



Title	6. Evolution in the Soviet Political System
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Citation	Acta Slavica Iaponica, 2, 127-158
Issue Date	1984
Doc URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/2115/7939">http://hdl.handle.net/2115/7939</a>
Type	bulletin (article)
File Information	KJ00000034081.pdf



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## 6. Evolution in the Soviet Political System

Jerry Hough

Few things are more difficult to discuss than the question of stability and change in any political system, for the definition of change itself is fraught with danger. On the one hand, the outside observer can always see some continuities in political practices and political culture which survive even such a cataclysmic change as the overthrow of the tsar in Russia and the establishment of a Communist system. On the other hand, even in a stable political system such as the American, the election of a new leader can modify the decision-making process and the relationships of basic political institutions in quite important ways. It is easy to ignore either the continuities that remain in time of obvious change or the subtle changes that take place gradually or quietly.

The problem of discussing political change is particularly great in the case of the Soviet Union. The basic organization of the Soviet political structure has remained relatively static over the years, and some of the important modifications that were introduced in the Khrushchev era were quickly reversed by his successors. Yet, the essence of the Soviet political system has been the combination of very democratic forms in both the Soviet state and the Communist party with actual methods of rule that robbed these democratic forms of much of their meaning. Hence changes that have occurred in the political system have not had to be expressed in formal institutional terms: instead, they have involved either an increase or decrease in the real meaning of this or that democratic form, in the degree to which this or that constitutional provision was violated. The result has been that the changes have been very difficult for the outsider to see in concrete form.

This paper will not concentrate on the obvious continuities in the Soviet political system with the tsarist or Stalinist past. The continuities of the Russian political culture with that of the pre-revolutionary period have been analyzed by a number of scholars, and they will, no doubt, be discussed by other participants in this seminar. They are found most strongly in the relationship of Russians to foreigners and foreign ideas — a sense of exclusiveness and moral superiority, a lack of self-confidence in dealing with foreigners, a reluctance to learn from the outside and a fear of “alien” ideas, a strong desire to hide “family” affairs from foreigners, and a willingness to accept incredibly strict secrecy to achieve this goal.

Of course, a profound change in political culture and system was taking place in the last decades before the Revolution, and, if it had not been for World War I, many parts of this political culture might have receded into the past. However, Lenin essentially did realize the old Slavophile-Narodnik goal of an economic development of Russia along different (and from their point of view, morally superior) lines than the pattern followed in the West, and in the process, he and

especially Stalin reinforced many of the exclusivistic aspects of the culture.

The basic institutional continuities with the Leninist and Stalinist past are even easier to observe:

1. Domination of the country's political life by a single, centralized political party. Prohibition not only of opposition to this party, but also of open factional political activity within it.

2. An insistence that all organized group activity take place under the aegis of the Communist party — that all organized groups be registered and that no such group be permitted if its expressed purpose is the advancement of the economic or political interests of its members.

3. The adoption of an official ideology and the requirement that all published discussion take place within its framework and that all officials swear allegiance to it, the latter demand enforced through the unwritten rule that even low-level officials be members of the Communist party.

4. A strict prohibition of dissident activity and the use of a substantial secret police network to enforce this prohibition.

5. Limitation of the right of publication to organs of the party, the government, or subordinate institutions. The establishment of a universal system of prior censorship to supplement the controls already implied in party domination of editorial boards.

6. A clothing of the dictatorship in democratic forms and the encouragement of many types of popular participation as a means of mobilizing the energy of the population and controlling the bureaucracy.

But, to repeat, these continuities are well known, and we will take them for granted. The purpose of this paper is to explore the evolution of the Soviet political system as a means of throwing light on the possibility of the development of liberalizing trends in the future. After all, the list of common characteristics of the Stalin and the post-Stalin political systems seems so familiar that it hardly stimulates any thought, but this should not be the case. If one recalls how Western scholars — especially American scholars — would have summarized the Soviet political system thirty years ago, it is immediately apparent that other features of the system were being emphasized at that time.

Thus, in the early 1950s the focus of the totalitarian model was not on one-party rule, but on the dictator. This dictator was so powerful and ruthless that he could not only carry out an unprecedented type of collectivization, but even have untold numbers of loyal party leaders killed or imprisoned on false charges. In the early 1950s, the focus was not on an ideology to which the officials had to conform, but on a utopian ideology that drove the dictator to transform society against its wishes. The emphasis was not on the maintenance of order (that was the definition of an authoritarian regime, with which the totalitarian regime was contrasted), but on permanent revolution and permanent purge. The focus was not on police action against dissidents, but on an irrational terror that was directed against dissident and non-dissident alike — a terror intended to atomize society.

The fact that we no longer even talk about these features of the Soviet political

system that we once considered absolutely central to it is ample testimony to the changes that have occurred in the system. It is these changes that will be the focus of this paper, and we will take for granted that the reader will not forget the continuities.

### The Role of the Leader

To a considerable degree, the most important changes in the Soviet political system have occurred in the role of the leader, but we must be careful in specifying what these changes have been.

It would, for example, certainly be wrong to emphasize any reduction in the status of the post of the General Secretary. Indeed, if anything, we should speak of an opposite tendency — of the institutionalization of this post as the country's leader or prime minister. Lenin never occupied the post of General Secretary but from the beginning led the country as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (or chairman of the Council of Ministers, as it is now called). The General Secretary was his lieutenant for organizational questions. When Lenin died, it was Aleksei Rykov who succeeded him as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, and this position carried its old aura. Similarly, when Stalin died, Georgii Malenkov, as chairman of the Council of Ministers, clearly had greater status than the Central Committee secretary, Nikita Khrushchev, for a year or so. Hence in both cases there was a two-stage succession in which the man who was General Secretary (or First Secretary in 1953) rose to the top. His post gained in status as he himself did, but both Stalin and Khrushchev ultimately assumed the position of chairman of the Council of Ministers as well — a move which seemed to acknowledge some lingering problem with the legitimacy of the General Secretaryship.

In the last two successions the situation has been very different. From the first days after Khrushchev was removed in 1964, Brezhnev as General Secretary was given a clearly superior status to that of Aleksei Kosygin, the chairman of the Council of Ministers. When Andropov was elected General Secretary in 1982, the thought never even entered anyone's head that Nikolai Tikhonov, the chairman of the Council of Ministers, might be the country's real leader or even a contender for the top post.

Originally, Brezhnev seemed unsure of his protocol position and met relatively few non-Communist Westerners during his first five years in office, but by the time of the Helsinki Conference of chiefs-of-state, he felt able to attend without either Kosygin or Nikolai Podgorny (the formal chief-of-state) accompanying him. Andropov had no such hesitation at all. Even though he did not assume the post of chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet until June, 1983, he met the most important foreign leaders at Brezhnev's funeral and left the second-rank leaders to be met by Tikhonov.

On the surface, one would have expected that this institutionalization of the post of General Secretary as the country's leader would have contributed significantly to the power of its occupant, especially in the transition period. When

Stalin and Khrushchev were originally selected as leader of the Secretariat, many may not have realized that they were selecting the leader, and hence both Stalin and Khrushchev had to win legitimacy for themselves as national leader as they consolidated their power. By contrast, when a party consciously selects a leader, it has a strong tendency by that fact to certify some trust in his judgment and to accord him some freedom of action on questions that are at the heart of his expertise and/or mandate.

Yet, paradoxically, the institutionalization of the post of General Secretary was associated with an apparent decline in the real influence of the General Secretary over events. Stalin had, of course, totally dominated the Politburo, and Khrushchev had frequently intervened on major policy questions to force through his idiosyncratic ideas against the desires of a majority of the Presidium, as the Politburo was then called. (The extent of Khrushchev's power in this respect was dramatically illustrated by the number of his policies and organizational schemes which his lieutenants reversed within the first year after they removed him.)

Brezhnev and Andropov gave every sign of having consolidated their personal power positions rather quickly, but Brezhnev never conveyed the impression of a man who was imposing his will on the policy process. Such a statement is, of course, too extreme. The massive irrigation and reclamation program bore his stamp, and it is quite likely that he had the final say on the most important foreign policy decisions, especially on those involving the crises in Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan, and Poland. Nevertheless, except for the emphasis on irrigation, the pattern of policy in the Brezhnev era is extremely close to that which we would expect to emerge from a consensus of the major institutional centers in the country.

I incautiously labelled this phenomenon "institutional pluralism," others have called it "bureaucratic ossification," but the meaning is the same. Brezhnev was not a larger-than-life totalitarian dictator who succeeded in transforming society against its will or who led a constant war on the bureaucracy which served him. Rather Brezhnev functioned much more in line with the classic definition of an authoritarian ruler — a man who, with repressive means, seeks basically to preserve the status quo.

