anti-Semitic policies, publicly praised the film *Battleship Potemkin* (1926) by Sergei Eisenstein – whose parents were baptized but whom the Nazis categorized as a Jew – for its advanced film techniques. See Georg Bollenbeck, *Tradition, Avant-garde, Reaktion: Deutsche Kontroversen um die kulturelle Moderne 1880–1945* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1999).

Americanization in the consumer sphere.¹⁰² Of course, mass consumption was far from totalizing even in America, where at least 20 percent of goods and services were consumed within the household in which they were produced, without passing through the market, let alone the mass market. In France, Germany, and Italy, household consumption was far higher, and for many goods and services produced outside the household, families often turned to socialist consumer co-operatives or mutual aid societies, rather than the mass market.¹⁰³ In Britain, where electricity was in 73 percent of British households by 1937 (compared with 67 percent in the United States), the vacuum cleaner, washing machine, and water heater took more than 30 years to spread to 50 percent of British households. Expenditure on the home was greatly exceeded by expenditure on clothing, though leisure spending was highest: cinema accounted for nearly 6 percent of all British consumer spending in the 1930s.¹⁰⁴ Neither the practice nor the powerful symbolism of mass consumption in European democracies approached the situation in America.

The Nazis, who promised a meteoric rise in consumption while depressing it (for war preparation), criticized the consumer culture of the United States.¹⁰⁵ So did the proudly noncapitalist Soviet Union, yet it, too, came to recognize the unavoidability of mass consumption. Following years of famine and the substitution of rationing for legal trade, the Soviet decision in the mid-1930s to affirm the practice of trade came as something of a shock. Suddenly, the Soviet authorities abandoned rationing and greatly expanded the number of physical stores (as opposed to less formal stalls and streetside vendors), and like the Nazis, selectively promoted many consumer products. Trade had somehow to be “socialist,” as did consumption, however. The solution hit upon was to make trade work a matter of socially useful labor and individual labor performance, and to involve the masses through lightning inspections or “control” from below. At the same

¹⁰² Victoria de Grazia, “Nationalizing Women: The Competition between Fascist and Commercial Cultural Models in Mussolini’s Italy,” in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, ed. Victoria de Grazia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 337–58.

¹⁰³ In Italy, auto-consumption accounted for 33 percent of the total national product. In Germany, the number of urban families with household plots grew during the interwar period. Victoria de Grazia, “Establishing the Modern Consumer Household,” in *The Sex of Things*, ed. de Grazia, 151–61.

¹⁰⁴ Radio spread to 50 percent of British households within a decade, and to 80 percent in less than two decades. Sue Bowden and Avner Offen, “The Technological Revolution that Never Was: Gender, Class, and the Diffusion of Household Appliances in Interwar England,” in *The Sex of Things*, ed. de Grazia, 244–74.

¹⁰⁵ Ulrich Wyrwa, “Consumption and Consumer Society: A Contribution to the History of Ideas,” in *Getting and Spending*, ed. Susan Strasser et al., 431–47. The boom in German consumerism came soon after World War II.

time, shopping was celebrated as an act of achieving cultural refinement. This went hand in hand with public displays of women wearing furs and perfume, men wearing suits and overcoats, and families moving into self-standing homes. Advertising took place, even when there was a single product “brand.”¹⁰⁶ Customers, as they were called, were exhorted to buy, and often instructed how to do so in “cultured fashion,” to demonstrate the superiority of socialism and Soviet-style consumption. Here, too, mass consumption emerged as an important terrain for developing and contesting identities.

All this is explored in the dissertations of Julie Hessler and Amy Randall.¹⁰⁷ Hessler rightly notes the pervasive and persistent anxieties associated with consumption amid constant shortages and poverty. Randall, complementing this view, argues that trade under socialism was legitimized as compatible with socialism through concerted state-sponsored effort and the lives of millions of people. She also shows that trade officials and managers sought to borrow and adapt technologies and organizing principles from the capitalist retail world. “Advanced techniques” such as installment buying and methods of consumer credit were introduced, alongside subsidized prices and selective access.¹⁰⁸ Trade was not just a matter of technique, however, for trade personnel were encouraged to join through their professionalism and labor exertion in the crusade of constructing socialist modernity. And the magic whereby consumer goods could seem to embody and propagate larger ideals was also exploited. Though the images of consumption that were highlighted in the media could appear to contemporaries as petty bourgeois, rather than refined, consumers as well as trade workers appear to have taken seriously the notion of pursuing *kul'turnost' (Bildung)* through consumption. Randall also describes how the world of Soviet trade was feminized, and how it reinforced female gender roles. Yet she treats such roles as more than an imposition, striving to give women in and around

¹⁰⁶ Liudmila Grichenko Wells, “The Role of Advertising in the Soviet Union,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Tennessee, 1992; R. Barnes, “Obshchestvennaia psikhologiya v SShA i SSSR 20–30-x godakh v svete teorii potrebleniia,” *Voprosy istorii*, no. 2 (1995), 133–37. Randi Barnes Cox, “The Creation of the Socialist Consumer: Advertising, Citizenship and NEP,” Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1999, was unavailable to me. See also Christina Hilleboe Kiaer, “The Russian Constructivist ‘Object’ and the Revolutionizing of Everyday Life, 1921–1929,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1995; and Sally West, “Constructing Consumer Culture: Advertising in Imperial Russia to 1914,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, 1995.

¹⁰⁷ Julie Hessler, “Culture of Shortages: A Social History of Soviet Trade, 1917–1953,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1996; Amy Randall, “The Campaign for Soviet Trade: Creating Socialist Retail Trade in the 1930s,” Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2000.

¹⁰⁸ Elena Osokina, *Za fasadom “Stalinskogo izobiliia”: raspredelenie i rynek v snabzhenii naseleniia v gody industrializatsii, 1927–1941* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1998).

trade agency, even if their menu of options was constricted. She thereby shifts some of the focus on Soviet women away from the better-known “activists,” the elite wives whose pseudo-philanthropic organizations were the *de facto* heir to the disbanded “women’s sections” of the Communist Party.

In Italy and France, too, women negotiated the public sphere largely as consumers, and only secondarily as “new women” and/or female activists. Both de Grazia and Roberts argue that for women, new images of personal freedom and emancipation went hand in hand with their “exploitation,” especially by the fashion and beauty industries. True, in France vocational guidance, which resulted in part from the wartime ruin of middle-class savings and the postwar surplus of single women, meant that women could more readily pursue professional interests, at least until marriage. But by and large, the “democratic” French no less than the fascist Italians remained locked in what Roberts sees as a dual push for modern industry, commerce, and technology, on the one hand, and, on the other, for re-imposing traditional gender roles.¹⁰⁹ Whatever this claim’s plausibility, it is difficult to assess, since Roberts restricts herself to what she calls the “symbolic work” of images, and does not examine the “actual lives” of women and men (thus, for example, she analyzes the text of some laws, but not how the laws were or were not applied). Be that as it may, if consumption seems to have been double-edged for women in France, what of women in a situation where the availability of mass consumer goods severely lagged behind the promises to make them available? Soviet women, as consumers in a shortage society organized around producers, were especially weak and overburdened.

That did not necessarily lessen women’s wants, or lessen, for women and men, the connection between material possessions and personal identity or social status, as well as the pressures felt by the authorities to live up to the advertisements for material goods. But Soviet mass consumption, depending on income levels and state supplies, could be as much drudgery as a form of self-realization or public participation. Furthermore, far more than just income levels governed Soviet consumption patterns and possibilities. The elite had separate networks of shops and distribution mechanisms according to rank. Worker purchases of many goods took place in restricted stores on factory territory, not in city shops, and even many goods on sale in city shops could be purchased only with permission slips – in what Elena Osokina called a “hierarchy of consumption.”¹¹⁰ Thus, the regime’s sudden turn to trade in the mid-1930s, its crash program to open new retail stores, and its deployment of mass consumption images and practices were accompanied by even more rigorous efforts to use controlled access to goods

¹⁰⁹ Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes*; de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*.

