

# On Rapid Industrialization and Collectivization: An Essay in Historiographic Retrieval and Criticism

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**U**ntil very recently, most students of Soviet society discussed the processes of rapid industrialization and collectivization undertaken in the final years of the 1920s as though they were two halves of one deliberate policy, consciously carried out. It was argued, either implicitly or explicitly, that collectivization was undertaken to further the goal of industrialization.<sup>1</sup> Yet in the historical record, as presented by Naun Jasny, Moshe Lewin and Olga Narkiewicz, it does not appear that a coherent plan was pursued.<sup>2</sup> Since the

Second World War, the interest in Third World development among Western academics led to their keen interest in the Soviet experience. Jerzy Karcz constructed a model of "command farming" to try to elucidate the system that Stalin set up. Late, however, he cautioned that such models "may unwittingly contribute to the impression that command farming arose as part of a larger strategy of economic development."<sup>3</sup> Since a great deal of uncertainty remains about the exact sequence of—let alone the immediate reasons for—the decisions made in the course of the great upheaval, it is reasonable to suggest a reappraisal. Alec Nove, among others, has argued that even if the collectivization drive was of dubious worth economically, it made sense politically.<sup>4</sup> But does the goal of creating socialism require the crushing of the peasantry? Surely it depends upon, among other things, the particular vision of socialism.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, any interpretation must deal satisfactorily with the simple fact that Stalin did industrialize the Soviet Union. But it does not have to assume that Stalin's success with industrialization implies he knew what he was doing. Contrary to much current thinking on this issue, I want to argue that the fact of his success does not allow easy inferences about his precise motives. Nor does it follow from his success that the kind of industrialization pursued was appropriate for building a socialist society.<sup>6</sup> Since we do not and may never know what Stalin thought he was doing, why should we assume he had developed logically coherent and rational policies? Such assumptions simply do not fit with the actual course of events. This paper, then, does not present new research.<sup>7</sup> What it does is provide an alternative picture of the links between agrarian change and industrialization.

The extent of the chaos described by Jasny, Lewin and Narkiewicz makes it hard to believe at first that industrialization can have taken place at all. Working contrary to decades of supposition, Karcz very cautiously developed the argument that it is not at all clear that Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP), although certainly enmeshed in difficulties, was utterly doomed.<sup>8</sup> When we adduce the recent demonstration by Michael Ellman that (again despite very widely-held theoretical expectations and retrospective beliefs shared by Bolsheviks and modern academics alike) agriculture did not provide a signifi-

cant surplus, if any—especially initially—to the industrializing parts of the economy, then standard rationales disintegrate further.<sup>9</sup> An academic groundswell became discernible, presaging a considerable storm moving towards a repudiation of collectivization: the peasants, it seemed, had suffered in vain. R.W. Davies has tried to build a breakwater against this imminent tempest. He denies that no industrialization at all was possible within the framework of NEP, but he has stated an intention to show “that industrialization at the extraordinary pace actually achieved in 1929-36 was quite incompatible with a market relation with the peasantry.”<sup>10</sup> This puts the emphasis squarely on various causal questions. How did industrialization succeed? Did collectivization help at all in this process, and if so, how? Merely to rule out the NEP approach to industrialization does not imply that collectivization helped produce industrialization. Supposing it was efficacious, one still should go on to ask precisely in what way it helped, and whether it was the best method. Furthermore, it is not just the pace, but also the kind of industrialization achieved that we must explain. The word “industrialization” is here a dangerously imprecise one. For industrialization with much less emphasis on heavy industry would have been both easier to attain and better as a goal. Unfortunately, the Bolshevik tradition was already characterized by an uncritical, almost reverent attitude to large-scale industry. Charles Bettelheim has argued that the “crisis of NEP” was substantially an induced one. Through the 1920s, small-scale rural industry was relatively starved of inputs to make sure it appeared inefficient! As a result, agricultural production was not as stimulated as it could have been. In a sense, the general problem with agriculture was caused by the approach to industrialization. It would, in fact, be more precise to say that the causal factor leading to agrarian disruption, in the era before the great series of Five Year Plans, was rural deindustrialization.<sup>11</sup> We will not enter into details about the causes of the collapse of NEP in this paper, however.

