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Preface

The Hokkaido University Symposium on Order Orientation and Liberalizing Tendencies in Soviet and East European Societies was held in Sapporo on August 23-25, 1983, under the auspices of the Japanese Ministry of Education. There were about sixty participants from Japan as well as from abroad. Eight nationalities were represented in the event. This was the first international symposium in Japan in the field of Soviet and East European studies.

One can associate many thoughts with the subject Order Orientation and Liberalizing Tendencies in Soviet and East European Societies.

Some people may be reminded of a well-known dilemma in Russian history: the precarious balance between unlimited autocracy in the state and anarchic tendencies in the society. If control is loosened, the whole body politic disintegrates, and inevitably chaos with its tragic consequences ensues. On the other hand, if control is tightened, order is maintained, but autocracy is the price. *Neogranichennoe samoderzhavie protiv anarkhii* (unlimited autocracy against anarchy) is the conclusion that the nineteenth century Russian writers often drew from this dilemma. This may be the historian's first thought on the subject.

Others may refer to a contradiction in the Russians' social conduct: deference to authority and a cult of discipline on the one hand, and a longing for unboundedness, an inclination toward spontaneity, on the other. The Russian word *stikhiinost'*, which is translated "spontaneity" but often means something like "natural violence," has undergone various evaluations by Russian social thinkers. For some it is a source of hope for social and political regeneration, but for others it is an anathema. The Russian mind is split into two extremes and cannot find tranquility. This may be the sociologist's approach to the subject.

Literature specialists may associate this subject with another thought. Soul-searching dramas by great Russian writers — Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* or Dostoevskii's *The Possessed* — center on the problem of how to find the right balance between social obligations and individual happiness. All attempts at such a balance are ultimately futile and end in tragedy. We can find such themes in many literary works even of the Soviet period.

Economists may interpret the subject in terms of that famous conflict within the socialist economy: plan versus market. This conflict is as old as the October Revolution and as new as Andropov's attempts at economic reform, if there are any. There is no sign of its being solved in one way or another in the near future.

The subject may appear again in a different way to specialists in international relations. An eternal problem in Soviet bloc policy is the conflict between the Soviet emphasis on unity and integration and the centrifugal tendencies of the East European countries. Symptoms of the same kind of conflict have always been observable in the Soviet nationality policy.

Thus, the subject is open to all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. It is flexible and pregnant enough for one to approach it as he likes.

Nevertheless, one remains within the same circle of problems. This is exactly what is intended. Such an interdisciplinary approach may result in confusion, but may also bring about new insights which could not be obtained from a purely intra-disciplinary discussion. Having held the conference, I can say with great confidence that ours was the latter case.

There were altogether nine sessions in the symposium. Every day three sessions were held, two in the morning and one in the afternoon. The morning sessions ran parallel in separate groups. One was more or less economics-oriented, and the other non-economics-oriented. The papers presented in the morning sessions dealt with more specific and monographic subjects. The afternoon session was a plenary one, and the paper presented there dealt with a more general, less discipline-oriented subject. The afternoon session was preceded by a summary report on the morning sessions so that all participants might be informed of what was going on in the part of the conference they could not attend. This constant parting and coming together during the conference was to guarantee maximal efficiency of discussion and the broadest participation in it under the conditions of an interdisciplinary conference.

During the discussions an unusual scene unfolded for those who were accustomed to the Japanese way of discussing. A really lively and heated exchange of views came about in spite of all language barriers. The proverbial Japanese habit of keeping a low, reserved profile was gone. The positions of individual participants were clearly staked out. They were heavily attacked and vehemently defended up to the point of impoliteness. This made the discussion extremely fruitful. Despite the strong words the participants did not lose mutual respect; on the contrary, they returned home with increased respect for their opponents.

How were the opinions divided? What conclusions were drawn from the discussions? The discussions may be summed up as covering three points: continuity and change, uniqueness and comparability, and future perspectives. Each of these points naturally overlapped and interconnected with the others. However, we may make some interesting observations by summarizing in the following way.