¹¹⁰ Elena Osokina, *Ierarkhiia potrebleniia: O zhizni liudei v usloviakh stalinskogo snabzheniia 1928–1935 gg.* (Moscow: MGOU, 1993).

and services as rewards and punishments. Sticking to the denial of the market, the Soviet authorities manipulated access to scarce goods, but they also belatedly entered the game of mass consumption, whose importance grew exponentially after World War II. Over time, the USSR found itself unable to compete in this consumption game, yet unable to withdraw.

Warfare and Welfare

Pre-1914 Europe, despite being characterized as an armed camp, militarized unevenly.¹¹¹ But after World War I, Michael Geyer argues, even societies that professed peaceful intentions continued to organize themselves for the production of violence. Just as war was no longer limited but total – or “totalitarian,” in Ludendorff’s expression – so war-preparation became a strategy of nation-building and social integration. Nazis, fascists, and militant leftists, Geyer argues, emulated the military, based their identity on military service, mobilized society for war as social therapy, and aimed at the violent creation of new societies.¹¹² Even in liberal countries, where the constraints remained much greater, the war vastly increased the leverage and ambitions of states. Total war radically extended the potential field of state regulation to the entire population, as Peter Holquist, among others, has been arguing.¹¹³

¹¹¹ As Geoffrey Best has written, conscription was proclaimed universal, but in France half the second-year call-ups had noncombatant jobs, while in Russia two-thirds of the eligible pool were exempted from conscription, and in Germany about half the possible conscripts were missing from the ranks. Governments were simply not equipped for carrying out, and anyway could not afford, the complete mobilizations that they mandated. Best, “The Militarization of European Society, 1870–1914,” in *The Militarization of the Western World*, ed. John Gillis (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 13–29.

¹¹² Michael Geyer, “The Militarization of Europe, 1914–1945,” in *The Militarization of the Western World*, ed. Gillis, 65–102; quotations 65, 101. Geyer explains that understanding “militarism” as a problem involving the persistence of pre-war elites obscures the militarization in the 20th century. Not only are the Junkers gone but the Nazis are too, yet post-WWII European societies built up even larger militaries and military-industrial complexes. To this we could add that even in the United States, where military spending declined from 28 to 15 percent of GDP between 1913 and 1940, planning, procurement, and economic mobilization for the possibility of war advanced, especially after a 1934–36 government study of the munitions industry.

¹¹³ Peter Holquist, “Information is the Alpha and Omega of our Work’: Bolshevik Surveillance in its Pan-European Context,” *Journal of Modern History* 69 (1997), 415–50. Eric Lohr has shown that the state expropriation of private property, usually associated with Bolshevism, began during the war against businesses owned by foreign nationals (especially Germans), and that many of the confiscation personnel carried over to 1918 and beyond. Lohr, “Enemy Alien Politics within the Russian Empire during World War I,” revised dissertation manuscript, 2000, courtesy of the author.

What has been less remarked is that warfare and preparation for warfare were intimately connected with welfare.¹¹⁴ One reason was necessity. Around 2.7 million Germans returned with war-related disabilities. In 1918 Germany had 500,000 war widows, and 1.2 million orphans. In the interest of maintaining order, if not to repay a debt, soldiers and widows were granted war-related pensions. Other war-influenced emergency social policies were no less far-reaching, such as in housing, where a series of emergency housing decrees willy-nilly introduced permanent regulation. The Weimar state became the arbiter of landlord-tenant relations and rents, and helped introduce various new financing schemes. The state could not cope, but it had eagerly assumed wide responsibility.¹¹⁵ Indeed, far more than necessity was at work. The interwar period marked a new stage in the recognition of the importance of population management as a key to state power (and war-making potential), as well of the social logic of calculating and addressing the incidence of industrial accidents, disease, and what were called business cycles. Welfare was, in this sense, an outlook on the world, with far-reaching practical consequences and an accompanying array of practices.

Welfare measures predated World War I, of course, but the expanded possibility of pursuing a social logic, alongside the increase in state capacity that flowed from fighting a total war and organizing society to prepare for future wars, forged a powerful combination. In liberal countries, Peter Flora has demonstrated a correlation between, on the one hand, the extension of the franchise as well as the development of mass political parties, and, on the other, public expenditures on health, education, and social security. For Flora, the key consideration is the development of “less coercive” and “more efficient” forms of revenue raising through taxation. “The modern state is a tax state,” he writes. In the late 19th century, the ratio of tax revenues to national product was under 10 percent – hardly the basis for effectively addressing social needs. It was World War I that brought a leap in the tax ratio, which despite the end of the war remained at

¹¹⁴ David Crew argues that, “the Weimar welfare state drew its inspiration less from the confident faith in social progress described by Peukert than from Germany’s desperate need for ‘social reconstruction’ following war, defeat, revolution, and inflation.” Of course, the two motivations are not mutually exclusive. Crew, “The Ambiguities of Modernity: Welfare and the German State from Wilhelm to Hitler,” in *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870–1930*, ed. Geoff Eley (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 319–44, quotation 325–26. Peukert blames the fall of Weimar in part on expectations that it could not meet, yet elsewhere he has argued that Nazism, too, awakened hopes that it could not fulfill. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany*, 46, 73–76.

¹¹⁵ Richard Bessel, *Germany after the First World War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 5, 169–96; Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992). Peukert shows that state welfare during Weimar was bureaucratized and anonymous, that many aims were schematic, and that non-state providers, especially religious ones, expanded to try to fill the gaps.

the new high level. Social insurance's continuous extension, until it covered the whole population, Flora compares to the history of the franchise after its introduction. Thus, welfare is a story of both wanting to "take care of" the people – for their own benefit and for the state – and of being able to do so.¹¹⁶ The parallel development of voluntary mass savings, encouraged by national campaigns, added to the fiscal capacity supplied by taxes.

To be sure, capacity did not automatically translate into motivation. Resistance to expanding welfare measures and social responsibility was widespread, especially in countries with private property and parliamentary representation – but not in the Soviet Union, where the desire for deploying welfare exceeded the capacity to do so. Bernice Madison has written the only extended treatment of interwar Soviet social welfare. She argues that notwithstanding a social insurance law (1893), a health and accident act (1912), and old-age pensions for government employees, the tsarist government "refused to recognize that poverty and despair are social phenomena," by which she means a matter for the state.¹¹⁷ The Provisional Government passed a law limiting night work for women and adolescents, yet it specified that the law could be ignored if enforcement inhibited the war effort. The Bolshevik authorities, only five days after the seizure of power, decreed a "comprehensive social insurance for all wage workers and for the city and village poor."¹¹⁸ Various laws followed that announced the introduction of unemployment insurance, cash sickness benefits, birth and burial grants,

¹¹⁶ Peter Flora et al, eds., *State Economy, and Society in Western Europe 1815–1975*, vol. 1 (Chicago: St. James Press, 1983). See especially the charts on the dates of the introduction of social insurance in each country of Western Europe (454), and on the expansion of that coverage (460–61). See also Johnson, *Modern Times*, 14–15.

¹¹⁷ Bernice A. Madison, *Social Welfare in the Soviet Union* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968). See also I. M. Rubinow, "Studies in Workmen's Insurance: Italy, Russia, Spain," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1911; and Paul Joseph Best, "The Origins and Development of Insurance in Imperial and Soviet Russia," Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1965. Best notes that the Soviet state destroyed private insurance (after a year of uncertain hesitation), yet it was soon obliged to re-establish systems for insurance. In 1921, the authorities issued a decree providing insurance against fire, sick animals, crop damage, and transportation mishaps. Voluntary private insurance was also permitted. After the industrialization drive brought into being a system of social security and private insurance was eliminated, the NEP-era state insurance system (Gosstrakh) came to serve mainly the agricultural population. Best, noting similarities with other countries in Gosstrakh's actuaries, advertising, fees, and sales personnel, argues that insurance in the Soviet Union was essentially "capitalist" in nature.