The historiographic situation is very complex. James R. Millar has tried very hard to discredit the whole way of thinking about the issues presented in Alexander Erlich's classic, *The Soviet Industrialization Debate, 1924-8*. That work and the ensuing literature discussed the idea of having the industrial sector accumulate in a measured and precise way, at the ex-

PLICIT expense of the agricultural. Also debated at length was the subsidiary question of the appropriate pace for such accumulation.<sup>12</sup> Erlich's work should really be viewed as an essay in development economics, even though it is cast as a piece of Soviet intellectual history. The discussion centres around the problem of achieving balanced growth in an economy with two sectors, through discriminatory pricing (among other methods). Millar argued cogently that Erlich, in directing a spotlight on the Great Debate and its frame of reference, misled later researchers. As a result, they all miscast the relation between agriculture and industrialization, and went looking for a non-existent transferred surplus. They have focused more on economic theory than Soviet history. But so has Millar. Although he presented an alternative (non-collectivized) model which showed how development could occur, it (like the presentation in Erlich) does not help to explain how industrialization in the Soviet case actually succeeded.<sup>13</sup> Millar faulted Erlich for degrading Preobrazhensky's concept of primitive socialist accumulation, reminding us that the great theorist did not dwell exclusively on the issue of the transfer of resources from agriculture to industry. Preobrazhensky, as a Marxist, used Marx's "rich" concept of primitive accumulation, in which the accumulation of capital is played down, and instead, changes in social relations are given pride of place.<sup>14</sup> Millar gestured towards Marx in his attack on Erlich, but failed to grasp the real import of Marx's savaging of the bourgeois concept of primitive accumulation. He was therefore unable to see where his own arguments were leading.<sup>15</sup>

There are many aspects of primitive accumulation that can be relevant, depending on the concrete circumstances, but truly revolutionary implications for society result if a major section of the population becomes separated from the means of subsistence in the countryside. Until there is a large and permanently non-agricultural population, there can be little heavy industry. A regime seeking to industrialize its country can be rich in capital, but at some point it must acquire a workforce not tied to the land. This elementary point should have been emphasized in the literature. Instead, we find Ellman's discussion with Millar on the importance of the "freeing" of farm labour taking place in footnotes. Millar's subsequent off-the-cuff pronouncements denying the importance of (and even the

need for) agriculture's contribution of labour are incomprehensible and quite at variance with the results of work on labour in the period.<sup>16</sup> Millar has been looking forward to seeing the apologists for Stalin shipwrecked once and for all! He has insisted that collectivization was simply a mistake with no redeeming features. However, that leaves the explanation of industrialization uncertain for the moment. Millar has since turned his attention to more narrowly financial aspects of the problem.<sup>17</sup>

Given the unsatisfactory current state of the controversy over Soviet collectivization, it is instructive to return to work that predates Erlich's intervention. Alexander Baykov provided a very clear statement about the importance of non-farm labour for explanations of how Soviet development became possible and took place:

By planned distribution of the total consumers' goods produced in the country it was possible, during the thirteen years from 1926 to 1939, not only to absorb 23.5 million of the natural increase of the population into the towns but to turn an additional 6.1 million rural inhabitants into urban dwellers. In this way for the first time in Russian history, the natural increase in population was absorbed by the towns. This permitted an increase in the numbers of workers employed in the national economy (excluding agriculture) by nearly 20 millions between 1928 and 1940 as well as an increase in the technical qualifications and general educational level of town-dwellers as a whole.<sup>18</sup>

Crudely put, food was made available, without obnoxious conditions attached, only in the cities and so many people went there. There they found work carrying out Bolshevik industrial schemes, and there they became more successful at finding enough food to raise families than did people remaining in the countryside. When Millar claims that there is no evidence of a labour shortage in the twenties and thirties, he is escaping the issue by speciously taking a long-term view which tries to bury the period of violent upheaval in the longer sweep of Russian development. For, paradoxically, there was no great need for labour in the twenties, and by the thirties any possible shortage had been forestalled!

Although research is scanty, we can state that it was made difficult, in many ways, for peasants to obtain food, especially from 1928 to 1933. During the period of explicit food rationing for example, only the peasants, not the workers, had their ration cards tied to production levels.<sup>19</sup> As a result, the rural exodus, it would appear, took place in collectivized areas and mostly affected younger people, particularly those who

were not willing to join a collective farm. Such people found that food became increasingly scarce as long as they stayed in the countryside but did not join a kolkhoz.<sup>20</sup> Also, it may have been a mixture of pride and fury that often led peasants to refuse controlled handouts from the produce of what had been, just the other day, their very own lands. That, rather than cool calculations about a differential in urban and rural living standards, may have set them on the road to the cities. But there were other inducements. Markedly lower wages were paid to rural workers. The trade unions, too, played a role in demographic upheaval. Industrial units contracted with collective farms for a seasonal supply of spare labourers, and the trade unions acted as recruiting agents.<sup>21</sup> Forced labour camps must have played a role in rural exodus, as did induced famine in certain areas.<sup>22</sup> Obviously a great deal more investigation needs to be done about rationing and other aspects of controlled distribution, about differential urban/rural wages, about the role of the trade unions, about forced labour, and about rural famine, before we can fill in the details of the history implied by Baykov's simple account.<sup>23</sup>