First, continuity and change. If we understand Order Orientation versus Liberalizing Tendencies in terms of plan versus market, as economists are likely to do, then there can be no question regarding continuity: the plan was introduced only after the Socialist Revolution. But Aron Katsenelinboigen and Tsuneo Morita point out that such a juxtaposition is no longer pertinent as an analytical framework. They suggest instead vertical mechanism or system of bureaucratic allocation versus horizontal mechanism or market system. If the question is put this way, historical continuity can be established between pre-revolutionary Russia and the Soviet Union.

Furthermore, even capitalism and socialism can be put into one spectrum where you can compare them in both qualitative and quantitative terms. This constitutes the starting point for Morita's new approach to the convergence phenomenon. Katsenelinboigen offers us a fascinating typology of the vertical mechanism which encompasses the widest range of variants from ancient Egyptian slavery up to the centrally-planned economy of the Soviet Union under Brezhnev. To this bold

scheme inevitably arise justifiable criticisms that it is not clear whether his typology is defined in logical or in historical terms, or that it is difficult to localize the Yugoslav type in his typology.

The problem of continuity versus change is a most legitimate subject for historians. Sheila Fitzpatrick made a controversial point, demonstrating continuity between Leninism and Stalinism using the context of the Civil War. Then followed an interesting exchange of views on the problem of continuity among the different factions of the Bolshevik party and among the October Revolution, the Civil War, the NEP, and the so-called revolution from above in the late twenties. The discussion was conducted on an extremely high level, since the two discussants, Haruki Wada and Yoshimasa Tsuji, were no less specialists on the topic than the speaker herself. There was no room for such a general question as whether Leninism or Stalinism is a legitimate son of the Russian tradition. If the discussion is pursued in that direction it will certainly be a great contribution to the problem of continuity in a broader historical context.

Alain Besançon strictly upholds the discontinuity theory. He regards the Soviet state as something completely new not only in the context of Russian history, but in human history itself. The raising of this problem leads us directly to the next question, that of uniqueness and comparability.

Is the Soviet state beyond any comparison? Does it stand out uniquely in the community of nations? Or can we analyze it in a comparative setting? The first generation of Marxist revolutionaries believed and proclaimed that they were creating something entirely new, hitherto unknown in the history of mankind; that is, they were building socialism. However, if you ask similar questions of today's rulers of Communist countries — men like Andropov or Jaruzelski — you will certainly receive a different answer. They will say that, though they are building socialism, the state they are ruling over tries to be and is comparable to any other state, and that they wish to be treated accordingly.

As is well known, the economic system has long been considered one of the basic criteria that distinguish socialism from capitalism. Surprisingly enough, however, it is the economists at our conference who strongly plead for the comparability theory. The most eloquent exponent of this view is undoubtedly Morita. His very ambitious paper concentrates on creating analytical frameworks for comparison which seem to provide a forceful argument. Katsenelinboigen, one of his discussants, basically agreeing with his view, suggests some modifications and supplements. Tsuneaki Sato, another economist, is most radical in taking the comparability approach. He goes so far as to suggest that there exists a mixed socialist economy.

Besançon takes the standpoint most remote from this. He insists that the Soviet state stands out as totally unique in world history, giving the impression that he took the convictions of the first generation of Marxist revolutionaries at face value. Here he invites the criticism of Shugo Minagawa, a political scientist, that his view is too simplistic to explain reality.

There are also those who take a middle position between the two extremes. Jerry

Hough believes in evolution in the Soviet political system. Wada contends that the Soviet state and society are today like any other state and society. The evolutionary theory presupposes that there was once a phase when the Soviet state was unique, but that it has become or is steadily becoming a normal state comparable to any other.

What are its future perspectives? The positions taken by the participants may be classified as pessimistic and optimistic.