¹¹⁸ See James Bunyan and H. H. Fisher, eds., *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1918: Documents and Materials* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 308.

and free medical care.¹¹⁹ Some commentators rejected these and other measures as too closely resembling capitalist practices, and urged a more “socialist” approach. Much of the legislation remained inoperative.

In the 1920s, as the authorities groped for a socialist orientation in a partially market economy, the idea of universal protection gave way to a focus on industrial workers.¹²⁰ In the 1930s, the reorganization of the country around large factories and collective farms was accompanied by the consolidation of a maximalist approach in welfare goals. Unemployment benefits were abruptly ended, but other measures for disability, sickness, old-age, death, and maternity were greatly extended.¹²¹ True, the ratio of pensions to monthly wages declined, as did disability payments.¹²² And although in 1938 pensions were raised, the rate of inflation exceeded the much-publicized increase, while paid maternity leave was shortened.¹²³ Yet Madison emphasizes that by the 1930s, the Soviet regime “did not think of welfare assistance as a sporadic activity to be brought into play only in cases of social breakdown, when the ‘normal’ market economy and/or family solicitude proved inadequate. Rather, they regarded welfare as an ongoing, comprehensive social institution,” a view that the propagandists trumpeted.¹²⁴

Madison limits herself to family and child welfare services, income maintenance programs, and vocational rehabilitation and services for the aged, leaving out health, education, recreation, labor protection, housing, and much else – all of which she, like the Soviet sources she studies, considers to be social welfare. Her account, which is Whiggish, neglects to add that Soviet welfare was geared toward achieving greater control over labor and to maximizing production, as in the rest of interwar Europe. Soviet welfare measures designed to raise productivity, by whatever means, including better safety, hygiene, health, and education, were handled largely by trade unions, in collaboration with factory manage-

¹¹⁹ Margaret Dewar, *Labour Policy in the USSR 1917–1928* (London and New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1956); Jack Minkoff, “The Soviet Social Insurance System since 1921,” Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1959.

¹²⁰ Gaston V. Rimlinger, *Welfare Policy and Industrialization in Europe, America, and Russia* (New York: John Wiley, 1971), 260–69.

¹²¹ R. Abrahamson, “The Reorganization of Social Insurance Institutions in the U.S.S.R.,” *International Labour Review* 31 (1935).

¹²² Minkoff, “The Soviet Social Insurance System,” 25–28.

¹²³ Under Khrushchev, the level of social welfare benefits rose substantially, but again, the aim was to encourage productivity and discourage labor mobility. A. A. Zabozaev and A. V. Levshin, eds., *Sotsial'noe obespechenie v SSSR: Sbornik ofitsial'nykh materialov* (Moscow: Profizdat, 1962). See also Rudolf Schlesinger, “The New Pension Law,” *Soviet Studies* 8: 3 (1957), 307–20.

¹²⁴ Madison, *Social Welfare*, 49.

ment.¹²⁵ At the local level and especially in factories, where social spending was supposed to occur, however, managers occasionally diverted welfare funds to more direct production expenses, even though spending on welfare was understood as advancing the cause of production. Quantitative output was the ultimate “social” good, a responsibility (and priority) of the entire society.

Discussions about and practical measures of welfare took shape not just around the workplace and the industrial worker, but also around children and the family. Susan Pedersen shows that in Britain and France the inflationary pressures and social instability of World War I led to the introduction of special bonuses to wage earners with children, and that many such programs survived into peacetime. Whether through widows’ pensions, children’s allowances, or dependents’ benefits paid to unemployed or incapacitated workers, Pedersen explains, many states came to see particular family relations as worthy of support. To be sure, within the emerging consensus over a public responsibility for children and the family, there were struggles over the extent and precise forms of that support. Pedersen reveals which interest groups were able to take the initiative and shape the policy agenda, and how their specific concerns influenced the goals and focus of family-support measures. But her key point is the targeting of the family as a defining characteristic of British and especially French welfare.¹²⁶

Fascist Italy, in the eyes of its celebrants, was a truly “social” state, the antithesis of the supposedly hands-off liberal state, according to David Horn. As the propagandists explained, individuals were social objects, not autonomous actors, who had a duty to be healthy and productive. In practice the fascists often relied on charity, but the 1930 Penal Code introduced a new category of “crimes against the integrity and health of the stock,” covering wilful transmission of

¹²⁵ Gaston V. Rimlinger, “The Trade Union in Soviet Social Insurance: Historical Development and Present Functions,” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 24: 3 (1961), 397–418. The Commissariat of Social Welfare (Narkom Sobes) was responsible only for custodial care and long-term assistance. Most benefits, from disability to subsidized recreation, came to be distributed through and managed by the trade unions. In the mid-1930s, trade unions were freed from responsibility for health care, when it became a part of the general government budget rather than the social insurance budget. In 1937, the trade unions off-loaded old-age pensions to the Commissariat of Welfare, but still kept the bulk of welfare-related spending. The Commissariats of Welfare were republic-level institutions. The trade union governing body (VTsSPS) was all-Union.

¹²⁶ Pedersen, *Family, Dependence*. Her study is largely confined to policy-making. Social history glimpses of women, men, and children who were targeted by policymakers, and their reactions, are rare. Cf. Pat Thane, “Women in the British Labour Party and the Construction of State Welfare, 1906–1939,” in *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States*, ed. Seth Koven and Sonya Michel (New York: Routledge, 1993), 343–77. For an argument about maternalist influences on the New Deal, see Gwendolyn Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood: Inequality in the Welfare State, 1917–1942* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

venereal disease, instigation to using contraception, and abortion.¹²⁷ Victoria de Grazia shows that the impact on women was not uniform. Childbirth was medicalized, and expertise often brought to bear, but only when the regime considered it politically opportune. The National Agency for Maternity and Infancy, created in 1925, provided services for unwed mothers and infant care, but the process was highly bureaucratized and underfunded.¹²⁸ Ambivalence pervades de Grazia's account, and indeed the entire literature, over whether welfare was an opportunity for women, or a disciplining of them.¹²⁹ But the spread of an applied "social calculus" is undeniable.

Imperial Japan did not claim to be a truly social state, but Sheldon Garon makes a claim for Japan as a special case of what he calls "social management." Examining welfare policies (poor relief), moral suasion campaigns, state-established religion, and licensed prostitution, Garon argues that the Japanese state, primarily in the guise of the Home Affairs Ministry, eagerly enlisted help-mates among certain civic groups, seeking to co-opt the new middle classes and their organizations in the pursuit of overlapping social aims (such as raising the savings rate or improving child rearing). Citizens' groups, in turn, were usually eager for the imprimatur of state authority. Accenting cooperation rather than conflict (over enfranchisement, political rights), Garon shows that "social intermediaries" exercised wide autonomy. The upshot was regulation (*torishimari*) of daily life that was more effective than what the state could have achieved on its own, as well as state avoidance of more costly programs. Only the launching of full-scale war against China and various new laws gave the government extensive powers over private social work (though this did not necessarily signal a commitment of more substantial public resources for welfare). In 1938, the Army Ministry compelled the formation of a Ministry of Health and Welfare.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ David G. Horn, *Social Bodies: Science, Reproduction, and Italian Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). Italian campaigns against contraception had the effect of publicizing birth control, while many top leaders were exposed for their failure to have children.

¹²⁸ De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*. In her treatment, Italy looks a lot like Catholic France: no forced sterilization as under the Nazis, but a punitive tax on bachelorhood or childlessness, restrictions against contraception and a ban on abortion. But whereas Italy outlawed homosexuality, France did not.

¹²⁹ David Crew nicely summarizes, without resolving, the debate on gender and welfare. Crew, "The Ambiguities of Modernity."

¹³⁰ Other steps included a Mother-Child Protection Law (1937) and National Health Insurance law (1938). The most far-reaching practical measure was the Military Assistance Law (1937). Sheldon Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds: the State in Everyday Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). See also Kathleen Uno, *Passages to Modernity: Motherhood, Childhood, and Social Reform in Early Twentieth Century Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999).

