

COUNCIL^{on} FOREIGN RELATIONS

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Source: *Foreign Affairs*, Oct., 1966, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Oct., 1966), pp. 98-111

Published by: Council on Foreign Relations

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20039216>

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THE RISE AND FALL OF “SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM”

By Arthur P. Mendel

JOSEPH SCHUMPETER gave us the perfect definition of Marx’s scientific socialism when he called it “preaching in the garb of analysis.” After observing this illusory fusion of science and ethics for more than a century, we are fully aware of its consequences: the concentration of absolute power in the hands of self-appointed executors of history’s “laws,” and their easy justification of deprivation and oppression as the “scientifically” necessary price to be paid for a future good society.

Before socialists claimed to be scientists, or, as in the case of the Marxist revisionists, after they abandoned the claim, their behavior was ethically consistent with their goals and, in fact, differed little from that of their bourgeois opponents. But when they insisted that their goals were not only just, but also scientifically necessary and historically inevitable, they moved from this shared ethical code to one radically inconsistent with the moral foundations of socialism, one allowing the fullest scope to violence, cynicism and implacable conflict.

But if we are only too familiar with the dangers inherent in Marx’s secular chiliarism, we have also learned something about the conditions that help promote it. Parallels between the emergence of Marxism in Germany and its later spread to Russia suggest, for instance, that one such circumstance is the prevalence of what might be called vulgar positivism, a theory of knowledge that favored the easy formulation and uncritical acceptance of allegedly scientific laws of history by assuming an essential affinity between the study of human society and the study of nature.

A second, more important condition would seem to be the dramatic failure of earlier radical movements, such as those in western Europe in the 1840s and in Russia during the “populist” 1870s, and the consequently powerful attraction for defeated rebels of doctrines preaching inevitable success. The effect of that failure is seen in the progression of Marx’s own career, from the voluntaristic idealism of his philosophical notebooks, through the mid-century debacle to the long, arduous research in the British Museum in order to construct a myth that would make History do for the rebels what they had failed to do for themselves.

The direct relationship between failure to realize radical goals and the strong appeal of pseudo-scientific doctrines assuring victory was most dramatically demonstrated in Russia. Against the background of a still largely feudal society, with only the glimmerings of something that one might call developing capitalism, were set G. V. Plekhanov's proclamations in 1884 that “we indeed know our way and are seated in that historical train that speeds us to our goal,” and that history as the Marxists saw it was “proceeding to its logical conclusion with the ineluctable character of astronomical phenomena.”¹ Victor Chernov, a leader of the defeated populists, frankly conceded the Marxists' triumph: “Undoubtedly, the Marxists were at the time [the 1890s] the ‘rulers of thought’ of the younger generation, and all efforts to swim against the current were usually destined to complete failure.”²

The early history of Russian Marxism supports the view, therefore, that scientific socialism flourishes mainly in backward nations where conditions are least favorable to social progress. In more advanced countries, where such progress is apparent and can reasonably be expected to continue, there is no need for the encouraging myth of scientific socialism.

But what does a Marxian socialist do in an underdeveloped economy that has just begun its transformation? The early Russian Marxists supported the transformation unswervingly, worked for rapid industrialization and all the concomitant political, social and psychological changes that Marx considered prerequisites for a flourishing socialist society. As Nicholas Berdiaev put it in 1901, in the last years of his Marxist phase: “The ideal of *maximum productivity*, of maximum economic attainment, to which we must adjust ourselves, has in our eyes great value as the only means of achieving idealistic aims.” Consequently, he continued, “everything that fosters the productive forces is progressive; everything that impedes them is reactionary.”³

Those like the Russian Populists who were deeply troubled by the human costs involved in the transformation and hoped—vainly—to defeat it were dismissed as mere “weeping ideologists” with nothing to offer but “melancholy lamentations and ethical accusations.” Following the example of Marx, “who never shed

¹ “*Sochineniia*” (Collected Works). Moscow, 1922, 2nd ed., v. II, p. 239 and 340.