It is too early to judge what type of leader Andropov will ultimately prove to be — or, indeed, whether he will live long enough to leave any mark as a leader. Thus far, however, he has responded to the widespread pressure for some change in the economic system by speaking out on the necessity for reform, but he has done very little. Indeed, the policy change in the first eight months of the Andropov administration has been less than that in 1953 eight months after Stalin's death or that in 1965 eight months after Khrushchev's removal. Moreover, Andropov has scarcely been speaking as a man driven to transform society on the basis of his ideological preconceptions. In his first major speech, he stated:

In general, comrades, there are many urgent problems in the economy. I, of course, have no ready recipes for their solution. But all of us in the party Central Committee are going to find these answers. We are going to find them

by generalizing them from our own and from world experience, and by accumulating the knowledge of the best practical officials and scholars.<sup>1</sup>

Seven months later, he was even more explicit in asserting that it was not even his job to initiate the proposals for policy change:

The problem is to work out a system of organizational, economic, and moral measures which would interest both leaders and workers — and, of course, scientists and designers — in technological innovation. Gosplan, the Academy of Sciences, and the State Committee for Science and Technology are now working on this. Only it is necessary for them to do this more quickly. The loss of time is costing us dearly.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly this type of self-image of a General Secretary — and such statements were often found in Brezhnev's speeches as well — has very little in common with the assumptions of the totalitarian model, built on the experience of the Stalin period, or even with the image of policy initiative found in Brzezinski and Huntington's *Political Power: USA/USSR*. They reflect a major change in the way that the political system functions — a change that in some way must be incorporated into our analysis of the evolution of the Soviet system.

### The Factors Influencing the Role of the General Secretary

For the outside observer, the most important task is to understand the reasons for this change in the nature of the behavior of the leader in the Soviet Union, for only in this way will we be able to judge the probability of change in the future. Is the pattern we have observed simply the result of the personality of one or two leaders, or does it reflect more long-term factors? If the latter, what are they?

Obviously such questions are not easy to answer, and we should always remember that our data base is extremely narrow. If very short-term transitional leaders are excluded, Iurii Andropov is only the fifth leader in Soviet history. With such a small number of leaders, no conclusion that we draw can meet the test of statistical significance. Any change may well be caused by the accident of personality.

Nevertheless, there are a number of reasons to assert that some general factors have also been at work in producing an evolution in the role of the leader, even if it is difficult to judge their relative weight.

First, even to the extent that the changes in the role of the leader are the result of the personality of the leader, this is not totally a matter of chance. Especially when the upper elite is deliberately selecting a leader rather than being surprised by the consolidation of power by the General Secretary, the personality and values of the leader are one of the factors that the members of the elite are

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1 *Pravda*, November 23, 1982, p. 2.

2 *Ibid.*, June 13, 1983, p. 1.

certainly taking into account. Clearly the Presidium and the Central Committee were determined to end the chaos and impulsiveness of the political process under Khrushchev, and just as surely they must have had the sense that Brezhnev was personally the type of man who was going to be more cautious and easy-going as a leader.

In addition, the second generation of leaders after a radical revolution is, on the whole, likely to be featured by very different personality types than the generation that carried out the revolution. Men who are willing to forego the normal pleasures of life to enter the revolutionary underground and who persist in such a "career" after imprisonment and exile have intense values and drives. If their ideology posits radical change, the personality structure that led them to endure the hardships of the revolutionary struggle is quite likely to give them a ruthlessness in carrying out the changes that they think necessary.

As Zbigniew Brzezinski emphasized nearly twenty years ago,<sup>3</sup> a man who is successful in rising through a bureaucracy almost surely has a very different personality type. A bureaucracy, in John Kenneth Galbraith's words, is a hierarchy of committees, and a successful bureaucrat must learn to work with his colleagues and to take a multiplicity of interests into account, especially as he reaches the higher coordinating posts in the organization. A fanatic who is best qualified to lead a revolution would almost certainly offend someone during his rise up the ladder and lose out in the competition for crucial promotions at some stage in his career. This phenomenon is particularly likely in the Soviet Union where leadership candidates come disproportionately from the party apparatus. To be a first secretary in a district, city, region, or republic is to learn to coordinate the work of local subordinates of representatives of powerful ministries and to persuade those ministries and other higher officials to appropriate money for the region. When such men reach the top after thirty or forty years of such work, they are unlikely to change suddenly their entire way of conducting politics and handling conflict. Such a difference between the leaders of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary generations is observable not only in the Soviet Union, but in virtually all the radical revolutions of the twentieth century.

A second factor which may explain the lesser impact of the leader on the Soviet policy process is a change that has occurred in the mechanism of the political system. On the surface, this is a seemingly minor matter — the length of time between sessions of the party congresses — but it may have had important consequences.

Originally the basic source of power for the General Secretary was what Robert Daniels called "the circular flow of power." The members of the Politburo and Secretariat are selected by and removable by the Central Committee, and the latter in turn is elected by the party congress. Because of the bans against factions and the centralized nature of the party, however, the various regional delegations to the party congresses of the 1920s were essentially controlled by their respective party first secretaries. Since the Central Committee Secretariat under Stalin in

3 Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Victory of the Clerks," *The New Republic*, No.151 (Nov. 14, 1964).

turn had the key role in the selection of the regional party leader, it is not surprising that the latter turned out to support the man who had selected them. The congresses selected a Central Committee which was beholden to the General Secretary and which supported him against his opponents. (Indeed, the Central Committee came to include many regional party secretaries at this time.)

Since the 1920s, the party congresses have had no dramatic conflicts, but the basic "circular flow of power" clearly was at work in the Khrushchev consolidation of power as well. As Central Committee secretary and overseer of agriculture, Khrushchev was able to use agricultural defects as the excuse to remove regional first secretaries, and they in turn supported him against the men who came to be known as the anti-party group. Even to the present day, the regional first secretaries have a special role in the selection of the Central Committee. During the congress itself, they meet to go over the list of people to be presented to the congress for confirmation.

If one thinks seriously about the circular flow of power, however, the key to the General Secretary's long-term control over the Central Committee is his ability to remove a Central Committee member if the latter is politically disloyal. In this connection, the question arises: why do the Central Committee members not join together to prevent the General Secretary from removing them? Or if, in fact, the General Secretary removes a number of Central Committee members from their jobs, they still sit on the Central Committee until the next congress and are apt to be more than willing to vote against him on any challenge.

During the 1920s, when congresses were held every two years on the average, this problem was not severe. The Central Committee was being rapidly expanded, and Stalin's men remained united in their battles against the various "oppositions." There was not much time for the number of Central Committee members who had been removed from their jobs to become too large, and congresses were held frequently enough for changes to be made gradually.

Nevertheless, Stalin must have felt nervous about the congresses. Even if the delegates should have been loyal by all rules of politics, the congress was still an occasion when opposition could well up and elect a hostile Central Committee. Stalin gradually extended the time between congresses, until finally none was held between 1939 and 1952. He relied on terror to control high officials as well as the general population, and he seldom allowed them to meet in a setting where they could unseat him.

In the post-Stalin period, the 20th Party Congress in 1956 was held little more than three years after the 19th Congress, but since then, the congresses have been held once every five years.<sup>4</sup> With such a long interval between congresses, the problem of controlling Central Committee members may have become more serious for the General Secretary. Especially with the memory of Khrushchev's overthrow so strong, Brezhnev seemed particularly sensitive to the danger of offending Central Committee members. He expanded the Central Committee at each congress,

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<sup>4</sup> There was also an extraordinary congress in 1960, but it was not empowered to elect a new Central Committee.

but less than ten percent of the living Central Committee members elected at one congress were removed from the Central Committee at the next congress five years later.

Brezhnev almost surely was overcautious, but the Soviet political system has a serious problem. Its leaders are subordinated to a committee of ministerial and regional bureaucrats, and if the leaders become afraid to replace their key subordinates, the problem of maintaining administrative efficiency will become increasingly severe. The lengthening of the time between the party congresses only intensifies the problem.

A third factor has been a change in the relationship of the party to the bureaucracy and to society. As already noted, the Bolsheviks were total outsiders in the tsarist system, and they also received little support from lower-level or middle-level officials of the governmental and economic hierarchies. As a consequence, the appointment of Bolsheviks to political and administrative posts during the Civil War and the 1920s meant the imposition of political control agents upon hostile administrative organizations. Trusted Bolshevik officials were transferred continually from post to post as agents of the party, entrusted with bringing this or that problem under control.

The proverbial "red" vs. "expert" conflict had real meaning in these circumstances. The Bolsheviks felt as alienated and threatened as those whom they were supervising. As Lenin stated in 1922:

Suppose we take Moscow with its 4,700 responsible Communists, and suppose we take that huge bureaucratic machine, that huge pile — who is directing whom? I doubt very much whether it can truthfully be said that Communists are directing this pile. To tell the truth, they are not doing the directing; they are being directed.<sup>5</sup>

Stalin was determined to change this situation. He thought that any regime must have its own ruling class, that there could not be this kind of dichotomy between the Communists and that "huge bureaucratic machine," between the "red" and the "expert." Beginning in 1926 he pushed a massive expansion in the size of the party, with the recruitment coming almost exclusively from those with a working class or peasant background. Then in the period of the first five-year-plan, he launched a large-scale expansion of the system of higher and specialized secondary education. In this educational program, he placed the strongest emphasis on technical education and on the recruitment of students from young adults with the "right" social background and some political experience.<sup>6</sup>

The products of these party-recruitment and educational programs of the 1920s and early 1930s streamed into the bureaucracy in the 1930s. In the Great Purge

5 V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniia* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1958-65), 45, p. 95.