Japanese social management, or even its military welfare policy, like Italian fascism's social policy (or Nazism's "Winter Help" and employment policies), did not comprise a "welfare state." Peter Flora and Arnold Heidenheimer point out that the welfare state grew "for several generations before it was recognized as such." At the beginning of the 19th century, the social welfare policy of German Conservatives was directed at the liberals. Early conservative social welfare tracts embodied a vision of a social order meant to challenge the laissez-faire, autonomous actor, free trade ideal, replacing it with an alliance of interests among landowners, artisans, and peasants that was rooted in notions of free price and fair wage.¹³¹ Other challenges to liberal notions came from socialists, Catholics, nationalists, and liberals themselves.¹³² Bismarckian social insurance, Parisian municipal regulation and reconstruction, industrial safety campaigns, and urban sanitation all came to share a way of looking at the world.¹³³ The German monarchy called its accident and health insurance measures, which were a response to the socialists, "social measures" or "social policy." During the interwar years, when unemployment and poverty programs were introduced, insurance metaphors still predominated. Early use of the German term *Wohlfahrtsstaat*, in the 1930s, appears to have been pejorative.¹³⁴

In English, the term "welfare state" was first used, in a positive light, by a British analyst, William Beveridge, in 1941–42, to contrast Britain with its enemy, Nazi Germany's "warfare state."¹³⁵ Flora and Heidenheimer observe that the coinage was meant to express "the social benefits that democratic governments hoped to offer once the war was over." But welfare measures were also developed by non-democratic states, dating back before World War I, and continued by their fascist successors, as Flora and Heidenheimer also note. Furthermore, they write, "the experience of Russia after 1917" illustrates the fact "that non-democratic and noncapitalist societies have established very similar institu-

¹³¹ Hermann Beck, *The Origins of the Authoritarian Welfare State in Prussia: Conservatives, Bureaucracy, and the Social Question, 1815–70* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

¹³² David Horn, *Social Bodies*.

¹³³ George Steinmetz, who delineates four paradigms of social regulation, shows that the etatization of welfare was not a unilinear process. George Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social: The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

¹³⁴ Chancellor von Papen, for example, accused his predecessors of having induced "moral exhaustion" by "creating a kind of welfare state," a terrible burden and diversion from regular administration. Ernst Hunber, ed., *Dokumente zur deutschen Verfassungs-geschichte*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart: V. Kohlhammer, 1966), 486.

¹³⁵ William H. Beveridge, *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1942). Beveridge went well beyond his mandate for a technical reform of social insurance to outline a comprehensive vision of government responsibility for freedom from want.

tions.”¹³⁶ To buttress the democratic “claim” on welfare, commentators generally point backwards to interwar Sweden, which offered the chief example of a democratic welfare state *avant la lettre*, with voluntary pronatalist measures, family allowances, universal free medical care, school meals, and a broad vision of social justice, although the felicitously named New Deal constituted a much-remarked leap in U.S. social policy.¹³⁷ In fact, the notion of a welfare state did become closely associated with democratic capitalist countries in Europe soon after World War II and in Japan by the 1970s.

That the comparative “welfare state” literature after World War II by and large ignores the Soviet case is a circumstance that could be justified by the fact that the Soviet Union advertised itself not as a welfare state, which was associated with capitalism, but as socialism and a new civilization.¹³⁸ Socialism was, by definition, supposed to be more comprehensive in its understanding of and provision for social welfare than capitalism. But after World War II, the Soviets were challenged on their own turf, as capitalist powers trumpeted their comprehensive welfare states. Coined as a counterpart to Nazism, the “welfare state” became an important weapon against the very country that had done the most to put the idea and practice of all-encompassing state guaranteed welfare on the agenda. That remained true even though many aspects of America’s New Deal were being circumscribed even as Beveridge issued his World War II clarion call for institutionalizing social rights in liberal democracies, and even though after World War II welfare under capitalism generally came under fierce attack for resembling socialism!¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Peter Flora and Arnold J. Heidenheimer, “The Historical Core and Changing Boundaries of the Welfare State,” in *The Development of the Welfare States in Europe and America*, ed. Flora and Heidenheimer (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Books, 1981), 17–34.

¹³⁷ Alva Myrdal, *Nation and Family: The Swedish Experiment in Democratic Family and Population Policy* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1941). Myrdal, like many other Europeans, visited America to inspect the famous New Deal firsthand. One historian has calculated that America’s combined spending on public employment programs and relief in the 1930s made it the most generous social spending regime at that time (6.31 percent of GDP in 1938, compared with 5.59 for Germany and 5.01 for Britain). But he does not, nor could he very easily, attempt comparisons using Soviet data, where “public employment” (55 percent of U.S. social spending) was nearly universal. Edwin Amenta, *Bold Relief: Institutional Politics and the Origins of Modern American Social Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

¹³⁸ One exception is Rimlinger, *Welfare Policy*.

¹³⁹ Amenta, *Bold Relief*, 247–48; Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 485–501. Beveridge was subsequently embarrassed to be hailed as the architect of the welfare state. Maurice Bruce, *The Coming of the Welfare State* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1961); and John Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

Empire and Nation

World War I jolted the relationship between empire and nation. The Versailles and Trianon Treaties gave approximately 60 million people states of their own, while making another 25 million into national minorities (there was also a manifold increase in the number of stateless persons). At the same time as continental empire seemed doomed to be replaced by the nation, however, the great overseas empire grew. By 1919 the British had expanded their empire to its greatest extent, one-quarter of the earth. In 1926, the empire was re-christened the British Commonwealth of Nations, an idea first proposed in 1917. The Commonwealth extended “dominion status” – meaning independence in internal and external affairs in exchange for loyalty to the Crown – to the white colonies of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, but not to its non-white possessions in Africa and for India. France, the world’s second largest colonial power, also emerged from World War I with an expanded empire. France moved from encouraging cultural “assimilation” of its colonial peoples, whatever their race and religion, to representing various folklorized cultures as orbiting around a dominant French culture. But neither the British nor the French approach were stable. As a result of World War I, the long-standing tensions between nation and empire increased, just as did the tensions within nation states over “minority” nations.

The Soviet Union, having improbably succeeded the dissolved tsarist empire, attempted to combine empire and nations in a novel structure that transcended the model of empire and addressed the problem of minority rights. To assess the Soviet innovation, one must take stock not just of the French and British reformulated empires, but also of the various and competing approaches to political community that were adopted. Nazi Germany sought to defy the trend against continental empire by means of war and annexation (or military occupation) under a racial hierarchy. Japan sought to benefit from the contradictions in European overseas empire by appealing to supposed racial solidarity – an “Asia for Asians” imperialism.¹⁴⁰ The United States offered yet another model based on the elimination of native peoples and the assimilation of all others, excepting blacks, in an American “nation of nations.” It was in this context that the Soviet

¹⁴⁰ Norman Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, 2 vols. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1974); Alan S. Milward, *War, Economy, and Society, 1939–1945* (London: Lane, 1977); Peter Duus et al., eds., *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). Pre-1931 Japanese imperialism studied and adopted from European examples, but also entertained notions of displacing China as the “middle kingdom” in Asia. Lewis H. Gann, “Western and Japanese Colonialism: Some Preliminary Comparisons,” in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*, ed. Raymon H. Myers and Mark Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 497–525; William G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism, 1894–1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

Union sought to defy the trend against continental empire, and to overcome the contradictions that beset the British and the French – not by seeking to follow the American unitary approach but by institutionalizing what seemed to be the enemy of empire: the nation. Francine Hirsch has aptly called the Union model an “empire of nations,” and shows that it was a project no less fantastic than the idea of non-capitalist modernity or socialism.

