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rogant diatribes against the few who dared develop more fundamental and critical analyses (such as Hannah Arendt and Raymond Aron) do not support the respect some partially converted epigones still wish to pay them.

The myth of the USSR was discussed in Cortona in the atmosphere of the newly emerging myth of Gorbachev's perestroika which quite a few among the participants were heartily ready to adopt as a welcome "third way," in spite of the very sober appraisal of Soviet reforms from the inside provided by L. Karpinskii and of the vibrant defence of market-based societies launched from the floor (and unreported in the volume) by Adam Michnik. The conference and its proceedings would have benefited from the inclusion of some ideologically and culturally dissenting voices from both the east and the west and from modesty in the discussion of myths by some of the very people who had contributed to them.

In light of the knowledge and rethinking caused by perestroika, the conclusions of some of these papers seem more mythical than the myths they discuss. Sheila Fitzpatrick insists that there were real sources of popular legitimacy and social support for Stalin, namely the historic mission of Russia's revolutionary proletariat from which Soviet administrators, managers and professionals were drawn and who formed "the new Soviet elite of upwardly mobile exproletarians." For M. Reyfman, after the death of the Soviet model for the world, the USSR might still be able to adapt its system to the necessities of effective development, thus providing the European left with new values. John Barber's paper which, on the one hand, provides evidence of the horrors of Stalinism, on the other hand submits that any government after the 1930s was exceptional "only in its categorical confidence of success and in the scale of unforeseen consequences which resulted from its actions." Vittorio Strada takes for granted that the "socialist prejudice" must supplement the "democratic prejudice" that must not be renounced when judging Soviet communism. Robert V. Daniels maintains that the Soviet "system embodied institutional forms and social values that had nothing in common with Marxism except in the most superficial sense."

Some of the most stimulating approaches to the debate are provided by Andrea Graziosi's overview of the better knowledge of Soviet reality (compared to the common people's knowledge) which governments got through their diplomatic officials (an assessment also fruitfully developed in Giorgio Petracci's paper); and by Marcello Flores' comparison between the enthusiastic and naive understanding of Soviet reality by intellectual travelers (mostly leftists) compared to the disenchanted reports coming from western technicians working on the spot.

But only Victor Zaslavsky raises the crucial question: why most western intellectuals who remained unaffected by 20th century totalitarianism got deeply "infected" by the Soviet type. The answer lies only in part in the consistent practice of disinformation which totalitarian, Soviet-type regimes where able to carry out. The main reasons for the infection, according to Zaslavsky, must be found in the socialist and utopian stream of western thought, in its revolutionary radicalism and in marxism. Within these cultural paradigms, western intellectuals could not criticize the nationalization of the means of production and the delegitimization of private property. The Soviet regime lied, but western intellectuals wished to be fooled.

It would be possible to carry forward Zaslavsky's thesis, arguing, as in Toynbee, that marxism is but a leaf in the tree of christianity. The anti-market and anti-capitalist culture which helped to sustain the myth of communism in the western world is still alive. A discussion on the negative myth of market capitalism should, perhaps, come next and challenge repentant intellectuals to come to terms with the world in which they live.

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How do you honor a man who, during the course of a bar-lounge conversation at a AAASS convention, yields idiomatic expressions in more languages than there are
admirable interlocutors gathered around him (and these are not a few)? A man who has directed nary a Ph.D. from start to finish and yet whose scholarship dominates the lectures of virtually everyone who teaches a course on twentieth-century Russia? A man who wafts you through the tumult of Soviet history by mixing social-scientific categories with cooking metaphors, whirling hand motions and dancing eyebrows, and then reminds you that the country’s remarkable existence has not been very long, really, just about the length of a man’s life? A man whose name no one knows for sure how to pronounce and which the Wilno goan himself pronounces any number of ways?

In a reflection of the international masshtabnost’ of Moshe Lewin’s influence, the twelve contributors to this festschrift reside in France, Germany, England, Scotland, Brussels, the United States and Canada (the editors could well have added colleagues from Russia, Italy, Israel, Lewin’s native Poland and many more countries). The varied essays address subjects on which Lewin has often led the way. Lewis Siegelbaum extends his own forays into Soviet labor relations with an essay on foremen—“the sergeants of an industrial army,” in Marx’s piquant phrase—who as of 1941 “retained most of the power they had at the outset of industrialization.” Maureen Perrie examines the familiar analogies between Stalin, Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible, all of whom in their own way battled Russia’s “backwardness.” Alec Nove offers a partial annotated bibliography of the derevenshchiki, reiterating the value of literature for the study of history and the importance of “the rural nexus.” Hans-Henning Schröder summarizes the research on upward mobility and mass repression during “the big drive,” focusing on changes in the structure and composition of the Communist Party. Jean-Paul Depretto, echoing Lewin on the socio-political significance of the dearth of mechanization in the construction industry, recapitulates the debate concerning the extent and contribution of forced labor (without, however, the benefit of recently declassified sources or Lewin’s aperçu concerning the need to relate the prevalence of chernorobochie, “free” and slave, to the rule of an elite). Peter Solomon investigates legality in Soviet political culture during “the Gorbachev phenomenon” and Peter Kneen testifies that Lewin’s analysis of “political undercurrents” in effect “predicted” perestroika. (Unfortunately Kneen’s essay was written before the collapse, so Lewin’s préssentiment on that score is unexamined).