6 This is discussed in Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Stalin and the Making of the New Elite," *Slavic Review*, 38, No. 3 (September, 1979).

of 1937-1938, many were promoted with breathtaking speed to the top administrative posts in the system. Except for a few Politburo-level officials, the entire administrative and political elite came to consist of men in their thirties — men born between 1898 and 1910, most of them between 1902 and 1910. (The top generals were slightly older, ranging in age from their mid-thirties to their mid-forties.)<sup>7</sup>

The process of transforming the bureaucracy, which began in the early 1930s and which was so dramatically advanced in the late 1930s, continued into the 1950s — and in the provinces into the 1970s. As the pre-revolutionary generation of non-party specialists eventually retired and then after them the poorly-educated Communist administrators, they were replaced by the steady stream of graduates from the engineering and agricultural higher and specialized secondary institutes. The large number of evening and correspondence divisions of these institutes permitted workers and to a lesser extent peasants who had not gone to college to acquire technical education while at work and thus to advance.

After the Great Purge, a number of additional steps were taken to reduce the distinction between “red” and “expert.” One was a change in the criteria of admission into the party. Party membership was required for appointment to an ever-widening range of administrative positions, but the requirements for party membership ensured that technically-qualified people could easily enter the party, as long as they avoided political dissidence and open religious activity. The mechanism by which this was done was a *de facto* raising of the age of party admission, especially for those with higher education. While there were exceptions, admission was normally postponed until after the age of 25 (the newly-elected first secretary of the Leningrad obkom, Lev N. Zaikov, actually did not join the party until he was 34 years old), and a candidate had to show dedication to socialism not only in words, but also in work performance. As political conformity came to be widespread and more or less taken for granted, the performance criterion became the crucial one in practice. Moreover, membership in the party became very widespread for men over the age of 30: in 1970, over 50 percent for those with a college degree and nearly 40 percent for those with a secondary degree alone.<sup>8</sup>

A second step to reduce the distinction between “red” and “expert” was to increase the expertise of the party apparatus to make it more comparable with that in governmental and economic administration. Not only did the Central Committee apparatus become increasingly complex in its structure and increasingly well-qualified in its staff, but this process was gradually extended into the provinces as well. Thus, today the regional party committee (obkom) of a medium-sized rural region (oblast) has two separate departments dealing with industry — one for heavy industry and the other for light industry — both staffed by engineers with the appropriate

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7 For a discussion of this phenomenon and the reason for it (surely a desire on Stalin's part to have a military elite old enough to have fought in World War I), see Jerry F. Hough, *Soviet Leadership in Transition* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1980).

8 Jerry F. Hough, *The Soviet Union and Social Science Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 125-139.

background. When the oblast's economy is more complex, the structure of the apparatus of the obkom also expands. For example, the Irkutsk obkom has five industrial departments—the two basic ones and one each for the machine-building industry, the timber and woodworking industry, and the chemical industry. In addition to the two basic departments, the Primorsk territorial party committee (kraikom) has one for the defense industry and one for the fisheries industry, the Khabarovsk kraikom one for the defense industry and one for the timber and woodworking industry, the Tiumen' obkom one for geology and the oil and gas industry and one for the timber and woodworking industry, and the Sakhalin obkom has one for the fisheries industry.<sup>9</sup>

The top officials in a region can also have considerable technical expertise of a type that is appropriate for their region. Thus, the first secretary of the Primorsk kraikom has a decade of work in an aviation industry plant, the second secretary of the kraikom over a decade in engineering work in city services (the heating system of Vladivostok), the chairman of the kraispolkom (the executive committee of the krai soviet) over twenty years in the ship-repair industry, and the first secretary of the Vladivostok gorkom (city party committee) over a decade in the ship-repair industry.<sup>10</sup> The first secretary of the Tiumen' obkom worked for fifteen years in the geological field before entering party work, the second secretary had worked for over ten years in the timber industry, the chairman of the oblispolkom was an agricultural specialist who had risen to head the oblast agriculture administration, and the first secretary of the Tiumen' gorkom had been in construction management until the age of 46 when he became gorkom first secretary.<sup>11</sup>

None of these developments meant that the party leadership lost its power to make final decisions or that it abandoned an authoritarian system of police controls. Yet, to the extent that the leadership has begun to defer more to the top political elite, this elite has become one which has risen out of the various specialized bureaucracies of the system and which has absorbed the respective values of these different sectors of society. Indeed, with the party organs themselves containing officials with very different backgrounds, the conflicts of value within society are brought directly into the party apparatus itself.

A fourth factor affecting the power of the General Secretary has been a growing difficulty in controlling the policy inputs from society. It would be wrong to relate this development simply to modernization, for the debates in the 1920s when the Soviet Union was still essentially rural were freer than they are in the 1980s. Nevertheless, the increase in the scale and complexity of the Soviet system and of the choices facing the Soviet leaders has made the kind of controls imposed by Stalin increasingly counter-productive.

9 *Vostochno-sibirskaiia pravda*, January 25, 1981, p. 1; *Krasnoe znamia* (Vladivostok), January 19, 1981, p. 1; *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, January 26, 1981, p. 1; *Tiimenskaia pravda*, December 28, 1980, p. 1; *Sovetskii Sakhalin*, January 11, 1981, p. 1.

10 *Krasnoe znamia* (Vladivostok), January 24, 1980, pp. 2-3.

11 *Tiimenskaia pravda*, February 2, 1979, p. 2; January 27, 1980, p. 2; January 30, 1980, p. 2.

Part of the problem, as we have seen, is that the post-revolutionary leaders have not been ideological fanatics, but have often been uncertain about the policy options to select. They want information and even policy advice, and, if they are intelligent, they need to permit an extensive debate among the specialists in order to ensure that the information and advice that they receive reflects the best and most-considered judgment of the specialists. For this reason, it was only logical that the June 1983 plenum of the Central Committee at which Andropov acknowledged lack of certainty about the proper content of economic reform was a plenum which strongly emphasized the need to improve sociological and economic research and which signalled greater freedom of scholarly debate.

Another part of the problem is that the system is becoming so large and complex that it is difficult to control on a detailed level. Thus, in the realm of personnel selection, the district and city party committees of Novosibirsk oblast alone have 15,600 officials in their *nomenklatura* (the list of posts for which they have the responsibility of approving — and often making — any personnel change),<sup>12</sup> and this implies that more than one and a half million posts are in the *nomenklatura* of all party organs. The party leadership simply cannot ensure that such a huge number of appointments correspond to some central preconceptions.

Indeed, with the specialized party officials charged with responsibility for personnel selection for the various bureaucracies and branches of the economy having come from these branches themselves, *nomenklatura* cannot mean the selection of officials with a single set of “party” values. Rather, *nomenklatura* becomes part of the process by which the leading governors are selected in significant part for their loyalty to central leaders, but in which the vast majority of officials in the party *nomenklatura* are selected by officials with similar professional and occupational values — and on the basis of criteria that would be little different if party *nomenklatura* did not exist.

The difficulty of controlling the myriad of middle-level decisions and of judging the reliability of advice coming from specialists with vested institutional and budgetary interests does not even constitute the end of the problem. As *de facto* restraints on debate in the media of communication become looser, it is difficult to avoid the formation of some public opinion that transcends specialized interests.

Take a most extreme example that is the furthest from an outsider's (or even an insider's) sense of debate and public opinion formation in the Soviet Union — the foreign news coverage in the regional Soviet press. At the oblast level at least, these newspapers do not have their own correspondents or commentators, but simply carry articles distributed by TASS and Novosti. In this system the foreign news distribution is totally centralized. Yet, in practice, TASS and Novosti carry far more stories than the four-page Soviet newspapers can publish. For example, I counted 116 different TASS and Novosti news items and stories about Japan in the month of May 1983 alone that were published in the newspaper of at least one union republic or oblast of the RSFSR. Surely there were other items about Japan on the Soviet news wire that no editor chose to print. Obviously no newspa-

12 *Sovetskaia Sibir'*, January 10, 1981, p. 3.

per could print all 116 stories, and the maximum number published in any one newspaper was 17 in Magadan.

Two kinds of variation were found in the news coverage of Japan in April and May 1983. One was in the quantity of coverage. The Russian language newspaper of Azerbaidzhan had only one story of 48 column lines in May, while that of the Komi Autonomous Republic had 16 with 1,100 column lines. As Table 6-1 (which includes both April and May, not just May alone) indicates, a good deal of the difference from oblast to oblast seems random, but this was not true in one respect. In April and May together, the oblasti from Western Siberia to the western border averaged 665 column lines of stories on Japan, while the five oblasti of the East Siberian district averaged 1,145 column lines and the seven of the Far East averaged 1,490 (1,660, if Yakutia is excluded.) Obviously the editors in areas closer to Japan were more interested in events in Japan and/or thought that their readers would be.

A second type of variation was in the type of story published about Japan. The 116 stories in May covered a range of subjects: 22 on Japanese remilitarization and military ties with the United States, 23 on the anti-war and peace movement, 15 on Japanese economic difficulties, 15 on Japanese desire for trade with the Soviet Union and on economic conflicts with the United States that imply the possibility of Soviet-Japanese cooperation, 12 on political subjects, 9 on Prime Minister Nakasone's trips to Southeast Asia and Washington, 8 on human interest stories, and 12 on miscellaneous subjects. Obviously if a newspaper carried a maximum of 18 stories on Japan — and more usually closer to 10 — it would be possible for the editor to publish articles only on the Japanese military threat or only on prospects for better Japanese-Soviet economic variations.

