PERESTROIKA IN THE THIRD WORLD

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The social and political upheavals sweeping the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are undermining the ideological mandates and traditional sources of aid of Communist Third World countries. Janusz Bugajski reviews the policies and prospects of these nations, focusing particular attention on Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Ethiopia. He concludes that although these Communist states face problems of stagnation, technological backwardness, and poverty, as well as substantial cuts in Soviet and East European economic aid and commerce, their collapse is by no means imminent. How well these countries respond to internal and external challenges will depend upon their varying national conditions.

The political earthquake which continues to shake Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is also sending tremors through the Communist Third World. It has brought into stark relief the prospects for the long-term survival of several traditional Marxist-Leninist regimes. Although Communist parties remain at the helm of a supposedly predictable historical process, contrary to ideological suppositions the capturing of state power proved to be relatively straightforward compared to the construction of a "socialist mode of production." Economic problems and social conflicts have beset Third World Leninist states since their inception, but the reformist currents now sweeping through the Soviet bloc may increasingly undermine the feasibility of their Marxist-Leninist development model and the continuation of the Communist party's supremacy.

Until recently the "world socialist system" was comprised of sixteen countries with full Communist parties in power: the Soviet Union, eight European states (Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia), Cambodia, China, Cuba, Laos, Mongolia, North Korea, and Vietnam.[1] Seven states possessed recognized vanguard parties in the process of coalescing into Leninist party-states: Afghanistan, Angola, Congo, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mozambique, and South Yemen. In five countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Nicaragua, Suriname, and Zimbabwe) "revolutionary democratic movements" remained in control but had not yet constructed a full Communist party or a socialist system. The socialist camp also encompassed a multitude of revolutionary groups vying for

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1. Details can be found in Richard F. Staar, ed., *1989 Yearbook on International Communist Affairs: Parties and Revolutionary Movements* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1989), xxxiii-xlvii.

power through armed struggle or political competition. The current condition of Third World communism can be assessed by outlining broad contrasts with the erstwhile Soviet bloc, by examining three countries where Leninist parties have either established full Communist states (Vietnam) or are far advanced in this endeavor (Afghanistan and Ethiopia), and by exploring their components and prospects for restructuring and reform.

Compared to parts of the developing world, communism in Eastern Europe had few indigenous roots and was imposed by the Soviet Red Army in the wake of World War II devastation. While outward political opposition was stifled for several decades, a deep reservoir of nationalism, religious fervor, democratic tradition, and Western influence preserved intact a mass movement for human rights and organizational pluralism. When the threat of Soviet intervention and domestic repression receded, democratic uprisings unseated Leninist governments, which had lost all remaining vestiges of legitimacy through their persistent mendacity, oppression, and economic mismanagement. Their social contracts proved a sham: the authorities were unable to deliver sustained economic progress, and the restless citizens were unwilling to remain politically disenfranchised.

In contrast, in developing countries where Communist movements seized power, a combination of factors have enabled them to consolidate and preserve their control. First, each party has been able to claim some domestic ancestry and historical legitimacy, and in most cases captured the state through its own efforts—even while benefiting from outside funds and arms supplies. Second, the Communists have successfully employed nationalist symbols, propounded independence from foreign domination, and espoused various popular causes such as land reform, the eradication of inequality, and economic growth among predominantly peasant-based societies. Third, the ruling parties imposed and solidified stringent political, social, and economic controls over the masses while eradicating opponents or absorbing independent organizations so they could not present credible political alternatives. Fourth, organized opposition to Communist rule has remained dispersed and divided, whether along ethnic, regional, political, or religious lines. One or more of these factors have been operative in each of these Communist-ruled countries and have contributed to maintaining Communist elites in power despite their incessant economic failings and simmering domestic power struggles.

Some Marxist-Leninist regimes have also experimented with political and economic reform even before the changes unleashed in the Soviet bloc. Many governments have sought the benefits of private enterprise and partial market reform without abrogating their socialist missions. Restructuring or renovation programs have been partly influenced by reformist experiments in China and the USSR and by Moscow's concern to scale down its expenditure among Third World allies. They are also a consequence of domestic imperatives caused by perpetual economic problems, political setbacks, and military imbroglios.

The reform process in the Communist Third World has remained uneven, however, with wide variations between states in the form and pace of liber-

alization. Despite their internal crises, no fully formed Leninist government in the developing world has taken irreversible steps in relinquishing power, and each party has remained hesitant to tolerate political pluralism and thereby undercut its political monopoly. In order to assess the successes and failings of Communist policies, it is worthwhile to review three representative country studies before discussing the prospects for reform or revolution throughout the socialist Third World.

