

The Soviet Political System: Transformation or Degeneration?

By Zbigniew Brzezinski

EDITORS' NOTE: The essay below by Prof. Brzezinski represents a fundamental inquiry into the essential evolutionary processes of the Soviet political system. In our opinion, it deserves careful reading and discussion. Accordingly, we have asked a number of prominent scholars—historians, philosophers, sociologists, political analysts—to submit brief comments on Prof. Brzezinski's essay, as well as on the articles in our recent symposium, "Progress and Ideology in the USSR" (November-December 1965). Replies will appear in forthcoming issues of this journal.

The Soviet Union will soon celebrate its 50th anniversary. In this turbulent and rapidly changing world, for any political system to survive half a century is an accomplishment in its own right and obvious testimony to its durability. There are not many major political structures in the world today that can boast of such longevity. The approaching anniversary, however, provides an appropriate moment for a critical review of the changes that have taken

place in the Soviet system, particularly in regard to such critical matters as the character of its top leadership, the methods by which its leaders acquire power, and the relationship of the Communist Party to society. Furthermore, the time is also ripe to inquire into the implications of these changes, especially in regard to the stability and vitality of the system.

The Leaders

Today Soviet spokesmen would have us believe that the quality of the top Communist leadership in the USSR has been abysmal. Of the 45 years since Lenin, according to official Soviet history, power was exercised for ap-

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proximately five years by leaders subsequently unmasked as traitors (although later the charge of treason was retroactively reduced to that of deviation); for almost 20 years it was wielded by a paranoiac mass-murderer who irrationally slew his best comrades and ignorantly guided Soviet war strategy by pointing his finger at a globe; and, most recently, for almost ten years, by a "harebrained" schemer given to tantrums and with a propensity for wild organizational experimentation. On the basis of that record, the present leadership lays claim to representing a remarkable departure from a historical pattern of singular depravity.

While Soviet criticism of former party leaders is now abundant, little intellectual effort is expended on analyzing the implications of the changes in leadership. Yet that, clearly, is the important question insofar as the political system is concerned.

Lenin was a rare type of political leader, fusing in his person several functions of key importance to the working of a political system: he acted as the chief ideologist of the system, the principal organizer of the party (indeed, the founder of the movement), and the top administrator of the state. It may be added that such personal fusion is typical of early revolutionary leaderships, and today it is exemplified by Mao Tse-tung. To his followers, Lenin was clearly a charismatic leader, and his power (like Hitler's or Mao Tse-tung's) depended less on institutions than on the force of his personality and intellect. Even after the Revolution, it was his personal authority that gave him enormous power, while the progressive institutionalization of Lenin's rule (the Cheka, the appearance of the *apparat*, etc.) reflected more the transformation of a revolutionary party into a ruling one than any significant change in the character of his leadership.

Lenin's biographers¹ agree that here was a man characterized by total political commitment, by self-righteous conviction, by tenacious determination and by an outstanding ability to formulate intellectually appealing principles of political action as well as popular slogans suit-

able for mass consumption. He was a typically revolutionary figure, a man whose genius can be consummated only at that critical juncture in history when the new breaks off—and not just evolves—from the old. Had he lived a generation earlier, he probably would have died in a Siberian *taiga*; a generation later, he probably would have been shot by Stalin.

Under Stalin, the fusion of leadership functions was continued, but this was due less to his personal qualities as such than to the fact that, with the passage of time and the growing toll of victims, his power became nearly total and was gradually translated also into personal authority. Only a mediocre ideologist—and certainly inferior in that respect to his chief rivals for power—Stalin became institutionally the ideologue of the system. A dull speaker, he eventually acquired the "routinized charisma"² which, after Lenin's death, became invested in the Communist Party as a whole (much as the Pope at one time acquired the infallibility that for a long time had rested in the collective church). But his power was increasingly institutionalized bureaucratically, with decision-making centralized at the apex within his own secretariat, and its exercise involved a subtle balancing of the principal institutions of the political system: the secret police, the party, the state, and the army (roughly in that order of importance). Even the ostensibly principal organ of power, the Politburo, was split into minor groups, "the sextets," the "quartets," etc., with Stalin personally deciding who should participate in which subgroup and personally providing (and monopolizing) the function of integration.

If historical parallels for Lenin are to be found among the revolutionary tribunes, for Stalin they are to be sought among the Oriental despots.³ Thriving on intrigue, shielded in mystery,

¹ Angelica Balabanoff, *Impressions of Lenin*, Ann Arbor, Mich., University of Michigan Press, 1964. Louis Fischer, *Life of Lenin*, New York, Harper, 1964. S. Possony, *Lenin, the Compulsive Revolutionary*, Chicago, Regnery, 1964. Bertram D. Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution*, New York, Dial Press, 1948.

² For a discussion of "routinized charisma," see Amitai Etzioni, *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations*, Glencoe, Ill., Glencoe Free Press, 1961, pp. 26 ff.

³ Compare the types discussed by J. L. Talmon in his *Political Messianism: the Romantic Phase*, New York, Praeger, 1960, with Barrington Moore, Jr., *Political Power and Social Theory*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1958, especially Chapter 2 on "Totalitarian Elements in Pre-Industrial Societies," or Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1957.

and isolated from society, his immense power reflected the immense tasks he succeeded in imposing on his followers and subjects. Capitalizing on the revolutionary momentum and the ideological impetus inherited from Leninism, and wedding it to a systematic institutionalization of bureaucratic rule, he could set in motion a social and political revolution which weakened all existing institutions save Stalin's own secretariat and his chief executive arm, the secret police. His power grew in proportion to the degree to which the major established institutions declined in vitality and homogeneity.⁴

The war, however, as well as the postwar reconstruction, produced a paradox. While Stalin's personal prestige and authority were further enhanced, his institutional supremacy relatively declined. The military establishment naturally grew in importance; the enormous effort to transfer, reinstall, and later reconstruct the industrial economy invigorated the state machinery; the party apparatus began to perform again the key functions of social mobilization and political integration. But the aging tyrant was neither unaware of this development nor apparently resigned to it. The Byzantine intrigues resulting in the liquidation of the Leningrad leadership and Voznesenski, the "doctors' plot" with its ominous implications for some top party, military and police chiefs, clearly augured an effort to weaken any institutional limits on Stalin's personal supremacy.