² “*Zapiski sotsialista revoliutsionera.*” Berlin, 1922, p. 276

³ “*Subektivizm i individualizm.*” St. Petersburg, 1901, p. 124.

tears over the 'painful paths' of economic development," the Russian Marxists were protected from such moral weakness and intellectual nonsense and "were not afraid to look bravely into the eyes of reality." Of course, as readers of "Capital" knew better than anyone else, the reality of industrialization was hardly pleasant: "Life for contemporary man is far from strewn with roses," but "he lives in the future as well as in the present and is therefore basically an optimist."⁴

Thus besides the prevalence of vulgar positivism and the frustration of radical opposition movements we have a third and still more essential condition favoring the adoption of Marxist scientific socialism—economic backwardness. Its record in developing economies makes clear, in fact, that the principal function of scientific socialism is precisely to support rapid industrialization. Since it has now gone the whole cycle, the history of Russian Marxism is particularly instructive here.

Being well-educated westerners, most pre-revolutionary Russian intellectuals favored the urban style; they relished their frequent trips to the great cities of the West and envied the material wealth and individual liberties that so sharply, and for them painfully, distinguished the advanced societies from their own. But a variety of influences encouraged a strong antipathy toward the very social system that had created all this. The disdain of the gentry for the bourgeoisie, along with its commerce and industry and its "formal" freedoms, affected even the most bitterly anti-aristocratic plebeian rebels. A feeling of guilt before the "dark people," the peasant masses just recently and, it seemed, only technically freed from serfdom, led to the demand that the "debt to the people" must be paid before any further benefits for the educated classes—such as urbanization and political freedom—were attained. Finally, there was the impact of pre-Marxist European socialism, which corroborated the dismal image of bourgeois society propagated by the gentry.

At a stroke, Marxism demolished all these arguments and countered all the attitudes that stood between the progressive intelligentsia and the westernized society they deeply craved. By

⁴ These quotations are drawn from the following works by early Russian Marxists: Berdiaev, *op. cit.*, p. 63, 118, 227; P. B. Struve, "Nashi utopisty," *Novoe slovo*, March 1897, p. 19 and "Moim kritkam," *Na Raznye temy* (St. Petersburg, 1902), p. 14, 34; Nemo (S. N. Bulgakov), "Prostaia rech o mudrenykh veshchakh," *Novoe slovo*, June 1897, p. 55 and "Manifest 'Narodnoi partii,'" *ibid.*, August 1897, p. 23–24. For a fuller account of the changing theories of Russian Marxists at the turn of the century, see the author's *Dilemmas of Progress in Tsarist Russia*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961.

becoming Marxists, the young radicals fully reconciled what they themselves wanted and what they now knew was really best for the people. Social justice *via* socialism, of course. And Marx had proved for them that industrialization and urbanization were the indispensable prerequisites for this. How, for example, could anyone talk of just distribution before there was high productivity? How could production leap forward unless the abysmally stagnant rural economy was replaced by an economic system based on modern science and technology and overwhelmingly industrial? What about the high cost of industrialization, the immense burdens on the peasantry and even on the emerging proletariat, destined to suffer the bourgeois exploitation so luridly described by Marx? “Why blame us?” the Marxist could honestly retort. It was all inevitable. This was the way of History, and History proceeds dialectically. They were no more responsible for the painful paths of History than is the meteorologist for the hurricane he predicts.

Here we see one of the sources of that fundamental paradox, by now so familiar, in the theory and practice of the “scientific socialist”: the persistent sacrifice of precisely that segment of the population, the working classes, whose interests all socialists must claim to serve. Or, stated in terms of the present argument, the appeal to science and analysis in the hope of facilitating the realization of ethical ideals has had, perversely, the opposite effect of promoting their total betrayal.