The process that led to the Union was very much an acceptance of the facts on the ground introduced by World War I (particularly the national armies formed out of imperial POWs), and of expedient alliances.¹⁴¹ As a kind of heir to the Habsburg empire, the Union joined ethno-territorial federalism for “historic nations” with national cultural autonomy for almost everyone else – not on a personal basis but as minority groups within historic nations (until the mid-1930s, when national cultural autonomy within historic nations was withdrawn). By contrast, in the post-World War I Greek and Turkish population “exchanges,” religion was the main marker of identity: Orthodox people were expelled to Greece, even if they spoke only Turkish. In post-World War I Russia, the pre-war multi-ethnic communities that were religiously based – whether Orthodox or Muslim – could not sustain the religious umbrella; all communities had to be fundamentally ethnic. Even the Krashens, a tsarist-era category invented to describe baptized Tatars, became a Soviet ethnicity.¹⁴² The triumph of ethnicity was unequivocal.

But Hirsch details how contemporaries struggled to decide who or what was a nation, as opposed to a tribe, or a clan. In the planning and execution of the 1926 census, for example, the political authorities, with the assistance of a large team of ethnographers, went about trying to find commonalities between various groups so that they could be combined into nations. Yet other groups with recognizable commonalities were divided. In other words, the Soviet Union was a colonial project – but with a difference.¹⁴³ Several “colonial” peoples had been given state borders, parliaments, academies of science, and native-language schools to produce native elites. There were eleven such Union republics during

¹⁴¹ Karl Tiander, *Das Erwachen Osteuropas: Die Nationalitätenbewegung in Russland und der Weltkrieg. Erinnerungen und Ausblicke* (Vienna and Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1934); Jurij Borys, *The Sovietization of Ukraine, 1917–1923: The Communist Doctrine and Practice of National Self-Determination*, rev. ed. (Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1981).

¹⁴² Paul Werth, “Non-Russians on ‘Russification’: Religious Conversion, Indigenous Clergy, and Negotiated Assimilation in Late-Imperial Russia,” paper presented at Princeton University, February 2000.

¹⁴³ Francine Hirsch, “Empire of Nations: Colonial Technologies and the Making of the Soviet Union, 1917–1939,” Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1998. See also Terry Martin, “An Affirmative Action Empire: Ethnicity and the Soviet State, 1923–1938,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1996.

the interwar period. For the case of Ukraine, George Liber has written that the USSR 1920s policy of nativization, along with the Estonian law on national-cultural autonomy, held the promise of becoming the most tolerant of minority rights in all newly independent states of Eastern Europe. Then, of course, came the 1930s famine and terror and everything else. Amid the violence, many scholars, Liber notes, lost sight of the continuation of the trend toward Ukrainianizing a large and diverse population that, with few exceptions, had not considered itself Ukrainian in 1917.¹⁴⁴

Consider the neighboring example of interwar Greater Romania, which after the fall of the Romanov dynasty had annexed Bukovina and Bessarabia from Russia. Irina Livezeanu shows that the establishment of an educational bureaucracy to found and oversee schools as well as to devise a curriculum for Romanianizing the new territories ran up against the enormity of the task, and a scarcity of resources. Furthermore, much of Romania's new population in cities was ethnic German, Austrian, Jewish, Ukrainian, or Russian, and they resisted Romanianization in city schools and universities. Livezeanu delineates the battles over what it meant to be Romanian, especially the differences by region. General frustration, she suggests, contributed to the formation of a "generation of 1922," whose experiences led it to become intolerant of foreigners. Coming of age, the youth found common ground with old-style conservatives on the new terrain of integral nationalism and fascism.¹⁴⁵ All of this makes Ukrainianization in Ukraine seem not tolerant but remarkable, notwithstanding the contradictions.

Turkey offers another important point of comparison with the Soviet Union. During and immediately after World War I, some one million people moved into Anatolia from the Ottoman Empire's Muslim provinces as well as

¹⁴⁴ George O. Liber, *Soviet Nationality Policy, Urban Growth, and Identity Change in the Ukrainian SSR 1923–1934* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 32–33. On Estonia, see Karl Aun, "The Cultural Autonomy of National Minorities in Estonia," *Yearbook of the Estonian Learned Society in America* 1 (1951–53), 26–41. Analyses of interwar Soviet Ukraine could take better note of comparisons with Poland. See Stephan Horak, *Poland and Her National Minorities, 1919–1939* (New York: Vantage Press, 1961); S. Vvytsky and S. Baran, "Western Ukraine under Poland," in *Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1963), 833–50; Alexander J. Motyl, "Ukrainian Nationalist Political Violence in Inter-War Poland, 1921–1939," *East European Quarterly* 19: 1 (1985), 45–55; Peter D. Stachura, "National Identity and the Ethnic Minorities in Early Inter-War Poland," in *Poland between the Wars*, ed. Stachura (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 60–86.

¹⁴⁵ Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, and Ethnic Struggle, 1918–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995). For comparison with Moldova, founded in 1924 and expanded in connection with World War II, see Nicholas Dima, *From Moldavia to Moldova: The Soviet-Romanian Territorial Dispute* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1991); and Charles King, *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2000).

from Russia. Turkification, following the Ottoman collapse, aimed at making these disparate peoples a nation, while undermining the grip of Islam, but many villagers did not accept Atatürk's non-Islamic nationalism or the Europeanization and statization in education, legal codes, dress, and surnames.¹⁴⁶ Be that as it may, Atatürk's dramatic reforms had a notable impact on the Soviet authorities already in the 1920s. "Even though the evidence is fragmentary," Gregory Massell has written, "it is beyond doubt that one of the impulses behind growing Soviet disposition to attack Central Asia's traditional world head-on was the perceived competition from Turkey. ... Even Afghan legislation abolishing polygamy and lowering the amount of *kalym* seemed of interest to some [native female teachers]" in Soviet Central Asia.¹⁴⁷ By extension, one could examine the Soviet Caucasus in light of developments in Iran as well as Turkey.¹⁴⁸ Soviet authorities were interested in having their country appear to be a part of Asia for Asians, and a part of Europe for Europeans.

It is important not to imagine that empire is "out there," far away, rather than in the metropole. Louise Young, for example, has examined not the Japanese impact on Manchuria, but the impact of the colonization of Manchuria on Japan, arguing that in "total imperialism," like total war, the experience was made on the home front. She shows – recalling LeMahieu – that in Japan mass marketing technology and the constitution of a national market led to the formation of a national mass culture, especially the penetration of the rural "market." This process was driven by the war fever, beginning in 1931, which greatly expanded the number and circulation of newspapers, and was a winning subject for radio, newsreels, magazines, movies, and recorded music. Manchurian "development projects converted people to the idea that imperialism was good, a force of modernization and progress," Young explains. That was true even of liberals

¹⁴⁶ Jacob M. Landau, ed., *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984); Gavin D. Brockett, "Collective Action and the Turkish Revolution: Towards a Framework for the Social History of the Atatürk Era, 1923–1928," in *Turkey before and after Atatürk: Internal and External Affairs*, ed. Sylvia Kedourie (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1999), 44–66.

¹⁴⁷ Gregory Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919–1929* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 219. See also Douglas Taylor Northrop, "Uzbek Women and the Veil: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia," Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1999. Turkey outlawed the fez, but did not outlaw the veil, though Atatürk expressed public disapproval of it. In the 1930s, Turkification increasingly focused on the Turkish "race," buttressed by theories of Central Asian Turks as the originators of all civilization. Caglar Keydar, "The Ottoman Empire" and Serif Mardin, "The Ottoman Empire," both in *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building. The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires*, ed. Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 30–44, 115–29, respectively.