Khrushchev came to power ostensibly to save Stalinism, which he defined as safeguarding the traditional priority of heavy industry and restoring the primacy of the party. In fact, he presided over the dismantling of Stalinism. He rode to power by restoring the predominant position of the party apparatus. But the complexities of governing (as contrasted to the priorities of the power struggle) caused him to dilute the party's position. While initially he succeeded in diminishing the political role of the secret police and in weakening the state machinery, the military establishment grew in importance with the

⁴ It seems that these considerations are as important to the understanding of the Stalinist system as the psychopathological traits of Stalin that Robert C. Tucker rightly emphasizes in his "The Dictator and Totalitarianism," *World Politics*, July 1965.

How to Deal with a Minor Aberration

Historical experience shows that the strategy of the Marxist-Leninist parties, worked out through the theoretical analysis of the principal social laws, corresponds most fully and exactly to the needs of world development. . . . The whole question is one of the nature and seriousness of the various mistakes and the timely exposure and correction of them.

For example, our party exposed and criticized the Stalin personality cult boldly and in the Leninist manner. Undoubtedly, the personality cult wrought considerable harm upon the cause of socialist construction in individual spheres of society's life. Yet neither the personality cult itself nor its consequences were in any measure a logical outcome of the nature of the socialist system and did not and could not alter its character. Therefore, it is neither theoretically nor factually correct to portray life . . . only from the angle of phenomena of the personality cult, thereby obscuring the heroic efforts of the Soviet people in building socialism.

—From "Marxism - Leninism — Firm Foundation of Development of the Social Sciences," by S. Trapeznikov, Head of the CPSU CC Department of Science and Educational Institutions, *Pravda*, Oct. 8, 1965.

continuing tensions of the cold war.⁵ By the time Khrushchev was removed, the economic priorities had become blurred because of pressures in agriculture and the consumer sector, while his own reorganization of the party into two separate industrial and rural hierarchies in November 1962 went far toward undermining the party's homogeneity of outlook, apart from splitting it institutionally. Consequently, the state bureaucracy recouped, almost by default, some of its

⁵ For a good treatment of Soviet military debates, see Thomas Wolfe, *Soviet Strategy at the Crossroads*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1964.

integrative and administrative functions. Khrushchev thus, perhaps inadvertently, restored much of the institutional balance that had existed under Stalin, but without ever acquiring the full powers of the balancer.

Khrushchev lacked the authority of Lenin to generate personal power, or the power of Stalin to create personal authority—and the Soviet leadership under him became increasingly differentiated. The top leader was no longer the top ideologist, in spite of occasional efforts to present Khrushchev's elaborations as "a creative contribution to Marxism-Leninism." The ruling body now contained at least one professional specialist in ideological matters, and it was no secret that the presence of the professional ideologue was required because someone had to give professional ideological advice to the party's top leader. Similarly, technical-administrative specialization differentiated some top leaders from others. Increasingly Khrushchev's function—and presumably the primary source of his still considerable power—was that of providing political integration and impetus for new domestic or foreign initiatives in a political system otherwise too complex to be directed and administered by one man.

The differentiation of functions also made it more difficult for the top leader to inherit even the "routinized charisma" that Stalin had eventually transferred to himself from the party as a whole. Acquiring charisma was more difficult for a leader who (even apart from a personal style and vulgar appearance that did not lend themselves to "image building") had neither the great "theoretical" flare valued by a movement that still prided itself on being the embodiment of a messianic ideology, nor the technical expertise highly regarded in a state which equated technological advance with human progress. Moreover, occupying the posts of First Secretary and Chairman of the Council of Ministers was not enough to develop a charismatic appeal since neither post has been sufficiently institutionalized to endow its occupant with the special prestige and aura that, for example, the President of the United States automatically gains on assuming office.

Trying to cope with this lack of charismatic appeal, Khrushchev replaced Stalin's former colleagues. In the process, he gradually came to rely on a younger generation of bureaucratic leaders to whom orderliness of procedure was instinctively preferable to crash campaigns. Ad-

ministratively, however, Khrushchev was a true product of the Stalinist school, with its marked proclivity for just such campaigns at the cost of all other considerations. In striving to develop his own style of leadership, Khrushchev tried to emulate Lenin in stimulating new fervor, and Stalin in mobilizing energies, but without the personal and institutional assets that each had commanded. By the time he was removed, Khrushchev had become an anachronism in the new political context he himself had helped to create.

Brezhnev and Kosygin mark the coming to power of a new generation of leaders, irrespective of whether they will for long retain their present positions.⁶ Lenin's, Stalin's, and Khrushchev's formative experience was the unsettled period of conspiratorial activity, revolution, and—in Khrushchev's case—civil war and the early phase of communism. The new leaders, beneficiaries of the revolution but no longer revolutionaries themselves, have matured in an established political setting in which the truly large issues of policy and leadership have been decided. Aspiring young bureaucrats, initially promoted during the purges, they could observe—but not suffer from—the debilitating consequences of political extremism and unpredictable personal rule. To this new generation of clerks, bureaucratic stability—indeed, bureaucratic dictatorship—must seem to be the only solid foundation for effective government.

Differentiation of functions to these bureaucrats is a norm, while personal charisma is ground for suspicion. The new Soviet leadership, therefore, is both bureaucratic in style and essentially impersonal in form. The curious emphasis on *kollektivnost rukovodstva* (collectivity of leadership) instead of the traditional *kollektivnoe rukovodstvo* (collective leadership)—a change in formulation used immediately after Khrushchev's fall—suggests a deliberate effort at achieving not only a personal but also an institutional collective leadership, designed to prevent any one leader from using a particular institution as a vehicle for obtaining political supremacy.

⁶ See S. Bialer, "An Unstable Leadership," *Problems of Communism*, July-August 1965.

The question arises, however, whether this kind of leadership can prove effective in guiding the destiny of a major state. The Soviet system is now led by a bureaucratic leadership from the very top to the bottom. In that respect, it is unique. Even political systems with highly developed and skillful professional political bureaucracies, such as the British, the French, or that of the Catholic Church, have reserved some top policy-making and hence power-wielding positions for non-bureaucratic professional politicians, presumably on the assumption that a free-wheeling, generalizing and competitive political experience is of decisive importance in shaping effective national leadership.

To be sure, some top Soviet leaders do acquire such experience, even in the course of rising up the bureaucratic party ladder, especially when assigned to provincial or republican executive responsibilities. There they acquire the skills of initiative, direction, integration, as well as accommodation, compromise, and delegation of authority, which are the basic prerequisites for executive management of any complex organization.