II

Since scientific socialism has long since become irrelevant in the advanced Western countries, it is only incidentally important that we are now thoroughly aware of this tragic history. But it is immensely significant that since Stalin’s death this awareness has been boldly and brilliantly expressed throughout the Soviet bloc, including Russia itself, and, as often as not, by Party members. The revisionist statements published in Poland and Hungary during the 1956 revolutions are still the most forceful of these expressions. “What right do I have,” wrote the young Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski, “in the name of that speculative dialectic of the future, to renounce at present the highest values of human existence? . . . I will not support any form of historical existence solely because someone persuades me that it is unavoidable—even if I believe in its unavoidability,

for which at present there is no evidence. If crime is the law of history, is the realization of this law reason for me to become a criminal? Why should that be so? . . .”⁵ The Hungarian author Gyorgy Paloczi-Horvath expressed the same judgment still more poignantly: “They fell in love so deeply with the generation of tomorrow, with the mankind to come, that there was hardly any love left for those who happened to live in today’s world. They were brought up in a manner which only filled their hearts with cold and abstract feelings, and they thought that the generation of the day after tomorrow could be happy even if it was conceived in suspicion and fear.”⁶ It is therefore not only “the relics of capitalist culture” that scholars are now urged to avoid but also the “thought-patterns of more recent origin, dating from the times of the grim myth with which those who were reconciled to the existing state of affairs salved their consciences: the myth of historical necessity as revealed to those who wield power.”⁷

It was precisely on these grounds that many early Russian Marxists, including those quoted above, converted at the turn of the century from Marxism to neo-Kantian idealism, which, in their eyes, gave the desired precedence to present values over future promises, to the existing human generation over the claims of scientific history. In 1903, only two years after publishing his Marxist “Subjectivism and Individualism,” Berdiaev, for example, wrote: “The paths to the future are many and diverse, and there cannot be here any exact sociological prediction, since there are no historical laws according to which the ideal of a better future will be realized by some fatalistic necessity.”⁸ Sergei Bulgakov, another convert from Marxism to Kantianism, wrote that the “absolute character of the imperative, ‘desire the good for its own sake,’ is not linked to any chance conditions fostering the realization of the good in history. . . . Merely because a particular process is actually occurring, does it follow that I should be attracted to it as something morally desirable?”⁹

⁵ As quoted in “Bitter Harvest,” ed. Edmund Stillman (New York: Praeger, 1959), p. 94–95. See also p. 244.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁷ Stanislaw Ossowski, “Class Structure in the Social Consciousness” (Warsaw, 1957; New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), as quoted by Leopold Labedz, *Survey*, October 1963, p. 170.

⁸ “*Kritika istoricheskogo materializma*,” *Mir Bozhii*, October 1903, p. 29.

⁹ “*Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa*,” in “*Problemy idealizma*,” ed. Pavel I. Novgorodtzev (St. Petersburg, 1902), p. 30, 37–38. Bulgakov summarized precisely the crux of the transition from Marxism to idealism: “Progress is not a law of historical development, but a moral task . . .” *Ibid.*, p. 37.

The ideological careers of some Polish and Hungarian Communists in 1956 or of some Russian Marxists at the turn of the century tell us little, however, about the contemporary Soviet mind. What of current Soviet historical thought? Do those who concern themselves with historical theory still insist on the affinity between history and natural science? Do they continue to focus their attention on general laws and patterns that permit confident prediction, rationalize past, present and future political actions and guarantee ultimate victory?

Judging from recent publications in Soviet historiography, no. Rather than emphasizing the similarities between science and history, stress now is put on the differences; rather than concentrating on general laws and patterns, a veritable campaign now under way seeks to promote the study by historians of concrete events and situations; and, finally, rather than concerning themselves with impersonal forces, historians are urged to attend to the uniquely human, “flesh-and-blood” qualities of experience long ignored by generalizers in search of laws.

“Each historical event possesses individual attributes characteristic of it alone,” writes A. V. Gulyga, one of the most prominent contemporary Soviet historiographers, “and to disclose these and preserve them for posterity is just as much the responsibility of the historian as is the generalization of materials studied by him.”¹⁰ Obviously, this responsibility can hardly be met by “skimming over the surface, describing facts from the point of view of already prepared, well-known conclusions.”¹¹ In the words of another outspoken revisionist, A. I. Gurevich, “A scholar is necessarily concerned with a geographically limited and relatively brief phase of the historical process, during which a general law may be only partly expressed by merely a few of its aspects or even a single one, or it may not appear at all.” He concludes, “It is obvious that History requires concrete explanations of occurrences, and mere references to sociological laws do not solve problems.”¹² At a major conference on historical methodology held in early 1964 this theme was restated again and again, usually in connection with attacks on the cult-of-personality

¹⁰ “O kharaktere istoricheskogo znaniia,” *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 9, 1962, p. 32.