Katsenelinboigen holds out the prospect of the evolution of the socialist economy into a kind of vertical mechanism, a modernized anarchism or Proudhonism which, armed with modern technology and mathematics, is capable of effective development without the intervention of coercive organs. This prospect, however, is surely utopian, because the Soviet Union may succeed in introducing economic deconcentration, but not political decentralization; the former is doomed to failure without the latter in Katsenelinboigen's own view. Thus, he is inclined toward pessimism.

Sato is also one of the pessimists in spite of his statement to the contrary. He admits that, although a mixed socialist economy does indeed kindle hopes for improvement, it has serious limitations which might eventually make the whole system unable to function. Socialist economies are sailing between Scylla and Charybdis or between two impossibilities: a pure centrally-administered system and a pure market system. No way out is yet visible.

Besançon joins the pessimists. He regards all efforts to improve the system as hopeless. Instead he proposes an uncompromising battle against it. He goes so far as to preach how to fight against this eternal evil.

The reality of a socialist economy on the level of everyday life is gloomy — gloomier than is generally supposed. Even the most sophisticated theoretical analysis of the plan-versus-market problem by an economist could not match the vivid picture of book markets in the Soviet Union given by literature specialist Maurice Friedberg. The tremendous discrepancy between supply and demand in literary life for ordinary Soviet citizens is not likely to be corrected, given the ideological and political supremacy of the Communist party, even if a far-reaching economic reform is carried out, Friedberg concludes.

Of the few optimists among the participants Minagawa is the first to be mentioned. He tries to demonstrate that the Soviet political system reveals strong tendencies toward diversification, and that the local political elite is embarking upon increasingly bold interest articulation. The Soviet political reality is more complex than we suppose, and is becoming more and more complex, Minagawa states. Hough readily subscribes to this view. Minagawa's analysis, based on the elaboration of numerous facts, extremely conscientious attention to detail and the finest conceptualization, seems to be convincing enough, though precisely because of its overwhelmingness there is a critical comment that it is not the Soviet reality, but the paper, that creates the impression of complexity.

Aladár Sipos may also be counted among the optimists. Integration and specialization in the CMEA are going on, but there are serious problems that hamper

the process, he establishes in a sober tone. Nevertheless, he does not lose hope for a better future for the CMEA.

What conclusions may be drawn from the discussion? The Soviet Union with its bloc is a colossus that is treading on a narrow and difficult path between order orientation and liberalizing tendencies. The balance is a very subtle one and, at the slightest shock, is likely to shift to one or the other extreme. Historical experiences show that the loss of balance may bring about immense calamities for the population. We know what happened to Russia after the Tsarist regime collapsed. The anarchy, the Civil War, and the famine that followed caused the deaths of millions of people. Then the pendulum swung to the other extreme: Stalinist mass terror. Additional millions fell victim. It is quite natural that Soviet citizens who have had these terrible experiences should today wish neither another revolution nor another Stalinist terror.

This problem concerns today not only the Soviet or East European peoples. The Soviet state has in the meantime grown into one of the superpowers which have enough power to destroy the earth many times over. She is no longer old Russia, which was indeed a great power, but not an all-destructive superpower. The world has survived the October Revolution, the Civil War, the Stalinist terror, and even the Second World War. But it might not be able to survive another Russian Revolution, another Stalinist terror, or another world war. The difficulties the Soviet Union and her bloc are today running into may be a cause of *Schadenfreude* for some quarters in the West. Those people should be reminded that the fate of the Soviet and East European peoples today concerns everybody in the world.

Hough's words in his paper are appropriate as a concluding remark for the entire symposium: "If liberalization is carried too far or conducted carelessly, then disorder will occur, but the opposite point is just as important to make. A failure to liberalize may also lead to disorder." We may add without any exaggeration that the future of mankind depends to a considerable extent on whether Soviet and East European societies can find a way out of the vicious circle of *either autocracy or anarchism*. The solution must be an *orderly liberalization*. We may and must help them to find the way out.

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Chairman of the Planning Committee
of the Symposium