As the principal influences on Lewin, Roland Lewidentifies Annales, Max Weber, marxism and the socialist tradition, arguing that Lewin’s work presupposes the zakonomernost’ of Russia undergoing a “modernization process” and the superiority of the bolshevik version of modernization (in the form expounded by the late Lenin and then taken up by Bukharin). “Lewin shows little interest for anything non-Bolshevik,” Lew writes, adding: “one sometimes has the impression that for him Bolshevism is unavoidable, not only because its victory made it the historian’s subject matter, but also because of its intrinsic merits.” Within this vein, R. W. Davies, the great economic historian and the person who in a sense “discovered” Lewin and brought him to Birmingham, asks whether in the history of socialism “Soviet developments since the 1920s (or since 1917?) may seem to have been a disastrous if educative false start?” In an answer that one could envision gaining Lewin’s consenso, Davies observes that “many of the traditional socialist arguments against private capitalism remain as powerful in 1990 as they were a century ago.”

Lewin has had a great deal to say about the pivotal civil war but not about nationality or the two in combination. Ron Suny, reviewing a large literature in order to establish that class and nationality must be seen as “social constructions” and their emergence as “contingent and historically determined,” delivers another installment on his promised revision of Richard Pipes’s account of the formation of the Soviet Union. Suny contests the view that neatly divides 1918–1921 into a civil war for Russia and a series of national revolts against Russia for the minorities. “The civil war in the disintegrating Russian Empire was a civil war everywhere,” Suny writes. “And though in the national peripheries it took on aspects of national wars, the social struggle... remained determinant”—a judgment that the wieloetniczny Lewin no doubt shares and may partially explain his neglect of the USSR’s multinational character.
Lewin has not been the only pioneer in the social history of Stalinism. Vladimir Andrl rehearsing the Russian Review debate about the much-discussed new cohort, coming down, not unexpectedly, against Lewin’s rival, the doyenne of 1930s history, Sheila Fitzpatrick. Now that the Soviet regime has run its course and more archives are opening, it will be interesting to follow not only what each has still to say but how their respective oeuvres will age. What will happen to his memorable formulations on “the quicksand society” and “the archaization of the socio-economic system” versus hers on “terror, progress, and upward mobility” and “the making of a new elite”? Perhaps we will come to see that their views are more complementary than either has cared to admit.

The festschrift’s most original contribution is by Gabor Rittersporn, the German-Hungarian turned Frenchman, who begins with the proposition that industrialization and collectivization vastly increased the responsibilities and power of the apparatus, and argues à la Lewin that “the activities of officialdom manifestly disorganized the regime and brought a deterioration in its relations to the rest of society.” That rampant incompetence and malfeasance could amount to “sabotage” appears to have been a conclusion shared by the regime and the general population. By way of demonstration, Rittersporn points to the state’s secretive nature, noting that “ever since the 1920s Soviet politics had been characterized by intricate covert maneuvering in the highest milieux.” He adds that, given the regime’s desire for order, the “irregular and uncontrollable working patterns” of its own officialdom, which created such disorder; were tantamount to “subversion.” For these reasons Rittersporn concludes, in words recalling his mentor, that “the projection of the regime’s elusively hostile universe . . . tallied with traditional popular beliefs.” Despite his opaque prose, occasional lack of logical transitions and the fact that some of the issues he raises are left hanging, Rittersporn has composed a mini-tour de force worthy of comparison to Moshe Lewin’s great essays on the “pathology” of “the Caliban state” and its interaction with society. Bravo!

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The author of June 22, 1941 has recorded in this thin volume a stirring account of scholarly life under Stalinism. Starting with the author’s graduate studies after the war and continuing with his early career at the Academy of Sciences’ Institute of World History, Nekrich’s memoir builds to the political struggles that preceded, accompanied and followed publication of his famous study of the blunders by which Stalin made it possible for the Wehrmacht to reach the Volga (the “Nekrich Affair” was in actuality a political odyssey lasting several years). While everything in this book was known to western historians long before its publication in 1966, June 22, 1941 presented politically explosive truths to a wide audience in the USSR for the first time. Along with the Daniel-Sinyavsky trial, the brezhnevite furor that led to the withdrawal of Nekrich’s book from the bookshelves (libraries without spetskhramy shred or even burned it) signalled the end of the relatively liberal stance toward the intelligentsia that prevailed under Khruschev.

The continued petty persecution the apparat visited upon Nekrich is in itself eloquent witness to the moral wretchedness of the Brezhnev regime. The author’s courageous refusal to make the self-abasing retraction and apology the party demanded, and the moral journey which took him from anti-Stalinism to rejection of the entire Marxist experiment, constitute the last part of the book. A noteworthy addition that did not appear in the original Russian version is the story of the progressive disillusionment of British superspy Donald Maclean—a friend whom the author wished to protect until his death in 1983— with the “actually existing socialism”