¹¹ P. N. Fedoseev and Iu. P. Frantsev, “O metodologicheskikh voprosakh istoricheskikh nauk,” *Voprosy istorii*, no. 3, 1964, p. 21. This is a condensed stenographic account of the 1964 conference referred to in this article. A more complete coverage of the conference was published under the title “*Istoriia i sotsiologiia*” (Moscow: *Akademiia Nauk S.S.S.R.*, 1964).

¹² “Obshchii zakon i konkretnaia zakonomernost v istorii,” *Voprosy istorii*, no. 8, 1965, p. 16.

period, "when facts and documents were arbitrarily forced into preconceived patterns." The author of this last statement, P. A. Zhilin, a military historian, went on to make the following hopeful declaration: "It is necessary to elevate the *responsibility* of the historians for the facts they use, for their authenticity. . . . The value, the authority of historical investigation lies in its objectivity, in the truthfulness of the description of events and phenomena."¹³

And no longer can the historian so easily escape this responsibility by reverential citations from the classics, piling up "stock formulas, based on nothing but a clever selection of quotations and often having nothing at all to do with the circumstances, country, or period about which a particular historian is writing."¹⁴ One participant at the conference was still bolder in opposing this familiar Soviet scholasticism: "Can one really limit oneself when explaining one or another set of historical phenomena to a few statements from the classics of Marxism that were relevant to concrete situations, and that were, moreover, based on a study of sources and literature accessible to them at that time, before the appearance of a great deal of new factual data?"¹⁵

The full importance of all this insistence on the study of concrete facts becomes apparent when those who urge it go on to argue that such concern with the specific rather than the general distinguishes history from natural science. "The fact in historical science is not supplanted by the generalization; it is an end itself," Gulyga stated categorically.¹⁶ Consequently, he wrote elsewhere, "factual material plays a special role, one that is different from that played in purely theoretical disciplines. The latter use factual data only to support generalizations." For the historian, he continued, bringing out the fundamental point, "the fact is not only material for generalization, not simply an example illustrating the action of a general law which can be left out or replaced by others."¹⁷

The direction of such thought is hostile to the entire tradition of Marxism-Leninism, since the foundation for both, as well as the principal source of Party legitimacy, is the unqualified conviction that Party policies—past, present and future—derive

¹³ "Istoriia i sotsiologïa," p. 244-45.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

¹⁶ "O metodologicheskikh voprosakh," p. 37.

¹⁷ "O kharaktere," p. 32-33.

from a knowledge of social and historical laws that are as objective and “necessary” as those uncovered by natural scientists. There is no question about the fundamental role of prediction in traditional Marxist politics and historiography or politicized history. It is amazing, therefore, to watch Soviet historians and philosophers severely qualify its relevance in historical study. As long as oversimplified economic determinism prevailed, historians could easily knock together superficially convincing patterns and predictions. But for a variety of economic and political reasons Stalin undermined this essential doctrine, and its demolition has continued since Stalin’s death—to the point where Soviet authors now scoff at “vulgar” Marxist economic determinists in the West.¹⁸

Economic determinism may have some validity in general sociology, Gurevich conceded, but he emphatically stated and restated that “the concrete historical actions of people depend on the most diverse causes, among which, besides production, one must find a place for natural environment, national characteristics, psychology, ideology, external influences, all sorts of traditions, the level of cultural development, biological and demographic factors and many others.”¹⁹ Oh, for the simple days of “substructure” and “superstructure,” when one could outline tidy paths to the future! But in this cornucopia of influences, factors and causes, “Every historical event is the result of a convergence of many contributing conditions. A different convergence might result in a different event which would in turn lead to consequences different from those that in fact occurred and, thus, there would begin an entire chain of events and phenomena—a different variant of development. . . .”²⁰ However useful the historians’ findings may be for defining future prospects, Gulyga said on his way toward abdicating the prophet’s role, history itself does not deal with them; “its view is retrospective: its attention is centered on results already achieved.”²¹

Significantly, the renewal of interest in the humanity of history is explicitly associated with the separation of history from science. The role of “laws” in history is fundamentally different from their

¹⁸ See, for example, M. M. Rozental, “*O svyazi filozofskikh teorii s ekonomicheskim bazisom*,” *Voprosy filozofii*, no. 3, 1960, p. 146.