Nonetheless, even when occupying territorial positions of responsibility, the *apparatchiki* are still part of an extremely centralized and rigidly hierarchical bureaucratic organization, increasingly set in its ways, politically corrupted by years of unchallenged power, and made even more confined in its outlook than is normally the case with a ruling body by its lingering and increasingly ritualized doctrinaire tradition. It is relevant to note here (from observations made in Soviet universities) that the young men who become active in the Komsomol organization and are presumably embarking on a professional political career are generally the dull conformists. Clearly, in a highly bureaucratized political setting, conformity, caution and currying favor with superiors count for more in advancing a political career than personal courage and individual initiative.⁷

Such a condition poses a long-range danger to

⁷ Writing about modern bureaucracy, V. A. Thompson (*Modern Organization*, New York, 1961, p. 91) observed: "In the formally structured group, the idea man is doubly dangerous. He endangers the established distribution of power and status, and he is a competitive threat to his peers. Consequently, he has to be suppressed." For a breezy treatment of some analogous experience, see also E. G. Hegarty, *How to Succeed in Company Politics*, New York, 1963.

the vitality of any political system. Social evolution, it has been noted, depends not only on the availability of creative individuals, but on the existence of clusters of creators who collectively promote social innovation. "The ability of any gifted individual to exert leverage within a society . . . is partly a function of the exact composition of the group of those on whom he depends for day-to-day interaction and for the execution of his plans."⁸ The revolutionary milieu of the 1920's and even the fanatical Stalinist commitment of the 1930's fostered such clusters of intellectual and political talent. It is doubtful that the CPSU party schools and the Central Committee personnel department encourage, in Margaret Mead's terms, the growth of clusters of creativity, and that is why the transition from Lenin to Stalin to Khrushchev to Brezhnev probably cannot be charted by an ascending line.

This has serious implications for the Soviet system as a whole. It is doubtful that any organization can long remain vital if it is so structured that in its personnel policy it becomes, almost unknowingly, inimical to talent and hostile to political innovation. Decay is bound to set in, while the stability of the political system may be endangered, if other social institutions succeed in attracting the society's talent and begin to chafe under the restraints imposed by the ruling but increasingly mediocre *apparatchiki*.

The Struggle for Power

The struggle for power in the Soviet political system has certainly become less violent. The question is, however: Has it become less debilitating for the political system? Has it become a more regularized process, capable of infusing the leadership with fresh blood? A closer look at the changes in the character of the competition for power may guide us to the answer.

Both Stalin and Khrushchev rode to power by skillfully manipulating issues as well as by taking full advantage of the organizational opportunities arising from their tenure of the post of party First Secretary. It must be stressed that the manipulation of issues was at least as im-

⁸ Margaret Mead, *Continuities in Cultural Evolution*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1964, p. 181. See also the introduction, especially p. xx.

portant to their success as the organizational factor, which generally tends to receive priority in Western historical treatments. In Stalin's time, the issues facing the party were, indeed, on a grand scale: world revolution *vs.* socialism in one country; domestic evolution *vs.* social revolution; a factionalized *vs.* a monolithic party. Stalin succeeded because he instinctively perceived that the new *apparatchiki* were not prepared to sacrifice themselves in futile efforts to promote foreign revolutions but—being for the most part genuinely committed to revolutionary ideals—were becoming eager to get on with the job of creating a socialist society. (Moreover, had the NEP endured another ten years, would the Soviet Union be a Communist dictatorship today?)

Stalin's choice of socialism in one country was a brilliant solution. It captivated, at least in part, the revolutionaries; and it satisfied, at least partially, the accommodators. It split the opposition, polarized it, and prepared the ground for the eventual liquidation of each segment with the other's support. The violence, the terror, and finally the Great Purges of 1936-1938 followed logically. Imbued with the Leninist tradition of intolerance for dissent, engaged in a vast undertaking of social revolution that taxed both the resources and the nerves of party members, guided by an unscrupulous and paranoid but also reassuringly calm leader, governing a backward country surrounded by neighbors that were generally hostile to the Soviet experiment, and increasingly deriving its own membership strength from first-generation proletarians with all their susceptibility to simple explanations and dogmatic truths, the ruling party easily plunged down the path of increasing brutality. The leader both rode the crest of that violence and controlled it. The terror never degenerated into simple anarchy, and Stalin's power grew immeasurably because he effectively practiced the art of leadership according to his own definition:

The art of leadership is a serious matter. One must not lag behind the movement, because to do so is to become isolated from the masses. But neither must one rush ahead, for to rush ahead is to lose contact with the masses. He who wants to lead a movement and at the same time keep in touch with the vast masses must wage a fight on two fronts—against those who lag behind and those who run ahead.⁹

Khrushchev, too, succeeded in becoming the top leader because he perceived the elite's predominant interests. Restoration of the primary position of the party, decapitation of the secret police, reduction of the privileges of the state bureaucrats while maintaining the traditional emphasis on heavy industrial development (which pleased both the industrial elite and the military establishment)—these were the issues which Khrushchev successfully utilized in the mid-1950's to mobilize the support of officials and accomplish the gradual isolation and eventual defeat of Malenkov.

But the analogy ends right there. The social and even the political system in which Khrushchev came to rule was relatively settled. Indeed, in some respects, it was stagnating, and Khrushchev's key problem, once he reached the political apex (but before he had had time to consolidate his position there) was how to get the country moving again. The effort to infuse new social and political dynamism into Soviet society, even while consolidating his power, led him to a public repudiation of Stalinism which certainly shocked some officials; to sweeping economic reforms which disgruntled many administrators; to a dramatic reorganization of the party which appalled the *apparatchiki*; and even to an attempt to circumvent the policy-making authority of the party Presidium by means of direct appeals to interested groups, which must have both outraged and frightened his colleagues. The elimination of violence as the decisive instrumentality of political competition—a move that was perhaps prompted by the greater institutional maturity of Soviet society, and which was in any case made inevitable by the downgrading of the secret police and the public disavowals of Stalinism—meant that Khrushchev, unlike Stalin, could not achieve both social dynamism and the stability of his power. Stalin magnified his power as he strove to change society; to change society Khrushchev had to risk his power.

The range of domestic disagreement involved in the post-Stalin struggles has also narrowed with the maturing of social commitments made earlier. For the moment, the era of grand

⁹ J. V. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Moscow, 1940, p. 338.

alternatives is over in Soviet society. Even though any struggle tends to exaggerate differences, the issues that divided Khrushchev from his opponents, though of great import, appear pedestrian in comparison to those over which Stalin and his enemies crossed swords. In Khrushchev's case, they pertained primarily to policy alternatives; in the case of Stalin, they involved basic conceptions of historical development. Compare the post-Stalin debates about the allocation of resources among different branches of the economy, for example, with the debates of the 1920's about the character and pace of Soviet industrialization; or Khrushchev's homilies on the merits of corn—and even his undeniably bold and controversial virgin lands campaign—with the dilemma of whether to collectivize a hundred million reticent peasants, at what pace, and with what intensity in terms of resort to violence.