¹⁴⁸ George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran, 1918–1948: A Study in Big-Power Rivalry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1949).

and radicals who had no love for the army and every sympathy for Chinese nationalism, but who became involved in administering imperialism while projecting utopian dreams of building railways and planning towns to the future. Empire is broad enough to incorporate visions of tolerance and repression, unapologetic domination and paternalism.¹⁴⁹

Japan's Korean colony makes for yet another illuminating comparison. Michael Robinson shows how even under strict censorship and prohibitions against Korean language, the Japanese desire to use radio to spread propaganda brought the Japanese to introduce Korean-language broadcasts. Such programs, along with newspapers and cinemas, played an enormous role in promoting a sense of the Korean nation. Radio encouraged the revival of traditional music genres, new forms of dramatic arts (such as the live ongoing melodrama), the import of Western jazz, the development of modern popular song, and a standardization of the Korean vernacular.¹⁵⁰ Japanese colonial overseers intended few of these developments, but empire had many unintended consequences. Barbara Brooks shows that Koreans had more opportunities in Japan than in Japanese-controlled Korea, and that some served in varied positions in the Manchukuo's colonial administration.¹⁵¹ This calls to mind the need to analyze not simply the non-Russian areas but the role of Soviet "colonial" subjects throughout the realm, and to view the Union in the round. In the early Soviet years, participation in the wars of imperial reconquest became a launching pad for careers in Moscow. Later, service in the non-Russian republics for Russians provided a key to advancement in Moscow.

Much more can be said. Let me end this section with the question of the representation of empire. A taboo on Russian national style in architecture lasted roughly until the 1940s, but during the interwar period there was no such ban

¹⁴⁹ Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), quotation 303. A vast emigration ensued of more than 300,000 peasant resettlers to Manchukuo, parallel to the flow of Italian peasants to Libya in the 1930s. Claudio Segré, *The Fourth Shore: The Italian Colonization of Libya* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). On interwar migration within the Soviet Union, particularly of ethnic Russians to other republics, see Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 118–25.

¹⁵⁰ Michael Robinson, "Broadcasting, Cultural Hegemony, and Colonial Modernity in Korea, 1924–1945," in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, ed. Gi-wook Shin and Robinson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 52–69; and idem, "Mass Media and Popular Culture in 1930s Korea: Cultural Control, Identity, and Colonial Hegemony," in *Korean Studies: New Pacific Currents*, ed. Dae-Sook Suh (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 59–82.

¹⁵¹ Barbara J. Brooks, "Peopling the Japanese Empire: The Koreans in Manchuria and the Rhetoric of Inclusion," in *Japan's Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy 1900–1930*, ed. Sharon Minichiello (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 25–44.

on non-Russian national motifs. In fact, as Greg Castillo shows in an essay based on his dissertation, the details of folklore were merged with monumental neo-classicism to form a national socialist architectural idiom that had wide application and influence.¹⁵² This development, usually attributed to the aesthetic mandates of Stalin and the party in the late 1930s, was visible in the 1920s in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and elsewhere, and in Moscow at the three great exhibitions of 1923, 1939, and 1954. Castillo zeroes in on the 1939 All-Union Agricultural Exhibition (or VSKh, the future VDNKh), which was planned for the 20-year jubilee in 1937, opened in August 1939, and drew 4.5 million visitors its first year.¹⁵³ VSKh national-monumental-classicist style, Castillo writes, was partly a by-product of institutional power struggles among architects who mobilized nationalism to gain state commissions. It also reflected the general Soviet paradox that national identity was supposed to be the driving force behind internationalism and a specifically Soviet socialist style.¹⁵⁴

One can ridicule the Soviet approach as self-serving and disingenuous. One can also place it in comparative context. Soviet colonialism, rather than segregate modernity from primitivism, as had been the case in previous world colonial exhibitions in Paris and elsewhere, wrapped the folklore at VSKh in an idiom of progress and development: Uzbekistan was both ancient minarets and cotton production. Some Soviet propagandists even spoke of “progressive colonialism,” in contrast to the rapacious British kind, though the more common phrase was “friendship of peoples.” Yet the Soviet colonial enterprise based upon nations would also suffer post-World War II decolonization. As was the case with the world economy, autarky in cultural and imperial policy proved to be an illusion.

Interwar Modernities, not Post-World War II Modernization

Between about 1890 and the 1940s, but especially after World War I, the term modernity (and modern times) enjoyed a certain vogue. Developed first in the arts, it came to signify the speeding up of time and the reduction of distances. It

¹⁵² Greg Castillo, “Peoples at an Exhibition: Soviet Architecture and the National Question,” in *Socialist Realism without Shores*, ed. Thomas Lahusen and Evgeny Dobrenko (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997) 91–119. See also Vladimir Papernyi, *Kul'tura dva*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1996); and Jamey Gambrell, “The Wonder of the Soviet World,” *The New York Review of Books*, 22 December 1994, 30–35.

¹⁵³ “Pamiatnik narodnomu khoziaistvu: VDNKh ispolnilo' 60 let,” *Kommersant*, 30 July 1999.

¹⁵⁴ Castillo considers the Soviet Union too much as a world unto itself, missing an opportunity to compare Soviet architecture to the WPA, or to the Nordic motifs described in note 24. See also Herman Lebovics, *True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity, 1900–1945* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); and D. Bruce Marshall, *The French Colonial Myth and Constitution Making in the Fourth Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

also came to signify worship of the machine and/or a predilection for social engineering and a vocabulary of scientific management. Above all, modernity signified the arrival on the historical stage of “the masses.” The new mass age, which presented a challenge to liberal and monarchical regimes in the late 19th century, was made possible by the beginnings of mass production and by the advent of new media prior to World War I. But in many ways – from shifts in gender relations to coordination of the economy and society – World War I constituted a multi-front radicalization. One of the most far-reaching effects of the war was to bring about a ballooning of the state, not just in the Soviet Union. Increased state *capacity*, like increased state responsibility, was a critical aspect of the competing interwar great powers representing themselves as modern, advanced, progressive, inevitable.

I write of modernities, not modernization. Nowadays, if the term modernity is used, it is mostly in the singular, and is invoked to mean parliamentary democracy combined with a market economy, a definition connected to the rise in American power. The notion of the United States as the guiding example of the ascendancy of democracy and the market was famously elaborated, after World War II, in “modernization theory.” That theory’s two-stage (traditional-modern) rather than three-stage evolution (feudalism-capitalism-socialism) was intended to forestall an “unnatural” intervention in the historical process by a socialist intelligentsia, and to encourage what were called Third World countries to achieve the transition to modernity. One can argue about the value of modernization theory as analysis or politics.¹⁵⁵ My concern is to prevent its retroactive application to a far different interwar conjuncture.

What of “totalitarianism,” a term of the interwar period? Popularized during Italian fascism, and applied to the Soviet Union by the comparison-minded émigré Mensheviks and others prior to the Nazi invasion,¹⁵⁶ the notion of totalitarianism, like modernization, caught on after World War II. Indeed, far more than “modernization,” “totalitarianism” helped win the Cold War. Now that the Cold War is over, however, the need for such a politically puissant, yet manifestly simplistic concept is unavoidably diminished. Indeed, what does totalitarianism offer by way of conceptual sophistication even on its own turf – comparative political systems? When William Sheridan Allen first went to Northeim in the

¹⁵⁵ Dean C. Tipps, “Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15: 2 (1973), 199–226; Carl Pletsch, “The Three Worlds, or the Division of Social Scientific Labor, circa 1950–1975,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23: 2 (1981), 565–90.

¹⁵⁶ Leonard Schapiro, *Totalitarianism* (London: Pall Mall, 1972); Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); André Liebich, *From the Other Shore: Russian Social Democracy after 1921* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

1960s, he interviewed numerous surviving Nazis and even German Social Democrats from the 1930s.¹⁵⁷ In the 1960s, indeed after 1938, it would have been very hard to find surviving Communists from a comparable Soviet town, let alone members of non-communist political parties. The Nazis killed millions of victims, but were the political systems and the political dynamics in these two countries so similar? Each system made extensive use of terror, which enabled comparisons for political purposes after World War II, but did their terror operate similarly? Were the state structures and personal dictatorships comparable in daily operation and long-term trajectory?¹⁵⁸

Even Leszek Kolakowski, no friend of either Nazism or communism, saw fit to differentiate their varied intellectual and cultural resonance.¹⁵⁹ In any case, whatever our views on the Nazi-Soviet comparison, it is indisputable that our comparisons need to be broadened to better approximate the comparisons made by interwar actors.¹⁶⁰ “Totalitarianism,” however, tends to preclude a full appreciation of the common challenges faced by all the major powers between the wars, as well as the mutual surveillance and borrowings (or refusals to borrow) across the dictatorship-parliamentary divide. Furthermore, by juxtaposing the USSR (as the new Nazi Germany) and the United States, totalitarianism, even in its best elaborations, left little room for the extremely important dissipation of the European liberal democracies in the interwar period or the broad popularity of interwar authoritarianism, both of which help to illuminate the Soviet Union’s initial strength and long-term weaknesses. We are in a new conjuncture, which should enable us to see the interwar period on its own terms and in its full complexity.