¹⁹ “*Obschii zakon*,” p. 19.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²¹ “The Subject Matter of Historical Scholarship,” *Soviet Studies in History*, Spring 1965, p. 54.

role in natural science, Gulyga wrote, because unlike the world of nature, where forces act blindly and where the resulting laws are immediately clear, "society consists of people endowed with consciousness and will who set for themselves specific aims and strive to realize them."²² There is no room in authentic historical scholarship for "stilted schematism," said one speaker at the 1964 conference, because history "is always factual in the best sense of the word; it reconstructs the past in all its full-blooded, many-colored, living clarity."²³ Using for his vehicle a discussion of Gogol as historian, a leading Soviet medievalist, L. V. Cherepin, devoted a lengthy article to this theme, recalling Gogol's opposition to all abstractions, his concern with "all the shifts and shades of feeling, excitement, suffering and joy," and his belief that a work of history should be at the same time a work of art.²⁴

Once attention returns to the human individual, to his personal aims and will, and to his concrete and uniquely human experience, the way is open to the study of the emotional and psychological facets of that experience. Gurevich has already emphasized the importance of social psychology for the study of the past. The historian, he urges, "must consider in each concrete case how the social life he studies is reflected in the minds of people, articulated into concepts, images and feelings and how, after undergoing an appropriate subjective transformation, these factors determine peoples' actions, moving separate individuals as well as social groups and masses to one or another activity." A notable feature of Gurevich's attitude, although by no means peculiar to him, is his sympathy toward Western bourgeois historians who have in his view given due attention to these subjective dimensions of past human experience. He is especially attentive to Huizinga, whose "Waning of the Middle Ages" he summarizes justly and at length.²⁵

It is worth noting, incidentally, that the revision in Soviet historians' descriptions of the aims and character of historical study has had a corresponding impact on their thoughts about historical methodology. Most remarkable, perhaps, is the tendency to replace the scientist by the creative artist and writer as the model for historians. "The proximity of history to art has long

²² *O kharaktere*," p. 31.

²³ "Istoriia i sotsiologiia," p. 322.

²⁴ "Istoricheskie vzgliadi Gogolia," *Voprosy istorii*, no. 1, 1964, p. 77-78, 82, 90-91.

²⁵ "Nekotorye aspekty izucheniia sotsialnoi istorii," *Voprosy istorii*, no. 10, 1964, p. 54, 55 and 66.

been known,” Gulyga wrote. “In antiquity this idea found symbolic expression in the image of Clio, the muse of history. Voltaire, Schiller and Pushkin embodied in their creative works a vital union between these two spheres of human culture. . . . History is dualistic by nature; there coexist here the abstract and the sensitively concrete, the conceptual and the visual picture of the past.”²⁶

III

But how enduring are these trends in historical thought? May what I have called the fall of scientific socialism, the separation of “ethics” from “analysis” and all that this implies, be another passing phase in the familiar zigzag of Soviet politics? Supporting a more optimistic outlook is the parallel between these trends in Soviet historical thought and highly significant developments in many other areas of contemporary Soviet thought and life.

To the extent that current tendencies in Soviet historiography represent a loosening of the ties binding scholarly inquiry to narrow political values, they seem a modest echo of more dramatic developments in the same direction occurring in other disciplines. The liberation of Soviet natural science from extra-scientific values has been particularly thorough, and although this process has been well reviewed in the West it may be worth while to stress its specific contribution to the fall of scientific socialism. The most obvious and important point here is that Marx’s scientific socialism represents a transposition into sociological and historical terminology of classical mechanics, now radically undermined by the theories of relativity, quantum physics, probability and indeterminacy. All of these approaches of the “new physics” today are frankly accepted by Soviet science.