In reality, all newspapers had some variety in their coverage, but, as Table 6-1 indicates, the balance differed significantly. Twenty oblasti carried at least one article which explicitly stated that Japanese businessmen wanted to increase trade; 8 carried a story from Australia that asserted that trade with Japan had made it dependent in a humiliating manner. (Only one newspaper carried articles of both types.) The proportion of the coverage given to the Japanese military threat ranged 0 to 63 percent. In the Far East alone, Amur had 160 column lines out of 1,820 devoted to the military question, while Khabarovsk had 1,210 out of 1,915.

The Japanese case is only one example, and actually a relatively minor one except in the Far East and East Siberia. One newspaper will carry a great many articles emphasizing the need for peace and disarmament, while another will carry far more on the American threat. In April and May, the TASS and Novosti wires carried at least 10 articles that conveyed some worry about the activation of Solidarity in Poland or about American interference. Fourteen of the RSFSR oblast newspapers carried none of these stories, 13 of the newspapers published from 20 to 99 column lines of the stories, 24 of the newspapers published from 100 to 299 column lines, and 17 had 300 column lines or more.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Here, as elsewhere, the word "oblast" also includes the krai and the autonomous republic. The Kabardino-Balkar and Kalmyk republics are not included, for their

**Table 6-1**— Foreign News Coverage in RSFSR Oblast Newspapers,  
April-May 1983, in Column Lines

Oblast	Japan			Poland		China	Middle East	Cent. Amer.
	Total	Mil.	A—W	Total	Worried			
Altai	560	295	115	450	135	225	—	—
Amur	1820	160	105	560	425	1205	—	—
Arkhangelsk	555	0	235	1013	310	70	—	—
Astrakhan	975	120	230	185	120	200	2100	2410
Bashkiria ASSR	395	140	110	495	335	155	—	—
Belgorod	680	425	105	320	185	165	—	—
Briansk	760	375	270	160	0	50	—	—
Briat ASSR	1305	220	295	410	195	175	—	—
Chech-Ing. ASSR	420	270	100	345	75	45	—	—
Cheliabinsk	695	175	205	465	195	295	—	—
Chita	1510	385	150	390	225	505	—	—
Chuvash ASSR	325	0	120	0	0	175	965	900
Dagestan ASSR	495	0	280	460	300	230	—	—
Gorkii	505	30	155	955	390	320	—	—
Iakuta ASSR	450	95	155	185	55	275	—	—
Iaroslavl'	975	270	340	115	30	210	2350	1580
Irkutsk	1270	130	605	430	265	180	590	1190
Ivanovo	1035	35	405	530	245	265	—	—
Kalinin	795	175	340	515	320	115	—	—
Kaliningrad	925	430	225	830	395	245	—	—
Kaluga	295	35	95	165	95	205	—	—
Kamchatka	1330	275	485	155	25	320	—	—
Karela ASSR	880	85	265	790	455	235	—	—
Kemerovo	425	80	200	305	75	310	—	—
Khabarovsk	1915	1210	115	650	410	950	—	—
Kirov	515	230	120	0	0	0	—	—
Komi ASSR	1775	565	345	185	110	135	1460	2950
Kostroma	765	220	215	205	80	215	1780	2220
Krasnodar	645	130	185	105	0	55	—	—
Krasnoiar'sk	1020	250	250	190	0	40	—	—
Kuibyshev	430	20	165	860	185	145	—	—
Kurgan	1170	520	265	235	120	230	—	—
Kursk	985	345	125	405	280	135	—	—
Leningrad	525	90	250	1150	425	550	3295	2830
Lipetsk	790	130	60	300	175	50	—	—
Magadan	1040	515	235	285	95	185	—	—
Mary ASSR	740	105	245	105	0	210	—	—
Mordovia ASSR	535	55	315	465	275	145	—	—
Moscow	85	10	0	335	205	200	—	—
Murmansk	975	515	205	665	485	260	695	1160

Oblast	Japan			Poland		China	Middle Cent.	
	Total	Mil.	A—W	Total	Worried		East	Amer.
Novgorod	850	110	280	235	0	70	—	—
Novosibirsk	840	200	235	410	290	175	—	—
Omsk	450	0	190	380	215	115	535	800
Orel	615	25	210	385	300	310	—	—
Orenburg	505	205	225	240	0	95	—	—
Penza	445	35	20	420	160	170	1195	1280
Perm	695	115	430	405	240	315	—	—
Primorsk	1550	530	15	880	360	470	—	—
Pskov	850	85	270	305	100	230	—	—
Riazan'	1100	110	345	410	160	90	1575	2345
Rostov	470	105	265	170	30	70	—	—
Saratov	370	0	180	190	80	240	—	—
Sakhalin	2325	980	375	765	415	460	—	—
Sev. Oset. ASSR	220	20	115	210	0	35	—	—
Smolensk	550	115	130	485	175	95	—	—
Stavropol'	465	70	160	65	0	35	—	—
Sverdlovsk	415	40	120	795	575	465	—	—
Tambov	620	275	205	75	0	25	965	995
Tatar ASSR	725	200	110	25	0	125	—	—
Tiumen'	615	225	230	225	55	170	—	—
Tomsk	770	135	115	590	130	80	—	—
Tula	825	120	400	425	340	125	870	605
Tuva ASSR	630	35	295	470	280	165	—	—
Udmurt ASSR	635	170	150	383	95	115	1325	1895
Vladimir	200	0	100	565	340	205	—	—
Volgograd	355	30	195	705	395	250	—	—
Vologda	1190	505	180	15	0	120	—	—
Voronezh	875	415	175	250	0	0	—	—

Notes: 1) Under the category of Japan, "Hil." means stories about Japanese build-up, alliances with the US and NATO, etc. "A—W" means anti-war and anti-military protests, meetings, etc. Under the category of Poland, "worried" refers to articles that convey some concern about an activization of Solidarity or about American interference. "Middle East" is limited to the issues involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, including Lebanon.

2) The numbers have been rounded to the nearest "5" to remind the reader that they are only approximate. There are possibilities of counting errors and even of overlooking a story, and, of course, newspapers can put different numbers of words in a column or vary the size of the column somewhat. However, if a story was written across two normal columns, it was counted as having two column lines actual column line.

As Table 6-1 indicates, the relative amount of coverage given to the Arab-Israeli conflict (including Lebanon) and to the conflicts in Central America also varied enormously in the RSFSR newspapers. This variation also is found in the union republics and was particularly dramatic in the Transcaucasian republics. All three of the republics border on the Middle East, but Moslem Azerbaidzhan carried 2,620 column lines about the Arab-Israeli conflict in April and May 1983, compared with 1,010 column lines about Central America. By contrast, Armenia, with its strong Christian tradition, published 2,165 column lines on Central America and only 1,990 on the Arab-Israeli story.<sup>14</sup> Georgia, also a country with a Christian tradition, likewise gave more attention to the Central American events — 859 column lines compared with 609 to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The higher political meaning of all these differences in news coverage is extremely difficult to judge. One cannot be sure whether the choices of stories are simply the idiosyncratic news judgment of the editorial staff or whether they reflect the values of the obkom first secretary. In some cases (for example, coverage of Japan in the newspapers of central Russian oblasti), the editors often are probably little influenced by the opinions of their superiors, for the latter may have little interest in the subject.<sup>15</sup> On other issues, the editors may be quite sensitive to

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newspapers are published only five times a week, in distinction to six times a week for the other oblasti.

- 14 These figures are still incomplete, for the Library of Congress still had not received a number of the Armenian newspapers for April-May 1983 when this was written.
- 15 In general, I was not very successful in correlating differences in the background of the obkom first secretaries with differences in coverage of Japan, especially on military matters and the anti-war movement. However, in one case — interest in Japan as an economic model or trading partner — I did find some mild correlations with the type of education of the obkom first secretary. Thus, in the 20 oblasti which carried stories about the Japanese desire for trade with the Soviet Union, 12 of the obkom first secretaries were engineers and 8 were not. By contrast, in the eight oblasti which carried the article warning about the dangers of dependence on Japan, 3 first secretaries were engineers and 5 were not. In the 28 oblasti which carried over 75 column lines on Japanese economic difficulties and which seemed thereby to suggest that Japan was not particularly successful, 12 of the first secretaries were engineers and 16 were non-engineers; in the 40 oblasti which carried less than 75 column lines, 22 were engineers and 18 were non-engineers. Of the 19 oblasti which carried at least two stories on Japanese-American economic conflicts (which seem to imply that the Soviet Union might be able to break Japan away from the United States), 12 had engineers as obkom first secretary and 7 non-engineers.

If one combines these various items into an index, one can obtain stronger correlations. I took the number of column lines on economic difficulties, subtracted 100 for each article stating that Japan wanted trade and 50 for each on US-Japanese conflicts and added 100 if the oblast newspaper carried the article warning about dependence. Of those oblasti with a score of less than +75 (that is, oblasti which seemed attracted to economic collaboration), 25 had a first secretary who was an engineer, 16 a first secretary who was not. Of those oblasti with a score of more than +75 (that is, more dubious about collaboration), 9 had a first secretary who

the priorities of the first secretary, probably without even consulting him. The newspaper editors in the RSFSR oblasti and krajs — but not necessarily the autonomous republics — are always members or candidate members of the obkom bureau, and they regularly hear the obkom first secretary's views on some issues. On such a crucial question as Poland, it is not surprising that the variations correlate strongly with the age of the obkom first secretary. (See Table 6-2) On still other issues (for example, interest in Japan in the Soviet Far East or the difference in coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Christian and Moslem republics of the Transcaucasus), it is likely that the differences reflect general variations in attitude among the elites of the respective areas.