Baykov's explanation is certainly easier to follow than many others. Let us look at the tortuous path of reasoning that a student not equipped with Baykov is likely to follow. It puzzles modern students, brought up to believe that an improvement in agricultural productivity is a *sine qua non* for industrialization, to discover from Nove that the immediate result of the First Five Year Plan was a catastrophic fall in agricultural production, simultaneous with a tremendous surge forward on the industrial front.<sup>24</sup> Jasny, however, seems to explain the paradox by pointing out that there was a "strangulation of consumption [which] put such large funds in the hands of the state as to permit extensive industrialization".<sup>25</sup> But he stretches our credulity when he goes on to add that the funds were so great that they also permitted "even greater militarization, despite loss and waste of every kind caused by wars, internal strife, mismanagement, and so on."<sup>26</sup> How can so much have been taken out of a failing agriculture and an infant industrial sector (composed, at that time, to a considerable extent of not yet completed capital projects) to support such prodigious change? The student learns that it was possible because the central authorities were able, by "extraordinary measures", to increase

the percentage that they procured out of a pool of grain which was admittedly declining in absolute terms from year to year.<sup>27</sup> At this point in the discussion, the government appears to the student to have pursued an ill-judged policy, which itself caused considerable waste. The glimmerings of an anti-collectivization argument appear. Perhaps the grain figures can be juggled to show that an agricultural system which would have resulted in increased production (or at least the maintenance of NEP levels) could have achieved the same result less painfully?<sup>28</sup> Some authors seem to be thinking of adding some assumptions that a more productive agricultural system would have been more popular, and therefore less likely to create waste and a need for expensive police operations. Thus the cost side comes down and the benefit side goes up. Such a version is implicit in Millar's interpretation. One can only assume, in the absence of any clearly worked-out third option, that the requisite agrarian arrangements in such a scheme would be fundamentally market-oriented.

What I am saying is that no such account can be made consistent with Baykov's explanation that industrialization of the kind and scale in fact achieved was possible only because of urbanization. The counter-factual speculations go wrong when they come to the significance of the "strangulation of consumption". Jasny, as we saw, made the privation of the Soviet citizen causally efficacious in bringing about industrialization. Baykov's account does not precisely say that. In a radical (because literal) reading of Baykov, the key feature is the "planned distribution" of consumers' goods.

It was the control over where food was available that provided the main stimulus for people to leave the farms, and thereby for the possibility of rapid, heavy industrialization. For several reasons, the quantity of food and other consumption goods available for distribution in a planned way was very small. So, to be sure, there was extreme privation. But it is too imprecise to say that hunger was causally significant in bringing about social change. Millar went as far as to argue that privation per se does not help anything to happen, but failed to see the point about distribution. That there came to be little left over to eat in the countryside after procurements—apart from what was made available on the kolkhoz—was the crux.<sup>29</sup> Collectivization worked because it allowed the Soviet regime to

procure so much of the grain, and therefore to control the geography of distribution. It made continued life in the countryside unbearable for a huge number of peasants. Certainly it is also true that the procurements and subsequent "collectivization" resulted in a tremendous decline in agricultural production, which made the causal mechanism work less well than it might have under "ideal conditions", namely, the explicit and immediate compliance of the peasants with every move made by the Soviet regime. But, as we know, the peasants resisted, with awful results for themselves. If they had capitulated immediately and cooperated with the Bolsheviks, instead of cutting back production and fighting, more surplus would have been skimmed by the regime. But the peasants would have lived, their offspring would have lived, and more of them would have been born. This is the conclusion to be drawn from that considerable portion of the decline in agricultural production which can be ascribed to peasant recalcitrance. An enormous loss of population occurred in this period. Taking all factors into account, it is apparent that between 1926 and 1939, ten million people, as Nove put it, "demographically disappeared".<sup>30</sup>

Now it is clear that such a loss is serious in any sort of scheme in which increased manpower is regarded as crucial for development. But an argument in defence of the ability of a non-collectivizing approach to cause such dramatic socio-economic change would have to show that the lost ten million would have been willing to work for the regime's goals, instead of eating precious food and resisting industrialization on Bolshevik terms.<sup>31</sup> Collectivization, then, caused a loss of population, but it also pushed people into the cities. That was crucial for the kind of heavy industrialization achieved. It is a repellent fact, but food confiscated from the Ukraine during the notorious famine did help the cities.

It is instructive to compare what happened in the period of the Great Industrialization Drive with the pre-Soviet approach to industrialization. Under the czars, a policy of industrialization at the explicit financial expense of the peasants had been followed. Essentially the peasants were made, by taxation, to produce grain for export, and the state used the proceeds to pay for industrialization. But this process relied on the maintenance of the farming community, and therefore did not pro-

voke a decisive rupture of the agrarian/industrial population ratio. Only such a rupture was capable of causing a dramatic change in the pace of industrialization.