One need only recall the impact of these discoveries in natural science on social and historical theory in the West to appreciate the direction of their influence in Soviet thought, that is, toward subjectivism, relativism and uncertainty—all fundamentally incompatible with the character of scientific socialism. Moreover, since Marx’s scientific socialism was based on a monistic worldview that argued a virtual identity between the natural and the social sciences, the pressures exerted by a modernized Soviet science on social and historical theory are probably even greater than they were in the intellectually more pluralistic West at the

²⁶ *O kharaktere*,” p. 36–38.

turn of the century. Salvation for the scientific socialists in Russia might be attained if the Stalinist attack on the new physics were resumed. But that is most unlikely, for reasons that Soviet scientists themselves make abundantly clear. If they had accepted the philosophers' definition of cybernetics as a pseudoscience, the eminent physicist Kapitsa argued, "we may safely say that our conquest of space, of which we are so justly proud and for which the whole world respects us, could never have been made a reality, since it is wholly impossible to steer cosmic vehicles without having recourse to cybernetics." Kapitsa then turned to a still more persuasive argument for freedom in science. "Many of us still vividly remember how some of our philosophers, dogmatically applying the methods of dialectics, were proving the unsoundness of the theory of relativity. . . . And so the physicists went ahead and brought about nuclear reactions, verifying Einstein's law not in terms of single atoms, but on the scale of atomic bombs. . . . Think of the position in which they [the physicists] would have placed our country had they not been ready to apply practically the achievements of nuclear physics!"²⁷

With such weighty arguments, the scientists have virtually won their battle for objective, apolitical inquiry. "As one of the most distinguished Soviet physicists informed me," writes Leopold Infeld, the Polish physicist, "physicists no longer read the Soviet philosophical journals and they don't care a damn what the philosophers have to say."²⁸

Constantly present both in life and in literary representation, this triumph cannot but set a model for aspiring scholars in other disciplines. The blow dealt by science against scientific socialism is thus double. First, it provides a dramatic example of the separation of politics from scholarship, of validation by objective proof instead of scholastic quotations and exegeses of sacred texts. Secondly, as discussed above, the specific direction of modern science undermines the very foundations of scientific socialism by promoting uncertainty, indeterminacy, relativism and subjectivism.

Of all the social sciences, economics, as one would expect, has been quickest to follow the lead of the natural sciences. Motivated and favored by goals as tangible and compelling as those supporting the "liberals" in natural science, Soviet economists since

²⁷ "Theory, Experiment, Practice," *The Soviet Review*, June 1962, p. 18-19.

²⁸ "As I See It," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, February 1965, p. 14.

Stalin's death have shown their impatience with ineffectual dogma and their willingness to substitute rational procedures and institutions for ideologically grounded ones. Rational price, profit, interest calculations, marginal utility theory and advanced mathematical and “cybernetic” models are, consequently, replacing primitive techniques associated with the sacred labor theory of value and the fetish of maximum “command” planning. In short, as is the case in the natural sciences, increasingly sophisticated and ideologically secular specialists are adopting rational means to reach specific material ends.

Attributing these hopeful trends only to pragmatic goals, however, is both an incomplete explanation of the developments concerned and an injustice to the individuals involved. The insistence on objective truth and honesty appears so frequently and in so many areas of post-Stalin Soviet life and thought that it must certainly reflect a deep concern for these values as ends in themselves. And after the Stalinist experience no reaction would be more natural. The historians' return (albeit still restricted) to the archives and the natural scientists' and the economists' demand for data instead of dogma all exemplify this commitment. But more than anywhere else this yearning for professional and personal honesty finds expression in Soviet literature. Evgeny Evtushenko, who, if anyone did, expressed the feelings of young Russia in the decade after the seminal Twentieth Party Congress, crystallized this mood when he wrote, “I envision Communism, symbolically, as a state in which truth is president. . . .”²⁹

The theme is a constant one. Indeed, if there is a single *leitmotiv* to characterize post-Stalin Soviet literature it is this, “the tradition of honesty with [oneself] and the reader,” in the words of the novelist Yury Nagibin.³⁰ It is because of the strength, persistence and obviously passionate sincerity of this devotion to truth, this revulsion against Stalinist mendacity and corruption, that I consider it a major influence in the qualified return to objectivity in various areas of Soviet thought. The stress on archival research, the relatively fair treatment of opposing Western views, and the other manifestations of this reorientation in

²⁹ *Survey*, January 1963, p. 29.