Vietnam: Communism Entrenched

Vietnamese Communists exploited numerous peasant grievances in order to justify their revolution against colonialism and feudalism. Similarly to other parts of the developing world, Marxist apologists asserted that the capitalist stage of development could be skipped in Vietnam through a "revolution in the relations of production." Socialist institutions, including a collectivized agriculture, were to be enforced even in the absence of a viable material base. State management would purportedly hasten the development of the nation's productive forces. After gaining control in Hanoi in 1954 and Saigon in 1975, the party embarked upon the Leninization of all political structures and the socialization of production.[2] Organized opposition was eliminated and a hierarchy of party committees assumed enormous powers over the population. A massive expansion of the military and security apparatus helped to enforce a socialist transformation. With over one million troops under arms, Vietnam mobilized the fourth largest army in the world, putting an enormous drain on its fragile economy.

Through its manufacturing and retailing monopoly the regime regulated supplies of resources to all social groups in order to forestall any capitalist resurgence. The small private business sector was nationalized and stringent limitations were placed on private property. By the late 1970s over 90 percent of the peasantry had been collectivized, although this process did not involve the mass terror characteristic of the policies of Stalin and Mao, for the populace had already been cowed during the earlier land reform programs.[3]

Despite glowing official propaganda, since their inception Vietnamese collective farms have been beset by inept management, lack of capital and incentives, and passive peasant resistance. Crop and livestock production has regularly fallen below planned targets after the elimination of independent farming in the 1950s. Infrastructural and transportation breakdowns and compulsory military service by a large proportion of productive males exac-

2. See Douglas Pike, *History of Vietnamese Communism, 1925-1976* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978); and Robert F. Turner, *Vietnamese Communism: Its Origins and Development* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1975).

3. See Edwin E. Moise, *Land Reform in China and North Vietnam: Consolidating the Revolution at the Village Level* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983). For an analysis of Vietnamese agricultural policies see Andrew Vickerman, *The Fate of the Peasantry: Premature "Transition to Socialism" in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam*, Monograph Series No. 28 (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1986).

erbated shortfalls. Hanoi has been unable to provide adequate food supplies to the fast growing population; it has averted mass famines only by emergency rice imports and strict food rationing. More dramatic agricultural decline has been averted by conditional government tolerance of a complementary farm economy. This limited private sector has proved nearly three times more productive than the collectives; in many instances small private plots provided over half of peasant income. Some reforms were periodically initiated to raise peasant yields by leasing cooperative plots to households, but the easing of controls has often been followed by new crackdowns against privatization in order to prevent any upsurge of farmer autonomy. Such policy twists aggravated uncertainty over government motives and weakened work effort among

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the peasantry. Party leaders continued to propound the dogma that collectivized agriculture would ultimately raise production and proletarianize the workforce. In principle, any shortcomings were deemed a consequence of poor management and inadequate mechanization rather than a failure of enforced collectivization. Reversions to private production and management decentralization were viewed as temporary retreats; the "transition to socialism" would evidently be relaunched when conditions became more favorable.

After seizing South Vietnam, the Communists initiated a large-scale deurbanization program to eliminate "unproductive" economic activities and potential political opponents.[4] The mass exodus of "boat people" drained the populations of the cities; since the late 1970s over a million people have fled the country. Also, nearly 2.5 million undesirable "petty-bourgeois" elements were relocated to New Economic Zones in inhospitable highland areas. Mass relocations were supposed to resolve urban unemployment and overcome chronic food shortages through the creation of new collectives. Hanoi's goal was to resettle about ten million people by the turn of the century, but collective farming in the South faced problems similar to those in the North: peasants had little incentive to raise productivity as the free market was

4. For studies on post-unification Vietnam see Nguyen Van Canh, *Vietnam Under Communism, 1975-1982* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1983); and Doan Van Toai and David Chanoff, *The Vietnamese Gulag* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986).

outlawed, and many suffered a serious decline in income upon joining the cooperatives. To prevent further decay, the 1986 party congress gave greater priority to agricultural modernization and buttressed peasant incentive schemes. Private plots were tolerated as long as they did not stimulate unregulated capitalism. The plots were to provide subsistence needs for households, reduce costs for cooperatives, and ensure a surplus which could be sold to the state. But partial concessions to peasant farming did not signify an official abandonment of socialist principles. Long-term commitments were not given to the private sector or to household production, and private capital accumulation was carefully monitored.

Incentive schemes largely replaced the work-point system on Vietnamese collectives. Through regulated production contracts, households supplied set quotas to the state and retained up to half of the surplus for family use or sale on a loosened market. This parallels the production responsibility system introduced in China in the late 1970s. Under the renovation (*doi moi*) reform program in effect since 1989, peasant families can lease out plots of land for up to fifteen years and sell their produce on the free market upon paying a crop tax to local authorities.