But at a minimum, the variation does show the difficulty in exercising total control of local officials in one of the most centralized realms. And it does remind us that, wherever we look in the Soviet political system — even in the most improbable of places — we find differences in values being publicly expressed, either directly or indirectly. Some of the differences are more salient to local bureaucratic elites than others — and one certainly would assume that domestic issues are more important to them than foreign policy ones — but to the extent that the leader is seeking advice or trying to avoid antagonizing members of the Central Committee, these values sometimes have an impact. The nature of politics in the Soviet system is very different from that in the parliamentary democracies, but those who deny the existence of such politics simply do not understand the Soviet Union.

### The Future

In the modern world the scholar is asked to play the role assigned the astrologer in the past. We are supposed to know not only whether the stars are propitious for some action, but also the future course of events. Often we are little better equipped for this task than the traditional astrologer. Frequently the most important influences on events within our expertise come from outside areas on which we have little expertise. Thus in 1978, a knowledgeable prediction about the American Presidential elections of 1980 would, first of all, have had to be based on a correct prediction of the course of events in Iran — which specialists on American politics were being told by those colleagues who worked on Iran was quite stable.

Within our field of expertise, we know that leaders face extremely difficult choices, because the pros and cons are evenly balanced. Hence, we often are driven to predict what are essentially 50-50 decisions. Even when the imperatives are fairly clear, we must judge whether a leader will have the wisdom and courage to do what an observer knows he should do. History is filled with so many incredibly stupid decisions by political leaders that the analyst's first task is to decide when a

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was an engineer and 18 a first secretary who was not. There are some debatable assumptions in the creation of this index, and I would not put enormous weight on it. Nevertheless, across a number of items there is clearly a weak tendency for oblasti with engineers as obkom first secretary to carry somewhat more material that would encourage the reader to be more favorably disposed towards the idea of improved economic relations with Japan.

leader will react rationally and when irrationally.

Our problems in predictions about the Soviet future are even more difficult than those of our colleagues who are making predictions about societies such as those in the United States and Japan. Not only does the level of secrecy mean that we know less, but the existence of the dictatorship means that the removal of a leader as a scapegoat to relieve public tensions and anger is more difficult than in systems with elections. Social and political forces are bottled up and may unexpectedly break through in a more dramatic fashion.

Therefore, as we try to analyze the relationship between order-maintenance and liberalization in the Soviet Union in the 1980s, there are essentially two questions that we must ask. First, what seems to be the objective relationship between order-maintenance and liberalization? Second, are the Soviet political system and political elite capable of doing what should be done?

The first of these questions is extremely complex. If the Soviet leaders are determined to prevent a free competition of political parties and groups, then clearly they must continue to use authoritarian methods to counteract efforts to form opposition groups. They give every sign of retaining their intention to maintain such a system. Andropov has talked a great deal about the need for more democracy within the Soviet framework, but he has been even more emphatic in his denunciation of any pluralism that involves opposition parties or free trade unions.

Indeed, even many Soviet liberals are deeply concerned about the implications of liberal democracy in the Soviet Union. They fear that the consequence would be separatist parties in the various union republics and the formation of terrorist groups if the separatist parties were not successful. Many who would like democracy for Russia itself are afraid that order in a multi-national state of the Soviet Union requires the maintenance of an authoritarian one-party state for a long time.

As we have seen, however, a considerable evolution has already taken place within the framework of the Communist one-party system. Party rule is now less oppressive for the bulk of the population than it once was, and it is easy to see where further liberalization would be possible without endangering political stability. Thus, if the Soviet Union permitted the new small group system in agriculture based on the collective contract to evolve into a form of family farming, if it encouraged the development of small-scale private trade, if it loosened the restrictions on forms of mass culture popular in the West (e.g., situation comedies on television, men's magazines with nude women, romance novels for women, comics for children, and so forth), such liberalization would surely increase popular satisfaction and strengthen political stability rather than weaken it. It is difficult to believe that the Soviet system will not gradually become more liberal and responsive in these realms where restrictions reflect intellectual prejudices of the past rather than the political control needs of the rulers.

The more serious questions center on the relationship between technological progress and liberalization. The Soviet economy has been completely protectionist, and the results have been precisely what an advocate of free trade would have predicted. The Soviet Union will never become a first-class industrial power until

it forces its industrialists, first, to compete with foreign imports and, second, to try to export technology and meet world standards in quality. But is this possible without a greater movement of people across borders and a greater openness to Western society?

The communications revolution poses an even more severe problem. If the Soviet Union wants to become competitive — indeed, if it does not want to fall further behind — it cannot continue the present level of restrictions on photocopying, and it will have to adopt the rapidly-appearing innovations in telecommunications and word-processing. Yet, as vital as such instruments are for effective management and for increase in productivity in the future, they also greatly facilitate the reproduction of illegal manuscripts.

This creates a great dilemma for the Communist party. Much of its legitimacy has rested on its success in transforming Russia from a country that lost the Russo-Japanese War and that performed badly in World War I into a superpower, more or less equal to the world's other military powers. If the Soviet population gains the sense that the Communist party is going to doom Russia to permanent inferiority in the realms of industrial and technological development, the party's legitimacy is going to be seriously — and eventually, fatally — eroded. The kind of liberalization that is necessary for technological innovation is also, therefore, indispensable for order in the long run.

The second question is whether the Soviet elite is psychologically and politically capable of introducing the kinds of gradual liberalizing changes that are necessary.

One aspect of this problem is our assessment of generational evolution in views within the elite. The Brezhnev elite had its values formed in the 1920s, and then, because of the Great Purge, many of its leading members stayed at top levels of the system for over forty years. Now, however, the Brezhnev generation is rapidly disappearing. Since late 1980, five aging voting members of the Politburo have died or retired, and four of them (Brezhnev, Kirilenko, Kosygin, and Suslov) constituted the inner core of the leadership since 1965.

There are still parts of the top Soviet elite where surprisingly little generational change has occurred. The fourteen-member Presidium of the Council of Ministers (the chairman and deputy chairmen) is incredibly old — 68 years of age on the average, 70 if two men in their fifties are excluded. Despite the replacement of a little over 10 percent of the other members of the Council of Ministers (essentially the ministers and the chairmen of the state committee) since Brezhnev's death, this group of 84 men (and they *are* all men) averaged 65 years of age in the summer of 1983. Remarkably little change has occurred among the leaders of the foreign trade: the head of the international department of the Central Committee has been in his for twenty-eight years, the head of the international department of the Central Committee has been in his for twenty-eight years, the chief foreign policy assistant of the Central Committee has been in his for nineteen, and the minister of defense has been a minister since 1941.

Nevertheless, even in the center, significant generational change is beginning to

occur. The new inner core of the Andropov Politburo for domestic policy (Gorbachev, Romanov, and Aliev) are all quite new to their jobs, especially the latter two, and they average only 57 years of age. Twenty-eight of the ministers and chairmen of the state committees are in their fifties, and this number is rising rapidly.

In the provinces, the generational change has been more thoroughgoing. The average republican party first secretary is 59 and the average obkom first secretary 57. In the summer of 1982, the lower obkom secretaries in the RSFSR (including the second secretaries) averaged only 53 years of age, the first secretaries of the city party committees (gorkoms) 51 years of age, and the first secretaries of the rural districts (raikom) 48. The chairmen of the executive committees of the oblast soviets were 55 years old on the average and the deputy chairmen 53.<sup>16</sup>

The crucial question is whether these younger officials, most of whom have worked exclusively or almost exclusively in the post-Stalin period, generally have a different set of attitudes than their predecessors. Of course, the leading members of the Brezhnev generation have been identified with old policies for years and even decades, and they are tired. Officials in their mid-fifties almost surely would favor some policy changes simply because they are younger and want to differentiate themselves from the men they are replacing.

It is much more difficult to judge whether the new generation has a basically different perspective on political life. Certainly the major scholars studying the outside world who are under 60 years of age tend to have less doctrinaire views than

**Table 6-2** Worried Stories about Poland in RSFSR Oblast Newspapers  
by 22 Age of Obkom First Secretary, April-May 1983

Year of Birth of Obkom First Secretary	Number of Column Lines		
	0-99	100-299	300+
1907-1918	5	5	11
1919-1925	3	12	3
1926 and later	19	7	4

Source: The newspapers of all krajs, oblasti, and autonomous republics of the RSFSR, except for the Kabardino-Balkar and Kalmyk Autonomous Republics. The newspapers of the latter two republics were issued only 5 days a week, while those of those areas were published 6 days. In the autonomous republics, the Russian language newspaper was surveyed.

Notes: (1) A "worried story" is one in which an activization of the Solidarity underground is featured and or American subversion of Poland is emphasized.

<sup>16</sup> Autonomous republics are not included in this calculation, but krajs are included. At the time of the 1982 elections to the oblast soviets (late May and early June), lists of the candidates were published in the oblast newspapers. In 36 of the 55 krajs and oblasti, the years of birth of the candidates were published, and these statistics are based on those 36 cases. For a survey of the earlier trends in the age of Soviet officials, see Hough, *Soviet Leadership in Transition*, (Washington, D. C.: Brookings Institution, 1980).

the scholars of the Brezhnev generation. Concrete evidence is rarer outside the scholarly realm, but Soviet intellectuals testify that younger officials in general are more flexible. The limited evidence that exists does tend to bear them out. For example, the one issue in the oblast foreign news coverage of April and May 1983 which was unquestionably important to all obkom first secretaries was the situation in Poland. In practice, the newspapers in oblasti with younger obkom first secretaries displayed far less concern about developments in Poland and the American ability to subvert Poland than the older ones. (See Table 6-2.)