It is only in the realm of foreign affairs that one can perhaps argue that grand dilemmas still impose themselves on the Soviet political scene. The nuclear-war-or-peace debate of the 1950's and early 1960's is comparable in many respects to the earlier conflict over "permanent revolution" or "socialism in one country." Molotov's removal and Kozlov's political demise were to a large extent related to disagreements concerning foreign affairs; nonetheless, in spite of such occasional rumblings, it would appear that on the peace-or-war issue there is today more of a consensus among the Soviet elite than there was on the issue of permanent revolution in the 1920's. Although a wide spectrum of opinion does indeed exist in the international Communist movement on the crucial questions of war and peace, this situation, as far as one can judge, obtains to a considerably lesser degree in the USSR itself. Bukharin *vs.* Trotsky can be compared to Togliatti *vs.* Mao Tse-tung, but hardly to Khrushchev *vs.* Kozlov.

The narrowing of the range of disagreement is reflected in the changed character of the cast. In the earlier part of this discussion, some comparative comments were made about Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev. It is even more revealing, however, to examine their principal rivals. Take the men who opposed Stalin: Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Bukharin. What a range of political, historical, economic, and intellectual creativity, what talent, what a diversity of personal characteristics and backgrounds! Compare this diversity with the strikingly uniform

personal training, narrowness of perspective, and poverty of intellect of Malenkov, Kozlov and Suslov.¹⁰ A regime of the clerks cannot help but clash over clerical issues.

The narrowing of the range of disagreement and the cooling of ideological passions mean also the wane of political violence. The struggle tends to become less a matter of life or death, and more one in which the price of defeat is simply retirement and some personal disgrace. In turn, with the routinization of conflict, the political system develops even a body of precedents for handling fallen leaders. By now there must be a regular procedure, probably even some office, for handling pensions and apartments for former Presidium members, as well as a developing social etiquette for dealing with them publicly and privately.¹¹

More important is the apparent development in the Soviet system of something which might be described as a regularly available "counter-elite." After Khrushchev's fall, his successors moved quickly to restore to important positions a number of individuals whom Khrushchev had purged,¹² while some of Khrushchev's supporters were demoted and transferred. Already for a number of years now, it has been fairly common practice to appoint party officials demoted from high office either to diplomatic posts abroad or to some obscure, out-of-the-way assignments at home. The total effect of this has been to create a growing body of offi-

¹⁰ One could hardly expect a historian to work up any enthusiasm for undertaking to write, say, Malenkov's biography: *The Apparatchik Promoted, The Apparatchik Triumphant, The Apparatchik Pensioned!*

¹¹ Can Mikoyan, for example, invite Khrushchev to lunch? This is not a trivial question, for social mores and political style are interwoven. After all, Voroshilov, who had been publicly branded as a military idiot and a political sycophant, was subsequently invited to a Kremlin reception. Zhukov, against whom the Bonapartist charge still stands, appeared in full regalia at the 20th anniversary celebration of the Soviet victory in World War II.

¹² F. D. Kulakov, apparently blamed by Khrushchev in 1960 for agricultural failings in the RSFSR, was appointed in 1965 to direct the Soviet Union's new agricultural programs; V. V. Matskevich was restored as Minister of Agriculture and appointed Deputy Premier of the RSFSR in charge of agriculture; Marshal M. V. Zakharov was reappointed as Chief-of-Staff of the Armed Forces; even L. G. Melnikov reemerged from total obscurity as chairman of the industrial work safety committee of the RSFSR.

cial “outs” who are biding their time on the sidelines and presumably hoping someday to become the “ins” again. Moreover, they may not only hope; if sufficiently numerous, young, and vigorous, they may gradually begin to resemble something of a political alternative to those in power, and eventually to think and even act as such. This could be the starting point of informal factional activity, of intrigues and conspiracies when things go badly for those in power, and of organized efforts to seduce some part of the ruling elite in order to stage an internal change of guard.¹³ In addition, the availability of an increasingly secure “counter-elite” is likely to make it more difficult for a leader to consolidate his power. This in turn might tend to promote more frequent changes in the top leadership, with policy failures affecting the power of incumbents instead of affecting—only retroactively—the reputation of former leaders, as has hitherto been the case.

The cumulative effect of these developments has been wide-ranging. First of all, the reduced importance of both ideological issues and personalities and the increasing weight of institutional interests in the periodic struggles for power—a phenomenon which reflects the more structured quality of present-day Soviet life as compared with the situation under Stalin—tends to depersonalize political conflict and to make it a protracted bureaucratic struggle. Secondly, the curbing of violence makes it more likely that conflicts will be resolved by patched-up compromises rather than by drastic institutional redistributions of power and the reappearance of personal tyranny. Finally, the increasingly bureaucratic character of the struggle for power tends to transform it into a contest among high-level clerks and is therefore not conducive to attracting creative and innovating talent into the top leadership.

Khrushchev’s fall provides a good illustration of the points made above, as well as an important precedent for the future. For the first time in Soviet history, the First Secretary has been toppled from power by his associates. This was done not in order to replace him with an alternative personal leader or to pursue genuinely al-

ternative goals, but in order to depersonalize the leadership and to pursue more effectively many of the previous policies. In a word, the objectives were impersonal leadership and higher bureaucratic efficiency. Khrushchev’s removal, however, also means that personal intrigues and cabals can work, that subordinate members of the leadership—or possibly, someday, a group of ex-leaders—can effectively conspire against a principal leader, with the result that any future First Secretary is bound to feel far less secure than Khrushchev must have felt at the beginning of October 1964.

The absence of an institutionalized top executive officer in the Soviet political system, in conjunction with the increased difficulties in the way of achieving personal dictatorship and the decreased personal cost of defeat in a political conflict, create a ready-made situation for group pressures and institutional clashes. In fact, although the range of disagreement may have narrowed, the scope of elite participation in power conflicts has already widened. Much of Khrushchev’s exercise of power was preoccupied with mediating the demands of key institutions such as the army, or with overcoming the opposition of others, such as the objections of the administrators to economic decentralization or of the heavy industrial managers to non-industrial priorities. These interests were heavily involved in the Khrushchev-Malenkov conflict and in the “anti-party” episode of 1957.

At the present time, these pressures and clashes take place in an almost entirely amorphous context, without constitutional definition and established procedures. The somewhat greater role played by the Central Committee in recent years still does not suffice to give this process of bureaucratic conflict a stable institutional expression. As far as we know from existing evidence, the Central Committee still acted during the 1957 and 1964 crises primarily as a ratifying body, giving formal sanction to decisions already fought out in the Kremlin’s corridors of power.¹⁴ It did not act as either the arbiter or the supreme legislative body.