Most Marxists—obsessed with patterns of ownership, and with the exploitation made opaque, but easy, by various patterns of production and exchange—only rarely note the importance of “the relations between town and country”. Stalin proved that there are ways of changing society which do not hinge on niceties of ownership and exchange. The Great Debate of the 1920s concerned only the set of relatively genteel ways of changing society. But since it is what people are actually physically making that counts in industrialization, ruthless change can be effective, even when extremely wasteful. To make an iron foundry, the workers who actually transform the raw materials, coal, iron and clay into blast-furnaces need wheat. So long as the worker is physiologically functioning, what matters most is the concrete use-value(s) s/he has produced at the end of the day. So long as the number of workers producing use-values appropriate for building (and then running) factories is small, progress will be slow. It is too easy to forget that human labour is a unique “input”, in principle capable of making anything. Stalin and the Gulag wardens knew that. Steven Rosefielde, for example, is guilty of gross confusion in terming the Soviet path to industrialization “wasteful” on the specific grounds that labour was moved from agriculture to industry, entailing a decline in average labour productivity.<sup>32</sup> In his view evidently, “economic theory” could have told Stalin not to be so silly. But Stalin has the last laugh, since at the end of the day he indeed did have a heavy industrial base, even though he did not wait for labour productivity to behave in a theoretically proper fashion.

Rosefielde’s obeisance to neoclassical theory is the problem here. For, contrary to that theory—and also to crude Marxism—there is no generally necessary tendency for labour productivity to increase. Nor is there an inevitable tendency for all social formations to require an increase in labour productivity to produce more. If different products, as well as more products, are sought, it may make even less sense to be constrained by considerations of labour productivity. Only if Stalin had run out of potential labourers would labour productivity have become all-important. Stalin’s lack of scruples about coercion are,

of course, prerequisite for his kind of approach to get off the ground, as any Egyptian slave-owner would instantly have understood. The rationality of using an increase in labour productivity as a way of causing development depends on a gross labour shortage, or on its functional equivalent, moral scruples. Economic theory cannot specify a priori that labour productivity is a key factor. Pettifogging analyses of the transfer of material or financial resources from agriculture to industry in the Erlich tradition, with all its attendant statisticians' nightmares of sectoral definition and price sensitivity, do not illuminate the crux of rapid industrialization. They may be instructive for indicating slower and more humane processes of development, but they do not help to explain how Stalin succeeded.

Stalin essentially created a vast extension to the framework of an industrial sector that had been built up under the czars. It is ultimately misleading, but nonetheless tempting, to describe this as the Labour Theory of Industrialization, inasmuch as the transfer of material and financial resources to the industrial sector was overshadowed by the contributions of labour. There was, to be sure, considerable primary exporting—even of grain—and importing of machinery, which played a role. But it would have been quite nugatory without the manpower “freed” from the farms. Millar darkly warned us that “we may discover that the Soviet Union achieved growth and development not because the peasantry was exploited and agriculture neglected, but despite it.”<sup>33</sup> While it is true that industrialization was not achieved because of that exploitation/neglect, it is seriously misleading to say that industrialization was achieved despite it. The controlled distribution of subsistence goods, which caused a change in the ratio of peasantry to industrial workforce, was crucial in the Soviet case, which was characterized simultaneously by a great shortage of capital and insanely ambitious plans. The peasants became labourers “free” from their own direct control over their own means of subsistence. Millar says that Stalin and Company, in their agrarian policy, only succeeded in “making life extremely difficult for the peasantry.”<sup>34</sup> This is too glib. Making life difficult for the peasants was a powerful contributory factor to the regime’s ability to control access to food.

The general point here is simple. Since the peasants did not volunteer to leave their lands to go to the cities, they had to be

coerced. Collectivization was one (effective) way of coercing them. Other techniques of coercion might have worked—e.g., a more straightforward policy of mass conscription into two armies, one industrial and one agricultural—but it is unlikely that less violence would have ensued. The entire argument of this paper is, of course, perfectly consistent with the moral judgment that collectivization was an inexcusable policy. Stalin had no right to force the peasants to abandon their way of life. But let us not imagine that rapid industrialization could have taken place if he had stayed within the bounds of morality.

Some serious historical problems remain with this elaboration of Baykov's explanation of industrialization. It does have adequate power to explain how collectivization helped cause industrialization. But it does not tell us how the problem was perceived in ruling circles in the Soviet Union at the time. The historiographic breach opened by Ellman and Millar was useful because it allows us to split off questions of policy from questions about the actual effect of attempts to carry out policy. George Yaney has discussed the gap between bureaucratic goals and actual implementation for both the czarist and Soviet states.<sup>35</sup> But I am suggesting something more radical than Yaney's thesis. It is unlikely that we will ever know whether Stalin consciously approached the problem of industrialization in the way elaborated here. But let us look at it this way. The first Five Year Plan was not fulfilled in many categories, but it was strikingly over-fulfilled with respect to labour supply. Significantly, this took the planners by surprise, especially since the immediate short-term effect during the collectivization process was an urban exodus as people rushed back to their rural cousins to see what was happening. Even Stalin's subsequent apologists do not put a sufficiently strong emphasis on the changing of the urban/rural population ratio as the key mechanism. Maurice Dobb does mention it explicitly, but he romanticizes the cause of the move of population, attributing it vaguely to improved labour productivity on the farms and misleadingly implying that an improvement in labour productivity always means an improvement in output—an exceptionally dubious proposition, especially in agriculture, and emphatically so in this case.<sup>36</sup>