Ultimately, however, we are going to have to maintain an open mind about generational differences in attitudes. There is a very strong theoretical case for the existence of major generational differences in perspective between the revolutionary generation and the first post-revolutionary generation in a country with a radical revolution, and the evidence from virtually all countries with a radical revolution confirms the theoretical analysis. The theoretical case for such a difference between the first post-revolutionary generation and the second post-revolutionary generation is considerably weaker, and we need more confirming evidence.

The second question is whether, whatever the perspectives of younger officials, the structure of the Soviet political system will permit change. As already discussed, the Soviet political system has one enormous potential flaw. The leaders are responsible to a committee composed of their administrative subordinates. The members of this committee obviously are concerned about their own job security and about the institutional interests of their own organizations and regions. One can easily imagine them uniting to protect these individual interests, or else one can imagine a General Secretary deciding to accommodate these various individual interests as his best strategy for job security. One or the other of these two developments clearly occurred in the Brezhnev era. The inability or unwillingness of Andropov to make significant changes in the Politburo membership or in policy in his first eight months in office does nothing to remove the thought that there are institutional tendencies to immobilism in the Soviet system.

Again, we need to wait, and we should remember that "inside" boards of directors in American corporations (those composed of the top subordinates of the boss) tend to be subservient. In many ways Andropov is a member of the older generation, and his health has been very poor. If Andropov's health improves or he is replaced by a younger leader, the Central Committee may prove to be less of a restraint than might be imagined. If immobilism threatens the maintenance of stability and order, then a majority of the Central Committee or a General Secretary may think that the potential dangers of inaction are greater than those of action, even for themselves personally.

If the immobilism of the last half-dozen years of the Brezhnev period does prove to be a long-range problem, the Soviet elite may have to consider more drastic changes to liberate the General Secretary from subordinate control. Such measures might include the subordination of the Politburo to the General Secretary and the transformation of it into a cabinet that can be changed with a change in leader, the simultaneous limitation of a General Secretary to a single term in office as in

Mexico, a limitation of the tenure of regional party officials and ministers on the Central Committee to a fixed period unless they are promoted to the level of Central Committee secretary or deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, and perhaps even the loosening of restrictions on factions within the party.

If we are to remain on solid ground, we should do no more in conclusion than to reemphasize once more the great complexity — a Marxist might say, the dialectical character — of the relationship between order and liberalization in the Soviet Union. If liberalization is carried too far or conducted carelessly, then disorder will occur, but the opposite point is just as important to make. The rising level of the education of the population, the need to integrate the Soviet economy into the world economy, and the impending communications revolution mean that a failure to liberalize may also lead to disorder. The ability of Soviet leaders to follow a correct line between these opposing imperatives will determine the degree of success for the Soviet system in the future.

## Comment

Tomoyoshi Hirai

Hough emphasized in his presentation that we should pay more attention to the changed and changing aspects of Soviet politics. He warned of the inappropriateness of our still adhering to the totalitarian model as a tool for analyzing the Soviet Union. Even intransigent supporters have recently been obliged to notice changes taking place in the components that compose this model. Today it is clear that the totalitarian model initiated by two professors at Harvard at the time, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Carl Friedrich, has lost much of its validity as an instrument for explaining the reality of the present Soviet society. At the same time Hough seems to take a very careful position in predicting what kind of changes the Soviet system will undergo in the future. With such an attitude Hough reminds me of a doctor who has discovered something abnormal or wrong in his patient and yet is hesitating to provide a final judgement and definite remedy of his own. At any rate Hough's presentation seems to me to provide a view diametrically opposed to Besançon's. For this I would like to give a high mark to this symposium's program organizing committee.

My question to Hough is: what kind of ruler will Yuri Andropov be? Hough seems to be correct when he states that, despite the new Soviet leadership's need to respond to strong pressures for some changes in the deadlocked economic system, Andropov so far has not attempted to make any visible change or reform. In my opinion Hough has correctly observed the general trend of bureaucratization of the party and the administrative organizations in the Soviet Union. But I also have the impression that Hough has noted the development of the Soviet state system from an autocratic or totalitarian type through an authoritarian phase to a more democratic or pluralistic one — though, of course, this has happened with much zigzagging and at a slow, snail's pace. But we must be cautious about accepting such a view as that which I attribute to Hough above. The political reality of Western society, let alone Soviet society, does not necessarily indicate that there is a cause-and-effect relation between bureaucratization and democratization. Consider, for example, such political scandals as the Tanaka bribery case in Japan and the Watergate affair in the United States. It seems to me too optimistic to hinge a hope for democratization or liberalization only on the ground that one can note bureaucratization — or more correctly, liberalization tendencies — in Soviet society. I would like to draw your attention to another possibility: this type of bureaucratization could as easily lead in practice to that described by George Orwell in his book, *1984*.

With regard to the question of continuity and discontinuity in Soviet history, politics and society, I tend to regard it as very important for us to examine which factor is more dominant in the Soviet society at a given moment. I am very much interested in knowing Hough's views on the following matters. As a result of the

general change recently taking place among party leaders at the local level, new types of leaders with more flexible views on a variety of issues may emerge in the future in the Soviet Union, although it will certainly take a long time for such leaders to reach the top decision-making level at the center in Moscow. Finally, I would like to have Hough's views on the effect that the "tough" policy being exerted by the United States and its allies is having on the present Soviet government, and particularly on the belief system or mind-set of these newly-emerging leaders.

## Comment

### Hiroshi Kimura

In Session 1 we were looking for a replacement for the totalitarian model; now Hough provides us with an alternative: "institutional pluralism" or "bureaucratic ossification." Without a doubt this is quite a valuable contribution. Although impressed very much by his new model, I would like nevertheless to take this opportunity to express a few questions about his argument.

First, I would like to know to what extent, in what direction, how and at what levels the Soviet political system has been undergoing changes. By what Hough terms as "evolution," I understand that some significant "changes" have been taking place in the Soviet political system. But here again we have a problem of the definition of the word "change." Hirai rightly mentioned that we can observe both changed and unchanged elements in the recent history of the Soviet society. There are elements which I am tempted to regard as more important and hence as rather fundamental within the Soviet political system, such as the relationship between the government and citizenry or between the party and the general public, or the procedures by which government personnel are selected, by which state policies are determined, or by which economic resources and wealth are disposed of or distributed. These kinds of fundamental elements have remained unchanged; they have been left strictly under the monopolized control of a handful of elite leaders. On the other hand, I cannot fail to notice that changes which also deserve to be stressed have been taking place in other types of elements. It may also be true, to use a Hegelian concept, that quantitative changes, once they have accumulated beyond a certain point, may bring about qualitative changes. Yet I personally tend to distinguish two kinds of changes: one is the fundamental or systemic change and the other the within-the-system change. In the latter group of less or non-fundamental changes I include changes in modes of policy implementation, in tactics and in the political style of governing. Then, my question to Hough is, when he says that evolutionary changes are taking place in the Soviet political system, what kind of changes are more relevant? Hough writes that Soviet politics has become rather conservative and even defensive lately. I don't deny this, yet what I would like

to say is as follows. In general, after having achieved whatever it wanted, any political regime will become defensive. Although it may sound like a sort of *contradicto adjectivo*, I am tempted to describe the present Soviet political system as "passive autocracy" or "defensive totalitarianism," because it is a status quo which is interested in keeping firmly in order and in its hands what it has already achieved in an aggressive way.

Hough also emphasizes generational change within the leadership, suggesting that a change in psychology will accompany it. This must be particularly true when one looks at leaders on the regional, local level. But when it comes to the top leaders at the center in the Kremlin, I am not quite sure whether we can be as optimistic as Hough is. As far as the top twenty to thirty leaders — the CPSU Politburo members and candidates, and Secretariat members — are concerned, I cannot detect any more changes occurring in their political profiles in the Andropov period than occurred in the Brezhnev period. I have tended to be more convinced by what T. H. Rigby and Vladimir Kusin described, i.e. by the "self-stabilizing mechanism" of the Soviet top elite group. The new leaders in the Kremlin do not represent the newly-emerging young generation in the society but are instead a group of people carefully selected by their elder bosses. In order to be selected they are likely, wittingly or unwittingly, to adopt an ideological frame of reference, belief system, and even a mind-set very similar to those of their senior bosses. Without doing this it is extremely difficult to climb far up the career ladder in the Soviet system of leadership recruitment. As a result of this, the rule of "self-replication" prevails more in the Soviet type of political system than in other systems. At any rate, this kind of "built-in" barrier does not necessarily accompany generational changes in political profile in the USSR.