The competition for power, then, is changing from a death struggle among the few into a contest played by many more. But the decline of violence does not, as is often assumed, automati-

¹³ Molotov’s letter to the Central Committee on the eve of the 22nd Party Congress of October 1961, which bluntly and directly charged Khrushchev’s program with revisionism, was presumably designed to stir up the *ap-paratchiki* against the First Secretary. It may be a portent of things to come.

¹⁴ Roger Pethybridge, *A Key to Soviet Politics*, New York, Praeger, 1962. See also Myron Rush, *The Rise of Khrushchev*, Washington, DC, Public Affairs Press, 1958.

cally benefit the Soviet political system; something more effective and stable has to take the place of violence. The “game” of politics that has replaced the former mafia-style struggles for power is no longer murderous, but it is still not a stable game played within an established arena, according to accepted rules, and involving more or less formal teams. It resembles more the anarchistic free-for-all of the playground and therefore could become, in some respects, even more debilitating to the system. Stalin encouraged institutional conflict below him so that he could wield his power with less restraint. Institutional conflict combined with mediocre and unstable personal leadership makes for ineffective and precarious power.

Party and Group Interests

In a stimulating study of political development and decay, Samuel Huntington has argued that stable political growth requires a balance between political “institutionalization” and political “participation”: that merely increasing popular mobilization and participation in politics without achieving a corresponding degree of “institutionalization of political organization and procedures” results not in political development but in political decay.¹⁵ Commenting in passing on the Soviet system, he therefore noted that “a strong party is in the Soviet public interest” because it provides a stable institutional framework.¹⁶

The Soviet political system has certainly achieved a high index of institutionalization. For almost five decades the ruling party has maintained unquestioned supremacy over the society, imposing its ideology at will. Traditionally, the Communist system has combined its high institutionalization with high pseudo-participation of individuals.¹⁷ But a difficulty could

arise if division within the top leadership of the political system weakened political “institutionalization” while simultaneously stimulating genuine public participation by groups and institutions. Could this new condition be given an effective and stable institutional framework and, if so, with what implications for the “strong” party?

Today the Soviet political system is again oligarchic, but its socio-economic setting is now quite different. Soviet society is far more developed and stable, far less *malleable* and atomized. In the past, the key groups that had to be considered as potential political participants were relatively few. Today, in addition to the vastly more entrenched institutional interests, such as the police, the military, and the state bureaucracy, the youth could become a source of ferment, the consumers could become more restless, the collective farmers more recalcitrant, the scientists more outspoken, the non-Russian nationalities more demanding. Prolonged competition among the oligarchs would certainly accelerate the assertiveness of such groups.

By now some of these groups have a degree of institutional cohesion, and occasionally they act in concert on some issues.¹⁸ They certainly can lobby and, in turn, be courted by ambitious and opportunistic oligarchs. Some groups, because of institutional cohesion, advantageous location, easy access to the top leadership, and ability to articulate their goals and interests, can be quite

¹⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, “Political Development and Political Decay,” *World Politics* (Princeton, N. J.) April 1965.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

¹⁷ The massive campaigns launching “public discussions” that involve millions of people, the periodic “elections” that decide nothing, were designed to develop participation without threat to the institutionalized political organization and procedures. The official theory held that as Communist consciousness developed and new forms of social and public relations took root, political participation would become more meaningful and the public would come to govern itself.

¹⁸ A schematic distribution of these groups is indicated by the following approximate figures: (A) amorphous social forces that in the main express passively broad social aspirations: workers and peasants, about 88 million; white collar and technical intelligentsia, about 21 million. (B) specific interest groups that promote their own particular interests: the literary and artistic community, about 75 thousand; higher-level scientists, about 150 thousand; physicians, about 380 thousand. (C) policy groups whose interests necessarily spill over into broad matters of national policy: industrial managers, about 200 thousand; state and collective farm chairmen, about 45 thousand; commanding military personnel, about 80 thousand; higher-level state bureaucrats, about 250 thousand. These groups are integrated by the professional *apparatchiki*, who number about 150-200 thousand. All of these groups in turn could be broken down into sub-units; e.g., the literary community, institutionally built around several journals, can be divided into hard-liners, the centrists, and the progressives, etc. Similarly, the military. On some issues, there may be cross-interlocking of sub-groups, as well as more-or-less temporary coalitions of groups. See Z. Brzezinski and S. Huntington, *Political Power: USA-USSR*, New York, Viking Press, 1964, Ch. 4, for further discussion.

influential.¹⁹ Taken together they represent a wide spectrum of opinion, and in the setting of oligarchical rule there is bound to be some correspondence between their respective stances and those of the top leaders. This spectrum is represented in simplified fashion by the chart on this page, which takes cumulative account of the principal divisions, both on external and on domestic issues, that have perplexed Soviet political life during the last decade or so.²⁰ Obviously, the table is somewhat arbitrary and also highly speculative. Individuals and groups

cannot be categorized so simply, and some, clearly, could be shifted left or right with equal cause, as indeed they often shift themselves. Nonetheless, the chart illustrates the range of opinion that exists in the Soviet system and suggests the kind of alliances, group competition, and political courtship that probably prevail, cutting vertically through the party organization.

Not just Western but also Communist (although not as yet Soviet) political thinkers are coming to recognize more and more openly the existence of group conflict even in a Communist-dominated society. A Slovak jurist recently observed:

*The social interest in our society can be democratically formed only by the integration of group interests; in the process of this integration, the interest groups protect their own economic and other social interests; this is in no way altered by the fact that everything appears on the surface as a unity of interests.*²¹

The author went on to stress that the key political problem facing the Communist system is