In one of the first post-Cold War overviews of Europe in the 20th century, the interwar ennui of parliamentarism and élan of mobilizational authoritarianism have been reemphasized. Mark Mazower notes that the smug British establishment responded to Italian fascism by speculating that Latins were unsuited to democracy. It was only Nazi Germany’s wartime drive for hegemony, he concludes, that forced Britain to reinvent democracy and expand social and eco-

¹⁵⁷ William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: the Experience of a Single German Town 1922–1945* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1965, 1984).

¹⁵⁸ For an elaboration of the Soviet political system and dynamic, see my *Magnetic Mountain*, chap. 7.

¹⁵⁹ Leszek Kolakowski, “Communism as a Cultural Formation,” *Survey* 29: 2 (1985), 136–48.

¹⁶⁰ That includes paying greater attention to the still under-studied mutual curiosity, mixing both admiration and excoriation, which contemporary functionaries and intellectuals from Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union shared toward each other. Several forthcoming dissertations address this interchange, including one by Stefan Siegel of Princeton University. It is also the subject of work by Amir Weiner.

conomic rights.¹⁶¹ Pressures exerted by the Soviet model, less well examined by Mazower, reinforce his argument. Interwar authoritarianism, by pushing a social agenda and mobilizing the masses, caught the parliamentary powers off-guard. The Depression-induced doubts about the market, and the trend toward economic nationalism or self-sufficiency, even in Britain, also undermined the confidence of the democracies and bolstered the appeal of authoritarianism, which came in competing guises favored by the left or the right.¹⁶² So much – one might conclude – for the retrospective application of modernization’s narrative of the triumph of democracy and the market to the interwar period. But were the popular interwar dictatorships “modern”?

A few analysts, such as Hans Mommsen, still dispute the modernity of Nazi industry, media use, and mobilization techniques, though their arguments turn on a restrictive definition of modernity (as a form of pure, profit-maximizing capitalism), which existed nowhere.¹⁶³ More flexibly, Detlev Peukert has argued that the “project of modernity” could lead in different directions, and that the Third Reich was a “pathological” one. Similarly, Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann argue that “the word ‘modern’ only fits the Third Reich if one strips it of all connotations of ‘betterment’ or ‘improvement’ to an extent which renders it utterly meaningless.”¹⁶⁴ But did not many contemporaries think of Nazi measures as synonymous with “betterment” and “improvement,” particularly of the nation or Volk as a whole, however odious that may appear to us? Jeffrey Herf suggests that we think in terms of “reactionary modernism,” a form of nihilism that rejected “Enlightenment reason” but embraced modern technology. Herf admits, however, that the thinkers he calls reactionary modernists never described themselves in such terms.¹⁶⁵ Nazi racialism, like the European civilizing mission abroad, involved claims of being the most-up-to-date science. Yet it remains difficult for historians to accept the power and popularity of illib-

¹⁶¹ Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe’s Twentieth Century* (New York: Random House, 1999). See also Karl J. Newman, *European Democracy between the Wars* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1970; German original, 1965). It was the experience of Greece during the Nazi occupation and the immediate post-WWII period through which Mazower became attuned to the force of the Nazi challenge, and the belatedness of a British response.

¹⁶² R. J. Overy, *War and Economy in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

¹⁶³ For the persistence of the debate, see Mark Rossman, “National Socialism and Modernization,” in Bessel, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany*, 197–229.

¹⁶⁴ Peukert, *The Weimar Republic*, xiii; Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, quotation 2–4.

¹⁶⁵ Four of the six intellectuals chosen for the book (Spengler, Heidegger, Schmitt, and Sombart) do not fit the framework. Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984). For an argument from the opposite extreme, see Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).

eral modernity, not least because of the Holocaust. Many contemporaries had far less trouble with the combination of modern and illiberal.¹⁶⁶

Like Nazism (and to a lesser extent, Italian fascism), the Soviet Union offered an internationally popular form of illiberal modernity that claimed to transcend parliamentarism. Like Nazism, Italian fascism, and Japanese militarism, Soviet socialism proactively integrated millions of people via coordinated social and political organizations, and frequent mobilizations, into a participatory crusade for a dynamic, purposeful society (whose practices the Soviet party authorities sought, at great commitment of resources, to carry over into the Gulag). Like other authoritarian regimes, the Soviet Union made vigorous use of new mass media techniques. Like other authoritarian regimes, it had no choice but to accept mass culture and even mass consumption, while trying to put its stamp on them through censorship, proactive propaganda, and an effective cult of the leader. But the Soviet Union was not just another authoritarian regime predicated on mass mobilization that combined elements of modernity (with differing degrees of enthusiasm). Hailing itself as a “new civilization,” the Soviet Union entailed a violent experiment in an avowedly noncapitalist modernity and in an avowedly non-colonial colonialism.

To an extent comparable only to the United States – which also liked to cast itself as a new civilization, of a very different kind – Soviet socialism not only greatly expanded the mass production of machines by machines, but also propagated a vision of an automated, heavy industrial world that equated technology with progress, while insisting that the elimination of private property made its version that much more progressive. Unencumbered by private property interests, Soviet socialism institutionalized comprehensive social welfare, from subsidized leisure, education, and medical care, to social insurance, maternity leave, and pensions, that endlessly extended a logic of responsibility for, and state regulation of, society and populations – exceeding anything contemplated or attempted in Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and imperial Japan, or in Britain, France, and the United States. Just as radically, the Soviet Union not only accepted but also consolidated the trend toward the nation, breathing new life into the ostensibly doomed project of continental empire, trumping most minority policies in Eastern Europe (where they existed), competing head on with the proximate Turkish experiment, and taunting the colonial approach of the British and French overseas empires. Before and after Soviet troops clashed with the Japanese in the Mongolian-Manchurian border areas, Soviet media also attacked

¹⁶⁶ On what might be called the question of “illiberal subjectivity,” see Jochen Hellbeck, “Laboratories of the Self: Diaries from the Stalin Era,” Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1998.

Japan's supposedly "anti-imperialist" imperialism in Asia, which was to bring Japan into war with the U.S.¹⁶⁷

In sum, for all its relatively primitive material conditions and its peasant majority, the Soviet Union appears as an unusual reflection of the interwar conjuncture: a thoroughgoing champion of its own versions of mass production and mass politics; an exploiter, again in its own way, of mass culture and mass consumption; and a leader in the logic and practice of welfare as well as in tackling the contradictions between empire and nation. Even so, mass terror and extensive use of forced labor were interpreted, by some contemporaries, as characteristics of the age. To be sure, many people inside and outside the Soviet Union, even those who were sympathetic to socialism, saw the terror and Gulag as signs of "backwardness" and a horrible disgrace. But others saw them as, at a minimum, politically necessary, and not a few contemporaries viewed terror as a modern form of political struggle and the Gulag as a more advanced, and possibly more humane form of criminal policy than the prevailing systems in "bourgeois" countries. The Gulag and mass terror could be both a source of legitimacy and illegitimacy. Be that as it may, during the interwar years, especially during the Great Depression, the USSR looked to many contemporaries to be well positioned on what they viewed as the historical curve.