If the Baykov-style argument can account for the success of the Great Industrialization Drive, then continued displays of

piety towards the Erlich paradigm become impossible. Erlich's followers uncritically transposed the terms and frame of reference of the Great Debate directly into their attempts to describe and explain the actual course of Soviet industrialization. Stalin, at some point, must have simply decided that the Great Debate, with its economists' apparatus of inter-sectoral analysis, was irrelevant. Certainly he eventually broke with its frame of reference in an unambiguous way, and adopted the frankly military approach instead. That he did so is another of the paradoxes that torment the beginner who comes at the problems of Soviet history via Erlich, having been conditioned thereby to take the debate seriously as a means of gaining insight into the historical process of Soviet industrialization. I argue that it is more accurate to say Stalin's break with the debate was a precondition for rapid industrialization.

Alexander Gerschenkron similarly downplayed the extent of control over the whole process in arguing that the first Five Year Plan was merely a temporary measure intended to raise the production of consumption goods, so as to break the disequilibrium in the economy caused by the peasants finding nothing to buy. In the collectivization of agriculture, Gerschenkron continues, a different solution to the disequilibrium problem was accidentally found. It seems it was only then that perpetual industrialization became an end in itself, no longer restricted by the purpose of producing what the mass of the people actually wanted. Indeed it is doubtful whether the industrialization goals of the Bolsheviks had ever been responsive to what the common people actually wanted. Increasingly the focus was on heavy industry, even if that implied depriving agriculture of key inputs.

Whether or not Gerschenkron's iconoclastic interpretation is wrong, it seems most likely that we will continue to puzzle forever as to Stalin's own reasons for doing what he did at many of the stages of the process. For, evidently, he soon began to change his tactics often, and became increasingly worried (with good reason) about the overall picture. Because of his simplistic beliefs about rural sociology, he could hardly have been expecting as much chaos as occurred when he unleashed the process of procurements and collectivization.<sup>37</sup> More likely, he deliberately chose the policy not expecting (at least initially) that it would cause the disaster which it, in fact, did. For it is

hard to believe that any leader would have chosen a policy known in advance to produce virtual civil war, merely in pursuit of grain. Once engulfed in the throes of mass collectivization however, he was soon past the point of no return. What he initially intended pales into insignificance. Certainly what he judged the possibilities to be as they unfolded—once the process had become, in a sense, uncontrollable—would be highly illuminating. But will we ever know these things? Curiously, even though Stalin probably did not see why collectivization could cause industrialization, he pursued his policies so maniacally that they became effective! His very persistence in causing agrarian disruption was essential. What Stalin thought kulaks were up to in the way of “reviving capitalism” can be dismissed. But his savagery towards them was certainly effective in turning the countryside into a relative hell, compared to the cities.<sup>38</sup>

Well before collectivization, Stalin and many other Bolsheviks were becoming increasingly exercised by fears of war with Britain and/or China, and wished to stabilize and strengthen the regime.<sup>39</sup> Industrialization, it was decided, would be the best method. Now, the bolstering of a regime is a classic, short-term objective. Yet any humane process of industrialization must be a quintessentially long-term project. The moderate NEP approach set in place by Lenin in 1921 was avowedly gradualist. Lenin warned that disaster would follow from attempts to hurry the peasants into the embrace of a different social system. If it had been allowed to continue, NEP would not have resulted in any dramatic move of the population to the cities. Rather it was expected to work through a steady improvement in agricultural productivity that would allow a slow reduction in the rural work-force needed. Since the peasants did not want to curtail NEP, they resisted.

Narkiewicz has argued that the Soviet state exhibited marked signs of centralistic tendencies throughout the twenties.<sup>40</sup> But the most brutal, militaristic and centralizing aspects of the Soviet system were chiefly acquired during the processes of collectivization and industrialization. This legacy was the result of the internal fight between the peasants and the regime. Accounting to the Party, a supposedly communist party, for the attendant brutality of the regime to its own people during this fight made the Great Terror and mass purges necessary.

This is both when and why Communism got its bad name. Because peasants control their own means of subsistence, they can often simply ignore a government.<sup>41</sup> But peasants cannot resist forever a regime willing to use a great deal of force. T. von Laue roots the Bolsheviks' commitment to a development drive, and their willingness to use force towards that end, in the prerevolutionary intellectual and political outlook of educated Russians.<sup>42</sup> There is, he insists, great continuity in the story. But von Laue puts in too strong a dose of his "cultural determinism". Only when Stalin really riled the peasants was he on the path to a fateful deepening of the militarization of the Soviet polity. The decision to attack the peasantry was a discrete move, too suddenly undertaken to count as an instance of general cultural determinism. Stalin's background urge to industrialize, though, may well be a case of von Lauean determinism. It is plausible furthermore, that in order to industrialize rapidly, the control over distribution, which Baykov emphasized, must be within the power of government. For purposes of controlling consumption, what better form of government than a highly militarized regime?