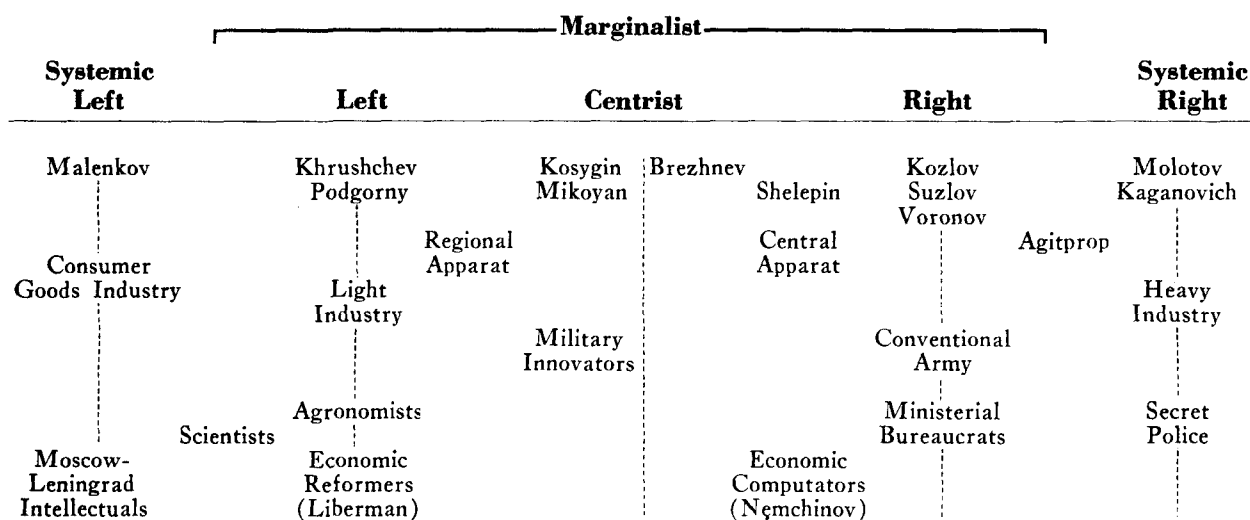
¹⁹ An obvious example is the military command, bureaucratically cohesive and with a specific esprit de corps, located in Moscow, necessarily in frequent contact with the top leaders, and possessing its own journals of opinion (where strategic and hence also—indirectly—budgetary, foreign, and other issues can be discussed).

²⁰ The categories "systemic left," etc., are adapted from R. R. Levine's book, *The Arms Debate* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1963), which contains a suggestive chart of American opinion on international issues. By "systemic left" is meant here a radical reformist outlook, challenging the predominant values of the existing system; by "systemic right" is meant an almost reactionary return to past values; the other three categories designate differences of degree within a dominant "mainstream."

In the chart below (unlike Levine's), the center position serves as a dividing line, and hence no one is listed directly under it. Malenkov is listed as "systemic left" because his proposals represented at the time a drastic departure from established positions. Molotov is labeled "systemic right" because of his inclination to defend the essentials of the Stalinist system in a setting which had changed profoundly since Stalin's death.

²¹ M. Lakatos, "On Some Problems of the Structure of Our Political System," *Pravny obzor* (Bratislava), No. 1, 1965, as quoted in Gordon Skilling's illuminating paper, "Interest Groups and Communist Politics," read to the Canadian Political Science Association in June 1965.

Policy Spectrum USSR



that of achieving integration of group interests.

Traditionally, this function of integration has been monopolized by the party, resorting—since the discard of terror—to the means of *bureaucratic arbitration*. In the words of the author just cited, “the party as the leading and directing political force fulfills its functions by resolving intra-class and inter-class interests.” In doing so, the party generally has preferred to deal with each group bilaterally, thereby preventing the formation of coalitions and informal group consensus. In this way the unity of political direction as well as the political supremacy of the ruling party have been maintained. The party has always been very jealous of its “integrative” prerogative, and the intrusion on the political scene of any other group has been strongly resented. The party’s institutional primacy has thus depended on limiting the real participation of other groups.

If, for one reason or another, the party were to weaken in the performance of this function, the only alternative to anarchy would be some *institutionalized process of mediation*, replacing the party’s bureaucratic arbitration. Since, as noted, group participation has become more widespread, while the party’s effectiveness in achieving integration has been lessened by the decline in the vigor of Soviet leadership and by the persistent divisions in the top echelon, the creation and eventual formal institutionalization of some such process of mediation is gaining in urgency. Otherwise participation could outrun institutionalization and result in a challenge to the party’s integrative function.

Khrushchev’s practice of holding enlarged Central Committee plenums, with representatives of other groups present, seems to have been a step towards formalizing a more regular consultative procedure. (It also had the politically expedient effect of bypassing Khrushchev’s opponents in the central leadership.) Such enlarged plenums provided a consultative forum, where policies could be debated, views articulated, and even some contradictory interests resolved. Although the device still remained essentially non-institutionalized and only *ad hoc*, consultative and not legislative, still subject to domination by the party *apparat*, it was nonetheless a response to the new quest for real participation that Soviet society has

manifested and which the Soviet system badly needs. It was also a compromise solution, attempting to wed the party’s primacy to a procedure allowing group articulation.

However, the problem has become much more complex and fundamental because of the organizational and ideological crisis in the party over its relevance to the evolving Soviet system. For many years the party’s monopoly of power and hence its active intervention in all spheres of Soviet life could indeed be said to be “in the Soviet public interest.” The party provided social mobilization, leadership, and a dominant outlook for a rapidly changing and developing society. But, in the main, that society has now taken shape. It is no longer malleable, subject to simple mobilization, or susceptible to doctrinaire ideological manipulation.

As a result, Soviet history in the last few years has been dominated by the spectacle of a party in search of a role. What is to be the function of an ideocratic party in a relatively complex and industrialized society, in which the structure of social relationships generally reflects the party’s ideological preferences? To be sure, like any large sociopolitical system, the Soviet system needs an integrative organ. But the question is, What is the most socially desirable way of achieving such integration? Is a “strong” party one that dominates and interferes in everything, and is this interference conducive to continued Soviet economic, political and intellectual growth?

In 1962 Khrushchev tried to provide a solution. The division of the party into two vertically parallel, functional organs was an attempt to make the party directly relevant to the economy and to wed the party’s operations to production processes. It was a bold, dramatic and radical innovation, reflecting a recognition of the need to adapt the party’s role to a new state of Soviet social development. But it was also a dangerous initiative; it carried within itself the potential of political disunity as well as the possibility that the party would become so absorbed in economic affairs that it would lose its political and ideological identity. That it was rapidly repudiated by Khrushchev’s successors is testimony to the repugnance that the reorganization must have stimulated among the professional party bureaucrats.

His successors, having rejected Khrushchev’s reorganization of the party, have been attempting a compromise solution—in effect, a policy of

“muddling through.” On the one hand, they recognize that the party can no longer direct the entire Soviet economy from the Kremlin and that major institutional reforms in the economic sphere, pointing towards more local autonomy and decision-making, are indispensable.²² (Similar tendencies are apparent elsewhere—*e.g.*, the stress on professional self-management in the military establishment.) This constitutes a partial and implicit acknowledgment that in some respects a party of total control is today incompatible with the Soviet public interest.