The Cunning of History

"Everything that happens in Russia today happens for the sake of the mass," wrote the Hungarian-born visionary, René Fülöp-Miller, after a visit to the Soviet Union in the mid-1920s. "Art, literature, music, and philosophy serve only to extol its impersonal splendor, and, gradually, on all sides, everything is being transformed to the new world of the 'mass man' who is the sole ruler. A fundamental upheaval has thus begun, and there can be no doubt that a new era is coming to birth."¹⁶⁸ But for all his insights, Fülöp-Miller was wrong. It was not mass mobilization under dictatorships that enshrined "the rule" of the mass man, but democratic liberalism as well as the market and mass consumption, mass culture, and social welfare. Charlie Chaplin, whose 1936 cinematic expression of mass culture shifts from the factory setting to the department store, was on to something. By the 1950s, the interwar trend of mass politics, which was so favored by the authoritarian regimes, would give way to a postwar politics of consumerism, while by the 1970s, the importance of big batch, low quality mass

¹⁶⁷ Akira Iriye, *Power and Culture: The Japanese-American War, 1941–1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

¹⁶⁸ René Fülöp-Miller, *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism: An Examination of Cultural Life in Soviet Russia* (London and New York: Putnam, 1927), 4; German-language original, 1926.

production would definitely decline, as would the weight of heavy industry. As a result, after the greatest economic boom the capitalist world had ever seen, a marketing and advertising-led mass consumption would take shape and form the basis of the consolidation of democratized parliamentary regimes into explicit welfare states. These unforeseen shifts in the political, cultural, and economic context provide one of the keys to understanding the Soviet Union's fall, just as the interwar world context helps us understand the Soviet Union's rise.

It is important not to assume the triumph of the fully articulated welfare state in democracies after World War II – or even the triumph of liberal democracy itself. During the interwar period, authoritarian regimes, including the Soviet Union, proved very successful at deploying welfare measures and using a broad commitment to social welfare to enhance their legitimacy. Liberal parliamentary regimes were slower to recognize the welfare nexus, and at least initially proved less enamored of achieving it in practice. Striking testimony to the balance of power between mobilizational authoritarianism and parliamentarism is supplied by the symbolic politics of the time, especially the iconography of machine-age dynamism married to aroused masses on the march. Beyond public representations of national mobilization, however, an examination of everyday mass culture indicates, unsurprisingly, that liberal parliamentary regimes were on the whole less threatened than authoritarian ones by taste-driven mass culture and more capable of folding mass culture phenomena into a consumption-oriented “solution” to the challenge of mass society.¹⁶⁹ Yet broad strands in both Britain and France dismissed the democratic ballast provided by mass culture as too much an American corruption, while they also dragged down the image of liberal democracy through the expansion of empire.

Then came the defeat of Nazism and fascism, and the post-World War II turn against authoritarianism in Western Europe (with the peripheral exception of Franco's Spain). Even though the specter of fascism continued to be invoked by communist propaganda, the Soviet defeat of the Nazi land army on the Eastern Front robbed the Soviet model of a principal pillar of its identity and legitimacy. Attempts to portray the United States as aggressively militarist in the fascist mold were no substitute. The pride and joy of Soviet accomplishments, industrial Fordism, rusted. And not only was Soviet socialism far more invested in heavy industrialism than the United States or Western Europe, but it lacked the market logic that compelled the capitalist democracies to make hard choices.

¹⁶⁹ There is considerable irony to the fact that “theories” of mass society became particularly prevalent in the 1950s, when mass society and mass politics were being superseded by mass consumerism. For an overview, see Salvador Giner, *Mass Society* (London: Martin Robertson, 1976). See also Theodor Geiger, “Die Legende von der Massengesellschaft,” *Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie* 39: 3 (1951), 305–53.

The system's commitment to heavy industry, which undermined Soviet efforts to advance consumerism, produced social and political structures that blocked postwar attempts to expand the share of light industry. Notwithstanding the victory in World War II, the Soviet state's cumbersome means of exercising political leverage – a pattern described as “strong thumbs, no fingers” – came to seem a terrible burden.¹⁷⁰ The Soviet system's time-bound structural weaknesses were still further exacerbated by the post-World War II wave of independence movements – at a time when the Soviet Union acquired and forcibly held near clone-systems in Eastern Europe.¹⁷¹ The ostensibly favorable colonial contrast with Britain and France, another element of Soviet identity, was also lost with postwar decolonization.¹⁷² Above all else after World War II, the geopolitical framework changed.

The United States vigorously embraced the role of the unambiguous institutional and symbolic champion of the liberal democratic model, to which European democracies deferred, however unhappily. In addition, the U.S. more or less sought to fill the void of the lost overseas empires.¹⁷³ Rather than the Soviet “empire of nations,” it was the American model of a “nation of nations” at home, complemented by expanding power and wealth via a world market economy, that provided the enduring example of successful “non-colonial colonialism.” At the same time, the “German problem,” notwithstanding the east-west division, ended with the post-World War II expulsions, which reversed nearly a millenium of German colonization in the east. And Japan was forced to abandon a military-imperial mission in Asia. In the event, peaceful and powerful economic giants took shape on the ruins of the Nazi New Order and the Japanese East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere. Thus, what had been a competition of modernities among the American model, the British and French parliamentary-imperial models, and the

¹⁷⁰ Don van Atta, “The USSR as a ‘Weak State’: Agrarian Origins of Resistance to Perestroika,” *World Politics* 42: 1 (1989), 129–49. See also Charles Lindblom, *Politics and Markets* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

¹⁷¹ Kathleen Stahl, *British and Soviet Colonial Systems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951).

¹⁷² Walter Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1952), 307–8; Hugh Seton-Watson, *The New Imperialism* (Chester Springs, PA: Dufour Editions, 1961); Alexandre Bennigsen, “Colonization and Decolonization in the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 4: 1 (1969), 141–52.

¹⁷³ See the clairvoyant work by William Thomas Stead, *The Americanization of the World, or, The Trend of the Twentieth Century* (New York: H. Markley, 1902), who perceived the future power of the United States. Concerned for the British empire, and informed by racial considerations, he advocated merging with the U.S.; otherwise, he warned that Britain – then the world's richest and most powerful country – would be faced with “our suppression by the United States as the centre of gravity in the English-speaking world ... and the ultimate reduction to the status of an English-speaking Belgium” (396).

various mobilizational models – whether Italian fascist, Nazi, imperial Japanese, or Soviet socialist – became by the late 1940s a competition between two stark alternatives (American-led capitalism versus Soviet socialism), notwithstanding the search for an institutionally ill-defined “third way.”¹⁷⁴ What a turn of events!

But in the 1930s, of course, no one could know for sure that Nazism and Japanese militarism would be defeated and the two countries transformed into democracies and mass consumer societies, just as no one could be sure that the British and French liberal democracies would relinquish their colonies (however reluctantly), that the U.S. would assume an aggressive global leadership role for its model, and that even the countries in Western Europe not under direct U.S. occupation would more or less close ranks. Who knew that the Great Depression would end and be followed by an unprecedented capitalist economic boom? Who knew that a certain type of mass production, even heavy industry, would become a burden rather than an asset? Who knew that near constant mass mobilization would cease to be practicable for socialization and integration? Who knew that mass culture and mass consumption were not tools of authoritarianism but corrosive of authoritarianism and potential foundations for democracy? And who knew that the innovative structure of an empire of nations would, in 1991, be dissolved by members of the Soviet elite when they discovered the game was lost, but also that they could survive by falling back upon the nation-state republics created within the USSR?

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¹⁷⁴ Astonishingly, Eric Hobsbawm, in his history of the world in the 20th century, almost completely ignores the United States. It is not just the unexpected rise and unexpected fall of Soviet socialism and the Union, the thwarted violent aggrandizement and subsequent peaceful successes of Germany and Japan, or the initial expansion and then protracted end of the British and French empires, but also the multidimensional colossus of the United States that dominates the story of the 20th century. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York: Pantheon, 1994).