What I would argue then, is that Stalin got involved in a far more severe battle with the peasants than he ever expected. In the course of that struggle, he inadvertently acquired the means to carry through the kind of colossal development programme which he believed was already underway. The means of success, in fact, fell into his hands through no foresight of his own. Once embarked, he plunged ahead at full speed. One of the most baffling puzzles in Soviet history is the ever more frantic and seemingly crazy upward revisions of the first Five Year Plan's targets, in a context that should have dictated the reverse. But if Baykov's causal explanation is correct, and if Stalin was beginning to see both what he had set going in the way of population upheaval and the inherent possibilities in that, perhaps the lunacy was not so total after all—in its own terms, that is.

This interpretation accounts for Soviet industrialization, but does not justify it. Soviet industrialization was just another, albeit unusually spectacular, example of the common phenomenon of industrialization chiefly undertaken for military reasons and carried out in a frankly militaristic style. While there are occasions when such a policy may be wise, it is certainly never

an appealing policy. Indeed it is difficult to find an example of an industrialization process chiefly caused and regulated by the explicit and immediate goal of making simpler and more reliable the means whereby common people get what they need in order to live comfortable and pleasant lives. From the perspective adopted here, it can only be concluded that Soviet industrialization was a tragedy in every sense.

The only part in the whole story that can be applauded is the Soviet defeat of Hitler. It is important to try to determine how Stalin industrialized the Soviet Union because it is worth knowing how he was able to defeat the Nazis. But even on this question, the militarized character of Soviet society may have been more crucial than industrial prowess itself. Stalin could not foresee in 1926 the eventual extent of Hitler's prominence. In any case, retrospective arguments cannot exonerate crimes.

It is unfortunately very difficult to see how we can directly learn anything about what would deserve to be called "socialism" from discussion of these matters. Industrialization as carried out by states has to be contrasted with industrialization as it might appear if it were carried out in what Ivan Illich calls "the vernacular domain". Stalinists must be faulted, first of all, for burdening socialism with the incubus of heavy industrialization as a priority. Criticism focused on the savage way Stalinists went about attempting to achieve their goal is far too generous, and too simplistic. Unfortunately the brutal and wasteful methods helped make the obnoxious goal attainable. What is alarming is that although people now readily decry the methods, they do not consistently reject the goal.

### Notes

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1. See for example, Maurice Dobb, *Soviet Economic Development Since 1917* (New York, 1966), p. 285.
2. Naum Jasny was so blasphemous that he deliberately ignored the framework of Five Year Plans in laying out the temporal structure for his outline of the process in his *Soviet Industrialization, 1928-1952* (Chicago, 1961). For a sample picture of chaos, see Moshe Lewin, "Society and the Stalinist state in the period of the Five Year Plans," *Social History* 2 (1976), pp. 139-75. Some of the kinds of historiographic difficulties are sketched at the beginning of Olga A. Narkiewicz, "Soviet administration and the grain crisis of 1927-28," *Soviet Studies* XX:2 (1969), pp. 235-41. The hesitations about agrarian policy, at least at the beginning of the big push, are described in Olga Narkiewicz, "Stalin, War, Communism and Collectivization," *Soviet Studies*, XVIII:1 (1966) pp. 20-37.