On the other hand, since obviously inherent in the trend towards decentralization is the danger that the party will be gradually transformed from a directing, ideologically-oriented organization to a merely instrumental and pragmatic body specializing in adjustment and compromise of social group aspirations, the party functionaries, out of a sense of vested interest, have been attempting simultaneously to revive the ideological vitality of the CPSU. Hence the renewed stress on ideology and ideological training; hence the new importance attached to the work of the ideological commissions; and hence the categorical reminders that “Marxist education, Marxist-Leninist training, and the ideological tempering of CPSU members and candidate members is the primary concern of every party organization and committee.”²³

However, it is far from certain that economic decentralization and ideological “re-tempering” can be pushed forward hand in hand. The present leadership appears oblivious to the fact that established ideology remains vital only when ideologically motivated power is applied

to achieve ideological goals. A gradual reduction in the directing role of the party cannot be compensated for by an increased emphasis on ideological semantics. Economic decentralization inescapably reduces the scope of the political-ideological and increases the realm of the pragmatic-instrumental. It strengthens the trend, publicly bemoaned by Soviet ideologists, toward depolitization of the Soviet elite.²⁴ A massive indoctrination campaign directed at the elite cannot operate in a “de-ideologized” socio-economic context, and major efforts to promote such a campaign could, indeed, prompt the social isolation of the party, making its dogmas even more irrelevant to the daily concerns of a Soviet scientist, factory director, or army general. That in turn would further reduce the ability of the party to provide effective integration in Soviet society, while underscoring the party *apparatchik*’s functional irrelevance to the workings of Soviet administration and technology.

If the party rejects a return to ideological dogmas and renewed dogmatic indoctrination, it unavoidably faces the prospect of further internal change. It will gradually become a loose body, combining a vast variety of specialists, engineers, scientists, administrators, professional bureaucrats, agronomists, etc. Without a common dogma and without an active program, what will hold these people together? The party at this stage will face the same dilemma that the fascist and falange parties faced, and that currently confronts the Yugoslav and Polish Communists: in the absence of a large-scale domestic program of change, in the execution of which other groups and institutions become subordinated to the party, the party’s domestic primacy declines and its ability to provide social-political integration is negated.

Moreover, the Soviet party leaders would be wrong to assume complacently that the narrowed range of disagreement over domestic policy alternatives could not again widen. Persistent difficulties in agriculture could some day prompt a political aspirant to question the value of collectivization; or the dissatisfaction of some

²² See the report delivered by A. Kosygin to the CC Plenum on Sept. 27, 1965, proposing the reorganization of the Soviet economy. Also his speech at a meeting of the USSR State Planning Committee, *Planovoe khoziaistvo* (Moscow) April 1965; and the frank discussion by A. E. Lunev, “Democratic Centralism in Soviet State Administration,” *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo* (Moscow), No. 4, 1965.

²³ “Ideological Hardening of Communists” (editorial), *Pravda*, June 28, 1965. There have been a whole series of articles in this vein, stressing the inseparability of ideological and organizational work. For details of a proposed large-scale indoctrination campaign, see V. Stepanov, head of the Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee of the CPSU, “Master the Great Teaching of Marxism-Leninism,” *Pravda*, Aug. 4, 1965.

²⁴ Stepanov, *ibid.*, explicitly states that in recent years “many comrades” who have assumed leading posts in the “directive aktivs” of the party have inadequate ideological knowledge, even though they have excellent technical backgrounds; and he urges steps against the “replacement” of party training “by professional-technical education.”

nationalities could impose a major strain on the Soviet constitutional structure; or foreign affairs could again become the source of bitter internal conflicts. The ability of the system to withstand the combined impact of such divisive issues and of greater group intrusion into politics would much depend on the adaptations that it makes in its organization of leadership and in its processes of decision-making. Unless alternative mechanisms of integration are created, a situation could arise in which some group other than the top *apparat*—a group that had continued to attract talent into its top ranks and had not been beset by bureaucratically debilitating conflict at the top—could

step forth to seek power; invoking the Soviet public interest in the name of established Communist ideals, and offering itself (probably in coalition with some section of the party leadership) as the only alternative to chaos, it would attempt to provide a new balance between institutionalization and participation.

The Threat of Degeneration

The Soviet leaders have recognized the need of institutional reforms in the economic sector in order to revitalize the national economy. The fact is that institutional reforms are just as

Socialism in Russia and the World Revolution

The socialist countries' course of building socialism and communism, far from retarding the revolutionary initiative of the working people of the capitalist countries, is the most effective means for its all-round development.

It is no easy task for the socialist countries to achieve superiority over the countries of capital in material production, considering that the latter have long-established experience in industrial and technical development. But it is nonetheless being steadily solved. The "economic challenge" of socialism to capitalism is becoming ever more powerful. Industrial production in the world of socialism has increased approximately ninefold as compared to the prewar level, and in the world of capitalism only 3.2 times. Solution of the task of the outstripping of the capitalist countries by the socialist ones, when the latter begin to produce more than half the world's output, will still require a certain amount of time. But even our political adversaries are obliged to admit that such a prospect is becoming increasingly evident.

The Soviet people, having achieved the construction and consolidation of socialism, have only one course—toward communism. The existence of imperialism cannot stop the creation of communism in the USSR, as it did not at the time stop the victories of socialism in our country. This is all the more true now that there exists a world socialist system, which is successfully countering the plots of imperial-

ism. Just as socialism was built in the USSR against the will of imperialism, so will communism be built in our country despite wishes to the contrary. . . .

The socialist countries' course of building socialism and communism has been tested in the 20 years of practical experience of postwar development. The successes of the socialist countries in building socialism and communism are in themselves an irrefutable confirmation of the correctness of this course. At the same time, the great revolutionary changes that have taken place in the world in the past 20 years are to an enormous degree the result of the influence of the socialist system, which is becoming the decisive force of present-day world development. Further successes in the construction of socialism and communism in the socialist countries will create even more favorable conditions for all the revolutionary detachments of the present day, for their closest unification into a powerful, victorious anti-imperialist alliance, for the struggle of the working people of all countries for the abolition of the obsolete system of capitalism, for the victory of world socialism.

—From "The Supreme Internationalist Duty of the Socialist Country," *Pravda*, October 27, 1965. English text from The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, New York, November 17, 1965, pp. 8-9.

badly needed—and even more overdue—in the political sector. Indeed, the effort to maintain a doctrinaire dictatorship over an increasingly modern and industrial society has already contributed to a reopening of the gap that existed in prerevolutionary Russia between the political system and the society, thereby posing the threat of the degeneration of the Soviet system.