My second remark concerns Hough's understanding of the Soviet image of Japan and its policy toward Japan. Hough has done a marvelous service to the Japanese specialists on Soviet affairs by going out of his way to complete his survey on the USSR's image of Japan as expressed in Soviet official news media such as TASS and Novosti. It is a great contribution indeed, which we greatly appreciate. Nevertheless, I have a primitive and yet basic question as to whether the images expressed in the official Soviet media reflect the Kremlin's real image. I suspect sometimes that the official Soviet images are deceptive versions of real images, or at least are images fabricated or manipulated for propaganda purposes. Aleksandr Bovin, political commentator for *Izvestiia*, once candidly wrote: "The verbal expression of policy can play a dual role, namely, it either reflects (*otrazhaet*) real interests and intentions, or, conversely, is called upon to conceal (*zkryvat'*) these interests and intentions." Whenever I read *Pravda*, *Izvestiia* or any other Soviet newspaper, I have to wonder which function this or that news item is expected to play. In my experience with research on the Soviet image of Japan, I have found that Soviet commentators and writers sometimes project plural images in the media. But, particularly when it has come to a final Kremlin policy decision regarding Japan, I have always found a unified policy on the subject.

Finally, I must confess that I was surprised by Hough's unbelievably optimistic view about a change in foreign policy toward Japan under the post-Brezhnev leadership. In his recent book, *Soviet Leadership in Transition*, he wrote: "A new and younger leadership may be more willing to take risks for diplomatic gains (for example, in regard to the four islands near Japan)." Discussing the possibility of the Soviet Union adopting a more flexible and imaginative policy and deciding to return the "Northern Islands" to Japan, Seweryn Bialer of Columbia University expressed a view similar to Hough's twice in his interviews with *Newsweek* magazine (October 11, 1982) and *The Christian Science Monitor* (November 8, 1982). We are wondering why such otherwise astute and realistic observers of Soviet affairs as Hough and Bialer suddenly become so unrealistic when it comes to the subject of Soviet foreign policy and behavior in Asia. Unfortunately, as far as Soviet foreign policy toward Japan is concerned, no viable change has been detected.

Third, it is hard to understand correctly or consistently the following two statements which we find in Hough's paper. One is that too much liberalization leads to disorder; the other, that the failure to liberalize leads to disorder. I can accept the first completely, but I wonder if the second statement is correct in the Soviet Union. It seems that, given the nature of the Russian mentality and in the light of the historical record of the Soviet Union, what the Soviet people really want is not necessarily full or complete liberalization. A "tacit agreement" seems to have been concluded between the ruling elite and the ruled that, as long as the rulers promise and in practice provide the minimum standard of living and ensure its incremental improvement, the general public will not challenge the system by requesting complete freedom. For its part, the leadership is going to try its best to make compromises when it is pressed by the public for more freedom in order to prevent the ruled from bursting out for liberalization. Thus it seems that a middle-of-the-road formula or solution exists between two extremes — too much liberalization and disorder — in the Soviet Union.

## Discussion

With regard to Hirai's question on the impact of Reagan's "tough" policy upon the USSR, Hough replied that discussion of the impact of toughness abroad is complex. Sometimes toughness and confrontation are absolutely necessary. Hough said candidly that he had never been too critical of Reagan's increase in military expenditures because he thinks the Soviet Union did some stupid things in military expenditure in the 70s and that someone had to hit them over the head with a club. But Hough considers it extremely dangerous to give the Soviets the impression that they are in a box, and said that it would be better to say "if you're going to be expansionist, if you're going to cause us trouble, we'll resist, but there is an opportunity if you want to change." Hough concluded that it is this kind of combi-

nation that he has not seen.

In response to Kimura on systemic or within-the-system change, Hough listed aspects of the definition of totalitarianism: total nationalization of the economy, a radical transforming ideology, the seeking of total power, an irrational terror, and a tight system of censorship. He asked what has happened to them, and whether there has been a fundamental change or not. Some of those characteristics seem to Hough no longer applicable, while some of them are half-true and some are completely true. Hough noted that we are all forced to speak the language of the society. Soviets must agree within the framework of Marxist ideology, partly because it is the language the people understand. Responding to the next question raised by Kimura, the issue of the possibility of the USSR's returning the four northern islands to Japan, Hough made the following remarks: The conservative side in the Soviet Union says, "Even if we gave the four islands back, Japan would never change her position. Therefore, it would never help us." On the possibility of the return of the islands under the Andropov leadership, Hough regarded what he had written in his book, *Soviet Leadership in Transition*, to be optimistic from the Japanese point of view, but pessimistic from the American point of view.

Based on his understanding that it is prohibited to bring the Soviet local papers out of the Soviet Union, Miyanabe asked why Hough's paper is based on recent Soviet local papers. He also disclosed his impression that with respect to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Western scholars have an overwhelming advantage in information over their Japanese equivalents. Hough replied that there are two kinds of local newspapers, one which is available by subscription both in the U.S. and anywhere else, and one which is not. He said that the only advantage that Americans have vis-à-vis Japanese lies in that American scholarly exchanges are fuller than those of the Japanese. In fact, he had collected materials from local newspapers which he had used in his article while at the Academy of Sciences exchange in June and July, 1983. He added that the historical library of the RSFSR contains all of the oblast newspapers, which include those in the Russian and Ukrainian languages, going back to 1945 in general.

Based on his experience that during World War II the Nazi extermination of the Jews was not believed by the Jews themselves because it made absolutely no sense in terms of Nazi Germany's economic self-interest, Friedberg asked to what extent we are to make an allowance for the fact that an authoritarian regime will always act in a way that is self-interested. In answer Hough said that obviously both authoritarian and democratic nations often do not act in their self-interest, at least as we see it. The requirements of political control in an authoritarian state often lead to decisions that may be irrational from an economic point of view. Then, Hough pointed out the twentieth century experience that there is often a difference in rationality between the first and second generations. Hough's own guess is that if the German Jews had managed to survive Hitler, the second generation Nazi leadership would have oppressed them in a less irrational way. There is something in the revolutionary generation; there is a craziness sometimes. And in Hitler it came out in one way; in Stalin, in another. But the bureaucratic mind of the

second and third generations gets away from some of the wildness. Furthermore, industrial growth did not seem to Hough so vital for legitimacy in a Communist system. The Soviet military leaders have just got to accept that the Americans can develop a good cruise missile but that they cannot. And their SAMs in Siberia don't work. To some extent the drive to keep up with the Japanese even if not the Americans is not a very powerful force for the Soviets.

Sticking to his theme of the relationship between totalitarian political systems and the disregard of economic considerations, Friedberg referred to what he had recently read in Hannah Arendt's book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. She had pointed out that Eichmann's was a quite bureaucratic mind, not a fanatical mind. During World War II there had been repeated complaints from the Nazi High Command that railroad track was being wasted in continuously transporting people to Auschwitz, on the grounds that the same trains could have contributed to lessening the Nazi defeat on the Russian front. Without disagreeing at all with Friedberg's observation, Hough stated that during the First Five Year Plan Stalin had been industrializing the country while, at the same time, making those crazy attacks on the foreign specialists, which were only going to frighten them away. Then Hough went back to his generational difference theory. Acknowledging that it was just a guess, he said that if Eichmann had become the Fuehrer in the second generation his bureaucratic mind would have taken things into account more or less economically. Speaking about generational change in the USSR, Hough said that we do not know whether the Gorbachevs will be different from Brezhnev's generation. Although he feels that they will be somewhat different, he cautioned against scholars' making bold predictions, because of their lack of experience. On the other hand, Hough again emphasized differences between the first (charismatic, fanatic) and second (bureaucratic) generations that exist in all countries.

Concerning Hough's opinion of the role of generations, Katsenelinboigen noted that now we have the third and fourth generations after the Russian Revolution. Personally he recalled that he had seen a person with a beard in the early 1970s when it was prohibited. At that time he had thought that such a man must be a non-conformist, and, therefore, a liberal person. But when he had begun to teach at the Department of Economics at Moscow University and had met a young man with a beard, he had immediately regarded that man as a non-conformist, a liberal, and as a terrible Russian chauvinist. What he guessed was that there is a new generational split between those liberals who really dream of seeing Russia become like Western countries and those who are similarly highly educated, sophisticated, and yet terrible Russian chauvinists. The fact is that the people's soul is empty in the sense that they do not believe any longer in Communism. They want to have something which can substitute for it. And the substitute is not always Western-type democratic ideals, but sometimes chauvinism. If the Soviet Union reaches the stage of a deep crisis, the situation will be dangerous. Katsenelinboigen explained what he calls deep crisis: the Soviet economy is in the worst situation that, other than during the War, it has experienced in the last fifty years. He pointed out those features which had led him to such an observation: the exhaustion

of resources and above all territories, the lack of investment for exploitation of new natural resources, the need to replace obsolete equipment, and the exhaustion of the Soviet people's mind, as demonstrated by growing Russian nationalism, alcoholism, etc. In addition, Katsenelinboigen gave a very pessimistic picture of the 1980s, when the crisis situation will prevail and, unfortunately, chauvinists will have more chances of success than other types of people in the USSR.

Hough agreed with Katsenelinboigen in that there are differences in each generation. He also agreed that there is a problem of Russian chauvinism, but at the same time he stated that the degree of balance is extremely difficult to judge. There is certain evidence that Andropov is on the anti-chauvinist side, judging from a series of signs and the nature of his speeches. Perhaps the new director of the IMEMO (the Institute of World Economy and World Relations), A. N. Iakoblev, may also be anti-chauvinist. Hough said that Iakoblev had been one of the first Soviet students to go to the United States, where he had spent a year on an exchange in 1958. Returning to Moscow, he had written an article against Russian chauvinism, and had almost immediately been exiled as Ambassador to Canada and had remained there. Now Andropov has brought him back to head the international scholarly community in the Soviet Union. But Hough was cautious enough to add that there is a series of other signs which indicate that the Andropov leadership does not represent solely the anti-chauvinist forces.