3. The model of "command farming" is presented in Jerzy Karcz, "An Organizational Model of Command Farming," in ed. *Comparative Economic Systems*, Morris Bornstein (Illinois, 1979). His suggestion that the whole process of agrarian change was something other than planned is made in Jerzy Karcz, "From Stalin to Brezhnev: Soviet Agricultural Policy in Historical Perspective," in ed. *The Soviet Rural Community*, James R. Millar (Urbana, 1971), p. 47.
4. In James Millar and Alec Nove, "A Debate on Collectivization: Was Stalin Really Necessary," *Problems of Communism* (July–August 1976).
5. On the question of, for example, motives for causing agrarian upheaval; it is made clear in the film, *Harvest of Despair: The 1932–33 Famine in the Ukraine* (Toronto) produced by the Ukrainian Famine Research Committee and directed by Slavko Novytski, that in the case of the Ukraine, Stalin may simply have been motivated by insensate rage at the very viability of Ukrainian peasant socialism. One is set thinking along the same lines by the description in Moshe Lewin, "Rural Society in Twentieth Century Russia: An Introduction," *Social History*, IX:2 (May 1984).
6. The present author considers it an open question whether a desirable socialist society would be likely to choose to be industrialized in a way at all resembling any known industrial society. For examples of what desirable socialist societies could look like, see A.V. Chayanov, "The Journey of My Brother Alexei to the Land of Peasant Utopia," *Journal of Peasant Studies* IV:1; and Peter Chapman, *Fuel's Paradise* (Harmondsworth, 1975), chapter 1, "A Parable: The Isle of Erg."
7. More corroborative facts would be welcome since the argument advanced here is, for the moment, necessarily speculative. The purpose here is to stimulate discussion and research. It is unfortunately not self-evident that the right sort of evidence exists. It is to be doubted both that the relevant information was ever recorded by the authorities, and even if it was, that anyone would be allowed to see it. It is likely that only anecdotal evidence will be found.
8. A tentative defence of NEP is to be found in Jerzy Karcz, "Thoughts on the grain problem," *Soviet Studies* XXVIII:4 (1967), pp. 399–434. The older, more pessimistic view, which emphasized the problem the Soviet regime had in stimulating the peasants to market grain, can be found in (for example) Rudolf Schlesinger, "On the Scope of Necessity and Error," *Soviet Studies*, XVII, p.1 354.
9. Michael Ellman, "Did the agricultural surplus provide the resources for the increase in investment in the USSR during the first Five Year Plan?," *Economic Journal* LXXXV (December, 1975), pp. 844–64.
10. R.W. Davies, *The Industrialization of Soviet Russia 1, The Soviet Offensive: The Collectivization of Soviet Agriculture, 1920–30* (London, 1980), p. xv.
11. the undermining of small-scale industry is emphasized in Charles Bettelheim, *Class Struggles in the USSR, second Period: 1923–30* (New York, 1978), p. 378. Davies claims however that the "drastic general decline of the artisan industry did not take place until 1930," in E.H. Carr and R.W. Davies, *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, vol. 1, part 1 (London, 1969), p. 400.
12. Alexander Erlich, *The Soviet Industrialization Debate, 1924–28* (Cambridge, Mas., 1967). For a sample of Millar's views, see James R. Millar and Corinne A. Guntzel, "The economics and politics of mass collectivization reconsidered: a review article," *Explorations in Economic History* VIII:1 (1970), pp. 103–16.
13. The model is presented in James R. Millar, "Soviet rapid development and the agricultural surplus hypothesis," *Soviet Studies* XXII:1 (1970), pp. 77–93.

14. Millar's "Marxist" reading of Preobrazhensky is in James R. Millar, "A note on primitive accumulation in Marx and Preobrazhensky," *Soviet Studies* XXX:3 (1978), pp. 384-93.
15. In fairness to Millar, Marx himself at his death was not yet absolutely clear in his own mind on these matters. he wondered whether the English model of development was in fact generalizable. There is a growing literature on this, which is perhaps best approached via Teodor Shanin, "Marx and the peasant commune," and Haruki Wada, "Marx and revolutionary Russia," both in *History Workshop Journal* 12 (Autumn 1981), pp. 108-50; and reprinted, with modifications, in Teodor Shanin, ed., *Late Marx and the Russian Road* (New York, 1983).
16. Millar's dismissive attitude to labour is exemplified in James R. Millar, "Rejoinder (to Nove)," *Problems of Communism* (July-August 1976), pp. 59-61; also in James R. Millar, "Mass collectivization and the contribution of Soviet agriculture to the first Five Year Plan," *Slavic Review* XXXIII:4 (1974), p. 765; and again in James R. Millar, *The ABC's of Soviet Socialism* (Urbana, 1981), p. 29. For two samples of the serious discussions on labour, see Anne d. Rassweiler, "Soviet labour policy in the first Five Year Plan: the Dneprostroi experience," *Slavic Review* XLII:2, (Summer 1983), pp. 230-46; and the book review by Margaret Dewar of Werner Hofman's 1956 study of Soviet labour policy, in *Soviet Studies* IX:2 (1957), pp. 178-90.
17. For a taste, see James R. Millar and Donna Bahry, "Financing development and tax structure change in the USSR," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* XX (1979), pp. 166-74.
18. Alexander Baykov, "The economic development of Russia," *The Economic History Review* 2nd Series, VII:2 (1954), p. 144.
19. L.E. Hubbard, *Soviet Trade and Distribution* (London, 1938), p. 32. Rationing has been curiously underemphasized recently. For a general description of its role, see Part 2 of Hubbard's now quite old study.
20. Solomon Schwarz, *Labour in the Soviet Union* (New York, 1952).
21. On the role of the trade unions in moving labour, see Isaac Deutscher, *Soviet Trade Unions* (London, 1950), especially chapter 4.
22. There has been a dispute raging since 1980 about the role of forced labour in Soviet development. The extreme position, arguing that it was immense and that, in any case, industrial development has been grossly exaggerated, was put forward by Steven Rosefielde in "The first 'Great Leap Forward' reconsidered: Lessons of Solzhenitsyn's Gulag Archipelago," *Slavic Review* XXXIX (1980), pp. 559-87. There followed a series of replies and discussions in both *Slavic Review* and *Soviet Studies* by many authors. This author agrees with Rosefielde's claim that Soviet industrialization was carried out by a re-allocation of labour from agriculture to industry, but notes that Rosefielde does not really explain how this was achieved and is inclined to claim too much for the category of "forced labour". For one thing, Rosefielde's claims sit curiously with the notorious early phenomenon of very rapid, worker-initiated labour turnover. Later the labour camps came to play the role played by unemployment in the West. What mattered most though was the forced *uprooting* of labour. For a description of famine induced by Stalinist industrialization, see Dana G. Dalrymple, "The Soviet famine of 1932-1934," *Soviet Studies* XV:3, (1964), pp. 250-84.
23. Baykov was not unique in having presented an argument stressing urbanization. But interestingly, the other authors who discussed the link between collectivization and the availability of labour for heavy industry, such as Deutscher, Schwarz, Arcadius Kahan and Gerschenkron, also all did their work in the era before Erlich's book came to dominate discussions. They