A political system can be said to degenerate when there is a perceptible decline in the quality of the social talent that the political leadership attracts to itself in competition with other groups; when there is persistent division within the ruling elite, accompanied by a decline in its commitment to shared beliefs; when there is protracted instability in the top leadership; when there is a decline in the capacity of the ruling elite to define the purposes of the political system in relationship to society and to express them in effective institutional terms; when there is a fuzzing of institutional and hierarchical lines of command, resulting in the uncontrolled and unchanneled intrusion into politics of hitherto politically uninvolved groupings.²⁵ All of these indicators were discernible in the political systems of Tsarist Russia, the French Third Republic, Chiang Kai-Shek's China and Rakosi's Hungary. Today, as already noted, at least several are apparent in the Soviet political system.

This is not to say, however, that the evolution of the Soviet system has inevitably turned into degeneration. Much still depends on how the ruling Soviet elite reacts. Policies of retrenchment, increasing dogmatism, and even violence, which—if now applied—would follow almost a decade of loosening up, could bring about a grave situation of tension, and the possibility of revolutionary outbreaks could not be discounted entirely. "Terror is indispensable to any dictatorship, but it cannot compensate for incompetent leaders and a defective organization of authority," observed a historian of the French revolution, writing of the Second Directory.²⁶ It is equally true of the Soviet political scene.

The threat of degeneration could be lessened through several adaptations designed to adjust the Soviet political system to the changes that

have taken place in the now more mature society. First of all, the top policy-making organ of the Soviet system has been traditionally the exclusive preserve of the professional politician, and in many respects this has assured the Soviet political system of able and experienced leadership. However, since a professional bureaucracy is not prone to produce broad "generalizing" talents, and since the inherent differentiation of functions within it increases the likelihood of leaders with relatively much narrower specialization than hitherto was the case, the need for somewhat broader representation of social talent within the top political leadership, and not merely on secondary levels as hitherto, is becoming urgent. If several outstanding scientists, professional economists, industrial managers, and others were to be co-opted by lateral entry into the ruling Presidium, the progressive transformation of the leadership into a regime of clerks could thereby be averted, and the alienation of other groups from the political system perhaps halted.

Secondly, the Soviet leaders would have to institutionalize a chief executive office and strive to endow it with legitimacy and stability. This would eventually require the creation of a formal and open process of leadership selection, as well—probably—as a time limit on the tenure of the chief executive position. The time limit, if honored, would depersonalize power, while an institutionalized process of selection geared to a specific date—and therefore also limited in time—would reduce the debilitating effects of unchecked and protracted conflict in the top echelons of power.

The CPSU continues to be an ideocratic party with a strong tradition of dogmatic intolerance and organizational discipline. Today less militant and more bureaucratic in outlook, it still requires a top catalyst, though no longer a personal tyrant, for effective operations. The example of the papacy, or perhaps of Mexico, where a ruling party has created a reasonably effective system of presidential succession, offers a demonstration of how one-man rule can be combined with a formal office of the chief executive, endowed with legitimacy, tenure and a formally established pattern of selection.

Any real institutionalization of power would have significant implications for the party. If its

²⁵ For a general discussion and a somewhat different formulation, see S. Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay," pp. 415-17.

²⁶ G. Lefebvre, *The French Revolution*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1965, Vol. II, p. 205.

Central Committee were to become in effect an electoral college, selecting a ruler whom no one could threaten during his tenure, the process of selection would have to be endowed with considerable respectability. It would have to be much more than a mere ratification of an *a priori* decision reached by some bureaucratic cabal. The process would require tolerance for the expression of diverse opinions in a spirit free of dogmatism, a certain amount of open competition among rivals for power, and perhaps even the formation of informal coalitions—at least temporary ones. In a word, it would mean a break with the Leninist past, with consequences that would unavoidably spill over from the party into the entire system and society.

Thirdly, increased social participation in politics unavoidably creates the need for an institutionalized arena for the mediation of group interests, if tensions and conflicts, and eventually perhaps even anarchy, are to be avoided. The enlarged plenums of the Central Committee were a right beginning, but if the Committee is to mediate effectively among the variety of institutional and group interests that now exist in Soviet society, its membership will have to be made much more representative and the predominance of party bureaucrats watered down. Alternatively, the Soviet leaders might con-

sider following the Yugoslav course of creating a new institution for the explicit purpose of providing group representation and reconciling different interests. In either case, an effective organ of mediation could not be merely a front for the party's continued bureaucratic arbitration of social interests, as that would simply perpetuate the present dilemmas.

Obviously, the implementation of such institutional reforms would eventually lead to a profound transformation of the Soviet system. But it is the absence of basic institutional development in the Soviet political system that has posed the danger of the system's degeneration. It is noteworthy that the Yugoslavs have been experimenting with political reforms, including new institutions, designed to meet precisely the problems and dangers discussed here. Indeed, in the long run, perhaps the ultimate contribution to Soviet political and social development that the CPSU can make is to adjust gracefully to the desirability, and perhaps even inevitability, of its own gradual withering away. In the meantime, the progressive transformation of the bureaucratic Communist dictatorship into a more pluralistic and institutionalized political system—even though still a system of one-party rule—seems essential if its degeneration is to be averted.

Rumania: The Fruits of Autonomy

By George Gross

A future Toynbee, looking at the 1960's, may well conclude that the central event of the current decade was the disintegration of the Soviet empire. This historic development is already well under way, deriving its principal momentum from the great schism between Moscow and Peking. But Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe is also fragmenting, though less abruptly, and this process is bound to continue.

Stalin's concept of a monolithic bloc, with Moscow as its Third Rome, was already thoroughly shaken by the rise of nationalism in Yugoslavia, Poland, and Hungary during the preceding decade. In the case of Yugoslavia, this challenge was successful, and the first "National Communist" state was born. Next came Albania, which made a decisive break in 1961, although it chose not to look westward because of its traditional antipathy toward Yugoslavia.

George Gross is the pseudonym of an eminent student of Rumanian affairs who has recently returned from an extended visit to Rumania. He has chosen to remain anonymous in order to protect some of his contacts in that country.

More recently, Rumania has gradually but surely asserted its independence from Moscow. When, on April 22, 1964, the Central Committee of the Rumanian Communist Party (RCP)¹ adopted its declaration on party and state relations, and when the Soviet Union failed either to prevent or to respond effectively to this act, a new form of independent national communism came into being. What follows is an account of how and why this has been accomplished, and what this accomplishment means.

The Roots of Alienation

When reports of Rumania's controversy with the Soviet Union over economic problems first appeared in the Western press in 1963, many observers were surprised, if not skeptical. Ru-

¹ Until July 1965 the party was officially known as the Rumanian Workers' Party (RWP) but, for the sake of convenience, will hereafter be referred to throughout, except in source references, as RCP.