³⁰ Quoted by A. Gaev, “Soviet Youth in Literature,” *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of the U.S.S.R.*, February 1963, p. 3. See also the relevant quotations and statements in “The Year of Protest, 1956,” ed. Hugh McLean and Walter Vickery (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), p. 132, 150, 177; Ilya Ehrenburg, *Frantsuzskie tetradi* (Moscow: *Sovetskii Pisatel'*, 1958), p. 121, 130–31; and Merle Fainsod, “Khrushchev's Russia,” *The Australian Outlook*, December 1963, p. 246.

historical study discussed above, provide, in a way, even stronger evidence for this contention than do corresponding tendencies in science and economics. With regard to the latter one could easily attribute the revival of rational inquiry to the pressing needs of the economy and national defense. But what does the Party lose by dogmatism in history? Rather is the opposite the case: traditional dogmatism in history has provided invaluable rationalizations and justifications for the Party throughout its career, and the régime, it would seem, has everything to lose and nothing to gain by permitting the developments discussed here.

A commitment to truth as an end in itself in both science and history seems to be, therefore, a major force behind the demise of scientific socialism. But there is another, closely related cause that similarly seems a natural reaction to the Stalin era. Let me recall the statement quoted earlier: "They fell in love so deeply with the generation of tomorrow, with the mankind to come, that there was hardly any love left for those who happened to live in today's world." There seems to me to be the closest relationship between this judgment and such methodological statements as Gulyga's, at first glance purely academic, "the fact in historical science is not supplanted by the generalization; it is an end in itself," or Cherepnin's strong emphasis on the need to study all the many-sided, vital qualities of human experience. The great service of scientific socialism was to explain the necessity of present sacrifice and to assuage the conscience of those forced, usually by conditions in underdeveloped economies, to sacrifice the very stratum of society that they supposedly served, the deprived masses. The renewed emphasis on the concrete and the appeal to historians to write about characteristically human experiences rather than concentrating on impersonal abstractions may well reflect, more than anything else, a radical reaction to the persistent sacrifice of the living individual both in fact and in theory.

I am sick of being a bridge between the old and the new world. I no longer want to go around with a sore and bloody back. Let me rest. . . . I am tired of struggling . . . struggling in science . . . struggling for bread . . . struggling for atomic energy . . . struggling for the development of the virgin land. Even for a quiet rest it is necessary to struggle. That's enough struggle for me! Give me a chance to live as a human being!⁸¹

⁸¹ G. Mdivani, "Ominous Days" (*Teatr*, no. 12, 1958), as quoted in Fainsod, *op. cit.*, p. 245-46.

With this we come to what may be the fundamental reason for the withering away of scientific socialism. The Soviet citizen can begin to relax. Russian society has come close enough to where it was really heading—and the direction had nothing to do with idyllic Communism—to give up, at least partially, the encouraging myths. The gains have already been immense and there is reason to expect that they will continue to accumulate, that the dominant classes will both give and receive adequately to maintain satisfactory progress and stability. The present can now be better served instead of persistently sacrificed, and the pseudo-scientific theories devised to justify the long sacrifice can gradually be abandoned. It is probably no coincidence that the historian is urged to concern himself with the concrete, “flesh-and-blood” human experience at the same time that the economist is devising more rational ways of meeting increasingly finicky consumer demand. In sum, “preaching” and “analysis” can begin to go their own ways. The politicians can proclaim their promethean ideals as absolutes, justified by their inherent value and by long humanist traditions rather than by allegedly objective laws of science and history. Conversely, the scientists and scholars can begin to return to their customary concerns, abandoning the hateful obligation of corrupting their talents in the service of dogma.