- did not, however, focus on consumption patterns as a causal motor for the changes. Kahan explicitly claimed that labour was the most important of agriculture's contributions in his "The collective farm system in Russia: some aspects of its contribution to Soviet economic development," in *Agriculture in Economic Development*, eds. C. Eicher and L. Witt (New York, 1964), p. 264. Gerschenkron also argued for the importance of the transfer of labour in his "Problems and patterns of Russian economic development," in *The Transformation of Russian Society*, ed. Cyril E. Black (Cambridge, Mass., 1960). It is very interesting and indeed ironic that Waedekin and other students of agricultural production problems have concluded that the Soviet collectivized model of agriculture could be faulted for causing a rural exodus. See Robert F. Miller, Robert C. Stuart and Karl-Eugen Waedekin, "Some retrospective thoughts on the applicability of the Soviet model of collectivization," in *Cooperation and Commune: Group Farming in the Economic Development of Agriculture*, ed. Peter Dorner (Wisconsin, 1977).
24. See chapter 7 of Nove's *An Economic History of the USSR*, (Harmondsworth, 1976).
  25. Jasny, *Soviet Industrialization*, p. 1.
  26. Jasny, *Soviet Industrialization*, p. 1.
  27. Nove, *An Economic History*, p. 180.
  28. Karcz suggested in "Soviet Agricultural Policy in Perspective" that the grain collected was to no small extent only available because of the mass slaughter of livestock undertaken by the peasants as part of their producers' strike.
  29. Nove, *An Economic History*, p. 178.
  30. Nove, *An Economic History*, p. 180.
  31. Some form of rural industrialization might well have been looked on favourably by the peasants.
  32. Rosefelde, "The First 'Great Leap Forward' Reconsidered".
  33. Millar, "Soviet rapid development and the agricultural surplus hypothesis," *Soviet Studies* XXII:1 (1970), p. 93.
  34. James Millar, "The agricultural surplus hypothesis: a reply to Alec Nove," *Soviet Studies* XXIII:2 (1971), p. 305.
  35. George Yaney, *The Urge to Mobilize: Agrarian Reform in Russia, 1861-1930* (Urbana, 1982).
  36. Maurice Dobb, *Soviet Economic Development Since 1917* (New York, 1966), p. 286.
  37. See Moshe Lewin, "Who Was the Soviet Kulak?," *Soviet Studies* XVIII (1966). Also consult: A.V. Chayanov's "Peasant Farm Organization," in A.V. Chayanov on the *Theory of Peasant Economy*, eds. Daniel Thorner, Basile Kerblay and R.E.F. Smith (Illinois, 1966); and, Theodor Shanin, *The Awkward Class* (Oxford, 1972). Nove makes the point that, in common with most socialist theorizing today and in the past, the Bolsheviks greatly overestimated the amount of wealth possessed by capitalists that is actually useful when confiscated. The amount of grain gleaned from the rich peasants was so small that the state was led ineluctably into attacking the middle peasants as well. This dangerous and ever-present path to civil war is described in Nove's, *The Economics of Feasible Socialism* (London, 1983).
  38. There may well be a parallel here with Mrs. Thatcher, as it's just possible that she will, despite her own motives, turn out to have accomplished nothing but a painful clearing of the road for a non-etatist socialism.
  39. E.H. Carr and R.W. Davies, *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, Vol. 1, part II, p. 699.
  40. Olga Narkiewicz, *The Making of the Soviet State Apparatus* (Manchester, 1970).

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41. Goran Hyden, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry* (Berkeley, 1980). Teodor Shanin had developed this point earlier, in a more general argument, in *The Awkward Class*.
42. T. von Laue, "Stalin in focus," *Slavic Review*, XLII:3 (1983), pp. 373-89.
43. Older senses of the term "vernacular" have recently been revived in a somewhat confusing but nonetheless refreshing way by Ivan Illich. See for example his essay, "Vernacular Values," in *The Schumacher Lectures*, ed. Satish Kumar (London, 1982). As far as this author can tell, the gist of Illich's message is a call for the most radical democratic control over their own lives by ordinary people.