Minagawa wondered what Hough would advise Andropov to do to enable the new Soviet leadership to carry out new economic policy or reform, thereby breaking the bureaucratic inertia. Minagawa further wondered what the composition of the cabinet leadership (which Hough had mentioned in his paper) will be if the cabinet is composed of members of Andropov's entourage who might become like American presidential assistants. Finally, if the tenure of elected party officials can be limited, Minagawa wondered what they will do when they finish their tenure, and where they are going to go, because the number of positions at the top is limited. Minagawa was afraid that there will be more factional struggles in the upper echelon of the leadership.

Hough replied that, being a scholar, he is not very much interested in making a prediction about the USSR's future, nor in giving political advice to anybody, because in the guessing game one discovers that no one is ever completely right. One person may be right on this and someone else on that, and then there will be some things that no one could have predicted. Life is simply more complex than any theorizing. Hough reminded the audience of Lenin's quotation that theories are gray while life is green. But Hough did say that, if pressed, his first advice to the Andropov leadership would be to move toward the Hungarian price equilibrium, to start raising the price of bread, meat, and so on, and to conduct an effective agricultural reform. However, Hough added that Andropov has not taken such a significant step at all. It seemed to Hough that Andropov is neither moving nor doing things as fast as he had thought he would. There are reasons, according to Hough, why Andropov feels that he has to move cautiously — maybe his illness, or, as Hirai had suggested in his comment, problems of bureaucratization in

the Soviet system: maybe the bureaucracy controls the General Secretary more than we think. This is a realm where scholars are just going to have to wait and see. Stressing that in the Soviet type of political system, where the bureaucrats dominate, the leader is responsible to the bureaucracy, Hough told Minagawa that no solutions are as easy as Minagawa had suggested. There are many compelling reasons for economic reforms, as well as many difficulties, in the USSR. Hough believes that if any Soviet leader raised prices he would get riots. This is not because the bureaucrat is powerful, but because the political leaders fear what he is doing. Gosplan says, if one decentralizes without changing the price system, there will simply be inflation as in Yugoslavia. According to Hough, economic reform is something very difficult in the Soviet Union especially now that they have let the prices get so far out of line. And the economy is so interconnected that it is very difficult to make one kind of change or another. Hough agreed with the view that the 1980s is an interesting period when we will see how the Soviet Union can face up to these things which have been preventing any leader from conducting economic reform.

Hough disclosed that his "pluralistic" approach to Soviet politics had come out of the arguments in political science in the U.S. during the 1950s and 1960s, when a bargaining kind of culture, limited demands, interests groups negotiating behind the scenes, and the so-called civic culture had been important topics. V. O. Key had then been defining pluralism very much in *covert* terms. Hough thought that those kinds of pluralism have increasingly played a part in the Soviet Union as well, particularly in the Brezhnev era, but not in the Khrushchev era. Specifically in the Brezhnev period there had been a *bargaining culture* with a sort of cautious, conservative incrementalism. What they do not have in the Soviet Union are competitive elections, confrontative politics, independent interest groups, an opposition — all of which are in many ways the most obvious aspects of a Western democratic system. In the latter system there is demonstrative action in order, for example, to close down an airport. In the Soviet system, in contrast, they do not have picketing, nor demonstrations, nor petitions, nor any other organized activities of that kind. What the political scientists of the 1950s and 1960s had been discussing concerned this sort of *bargaining*, incrementalism, or confrontation, and the like. These had been important theoretical questions. Hough underlined that what he had noted was similarities in that kind of pluralism between Western systems and the Soviet system. However, Hough said that he is now cautious, and he almost never uses the word "institutional pluralism" which people define in a manner different from his. Rather, he tries to use terms that are not quite as explosive, nor as ambiguous, as this.

Kim proposed that since "pluralism" connotes the Western concept of pluralism, scholars should not use the term in the analysis of the Soviet political system. Instead, Kim recommended the concept of "co-optation," which means that the Soviet Union may utilize some of the expertise of the administrative, technical, and economic elite, as well as of the party officers. It might also draw on the abilities, knowledge, and information of non-party elites who belong to the non-political sector of the society. The party elite must "co-opt" other elites in the society

without letting them share power. Superficially, Kim continued, because of this "co-optation" system, the change in the nature of the Soviet leadership can be observed. In other words, although power is still monopolized by the party elite, the "co-optative" elites, which do not share power with the party elite, have been emerging. The change to the co-optation system from the monocratic system seems to Kim remarkable. However, Kim warned that this co-optation system is completely different from the Western concept of the pluralistic system.

Hough replied to Kim that again everything depends on the definition of the concept. He believes that the Western type of political pluralism will not be seen in the Soviet Union in his lifetime. He cited the Soviet reaction to Solidarity as an example. The Soviets are not going to permit independent trade unions, let alone political parties. There is a series of things the Soviets are not going to permit. Hough's comment on "co-optation" was that it is useful to distinguish between power and influence. He said that the bureaucracy, still subordinate, may have some influence upon the General Secretary but never the power to overrule him. Hough also pointed out that when someone is co-opted he does not necessarily become a mere instrument. One of the problems in the Soviet system is that because of the Stalin program most of the best young men enter defense institutions, and later defense industries. Thus, when engineers are co-opted, they are found in the defense industries. From a different perspective they still see things as defense engineers. If a man of agriculture is co-opted, he still thinks of everything and gives advice from an agricultural perspective. Though the co-opter may think he is in control of his ostensible subordinate, the reverse might also be true. That is to say, participants in the political process are often influenced without their knowing it.

According to Shiokawa, it is necessary to distinguish between several kinds or aspects of pluralism. First, social pluralism should be distinguished from political pluralism. Social pluralism had been more or less tolerated in the Stalin period, especially in Poland and Hungary and other socialist countries, although, on the other hand, strong constraints on political pluralism had still existed. Second, he said that covered pluralism should be distinguished from open pluralism. The former has never ceased to exist, even under a strongly controlled leadership such as that of Stalinism. To note the existence of a former type of pluralism is helpful for understanding "socialist" political systems, though we should not confuse this type with the open pluralism which has never been tolerated in Soviet politics. Completely agreeing with Shiokawa, Hough explained the ground from which his concept of "institutional pluralism" had come.

Ito basically agreed with Hough, saying that a kind of evolution has been taking place in the Soviet political system since the death of Stalin — there has been a growing diversification of standpoints and of the number of issues among Soviet officials; increasing professionalization and bureaucratization of political life has occurred; ruling classes have been emerging whose basic interest is to preserve the status quo; there has been a change of generations, and so on. Yet, Ito raised two academic problems which seemed to him worth discussing. First, there

was again the question of totalitarianism. Ito said that there are different schools of totalitarianism within the totalitarian model. The totalitarian model had originally been invented by Sigmund Neumann in the 1930s to analyze the political system of Nazi Germany, and had then been applied to the Communist political system, particularly during the Cold War period. Ito said that he himself rejects the totalitarian model, applied even to Nazi Germany, because he believes that the concept does not help explain Hitlerism, but rather gives a distorted picture of it. In other words, it is not a scientific concept at all. To begin with, he explained, it is extremely value-oriented. Furthermore, the totalitarian model cannot explain changes taking place well.

Ito's second question concerned the bureaucratization of the political system in the USSR. He emphasized the difference between the Western and Soviet bureaucracies in terms of quality. Since the bureaucracies in the USSR, Poland, and East European countries do not meet the necessary conditions of bureaucracy articulated by Max Weber, Ito doubted that the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union is likely to lead to modernization or democratization of Soviet life. Minagawa reminded Ito of the fact that Hough himself had said that the bureaucracy in Poland is of a kind different from Weber's model. Ito also expressed his regret that a better alternative cannot be found for the totalitarian model, mainly because of the limited information on these societies.

In his reply to Ito's remarks, Hough warned against equating Poland with the Soviet Union, because there are many differences between the two countries, of which one is the significance of nationalism. Nationalism in Poland has largely been destroyed by the Communist regime and has since been associated with the Church. However, the regime has been unable to capture nationalism and has therefore remained extremely weak. In contrast, in the Soviet Union the Communists have achieved national goals for the Russians, and their system is more stable. Generalizing a bit, Hough said that where Communist systems have come to power on their own, they have generally associated themselves with nationalism, but in Eastern Europe, where the Communists did not come to power by themselves, the systems have tended to be unstable except where they have become more independent internally, as in Hungary. As far as the totalitarian model is concerned, Hough repeated that such words as "totalitarianism" and "pluralism" are ambivalent, with no short list of characteristics, and that he had abandoned the word "pluralism" because of this language barrier, which, without conveying to the audience what the author or speaker really wants to say, leads to unnecessary confusion.

Besaçon remarked that from the six features of totalitarianism enumerated by Hough, he got the impression that the totalitarian model is not as obsolete as had been suggested. However, he also reminded the audience that historically dictatorships have always been short-lived. In this sense Besaçon does not regard the Soviet regime as a dictatorship. Hough had to go back again to the problem of definitions. He said that since 1965 Brzezinski has not used the word "totalitarianism" to describe the Soviet system because of conservative ossification which has been transforming qualities that he had described in 1956. The distinction

between authoritarianism — as it exists in Argentina and other countries, in Central America, or even in the Philippines — and totalitarianism is more blurred in reality than the definitions of Arendt and Brzezinski suggest.