The regime recognized that crackdowns against private farming simply drove it underground and failed to raise collective production, whereas measured tolerance increased output without sacrificing overall party control. The long-range development plan sketched out at a party conference in January 1985 envisioned the creation of over 400 enormous district-level "agro-complexes" during the next decade. An industrial-type division of labor in agriculture would help proletarianize the peasantry. But it remained unclear how this socialist program was to be reconciled with private initiative, or how state planning—even if decentralized to the district level—would mesh with private agriculture.

The Vietnamese party's ruling circles have waged an internal debate over the right combination of economic pragmatism and ideological faithfulness throughout the 1980s. This is reflected in periodic changes of emphasis between privatization and full state control. Although the principles of socialist construction are evidently accepted by all party leaders, the timescale and mechanisms for its implementation have remained subject to some dispute. A younger leadership in Hanoi may in the future decide to further loosen its grip over various economic and cultural activities. But the party remains deeply entrenched and has shown little indication of abdicating any key instruments of power or accepting untrammelled political pluralism. It is not presently challenged by a strong internal reformist faction, by any well-organized political, labor, or peasant opposition demanding *perestroika*, or by any sustained armed resistance in the countryside. Despite the use of incentive schemes and relaxations on small businesses and foreign investments, the food situation has remained grim and the Vietnamese economy continues to be kept afloat largely by Soviet-bloc aid.[5]

5. For an assessment of reform see Nayan Chanda, "Vietnam in 1983: Keeping Ideology Alive," *Asian Survey*

A prolonged Central Committee session in March 1990 reaffirmed Hanoi's pursuit of partial economic reform designed to stabilize the market and attract foreign investment. But contrary to speculations about imminent political liberalization, Communist leaders decided not to significantly loosen one-party rule and condemned the revolutionary changes in Eastern Europe as a disaster for socialism engineered or exploited by "imperialist circles." Nonetheless, important leadership changes can be expected at the forthcoming party congress in early 1991. The aversion of old-guard Communists to any form of political experimentation could at this point be countered by a more pragmatic younger cadre seeking credibility, legitimacy, and economic growth at a time of decreasing East bloc assistance. But progress toward political pluralism will not be swift or smooth, for the up-and-coming Communist leaders are not preparing to surrender control or share power.

Afghanistan: Communism Besieged

The Communist victory in Afghanistan was accomplished in 1978 by a small civilian party who engineered a military coup.[6] In assessing government policies and public responses it is useful to distinguish between the Khalq programs under the Taraki-Amin regimes (1978-1979) and the Parcham programs implemented by the Karmal-Najib administrations (1979-1990). Following the 1978 coup, Kabul initiated a series of radical measures to transform Afghan society along socialist lines and to bring the countryside under stricter political control. The regime sought to break the existing structure of authority by replacing village headmen, tribal leaders, and religious figures with loyalists drawn from an expanding state bureaucracy. But a sparse organizational presence in the provinces and no significant ties with any tribal group handicapped the party. In the absence of a strong state structure and given the Khalq rejection of coalitions with non-Communists, the military became an indispensable instrument for pushing through and upholding the revolution. However, the use of coercion to implement government programs provoked armed resistance and led to major production shortfalls.

After the Soviet invasion in 1979, the Parcham version of socialism was launched to root out resistance and introduce some flexibility into government programs in order to pacify the populace. Moscow believed that the previous regime had proceeded too fast with its socialist agenda while its political base and social controls were undeveloped. By assuming direct control over the party, army, and government, the Soviet Union attempted to rescue the basically progressive regime from disintegration.

Vol. XXIV, No. 1 (January 1984): 28-36; and Ronald J. Cima "Vietnam in 1988: The Brink of Renewal," *Asian Survey* Vol. XXIX, No. 1 (January 1989): 64-72.

6. For useful reading on Afghan communism see Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Perspective* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1985) and *Afghanistan's Two Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1983).

The Soviet military force proved incapable of crushing the rebellion even though it had assumed control of major towns and communications networks. The Kremlin was unwilling to commit significantly larger forces for both diplomatic and economic reasons. Although possessing superior fire-power, the Communist forces failed to permanently extend their control, and Muslim insurgents operated freely in most of the countryside.[7] Unable to eradicate the resistance, Soviet troops sought to deprive the guerrillas of food supplies by way of "migratory genocide." Entire villages were levelled with the residents exterminated or expelled. Approximately 1.25 million Afghans (about 10 percent of the population) perished, nearly two million became internal refugees, and over 4.5 million sought refuge in Pakistan or Iran.[8]

In its political designs Moscow sought to modify the radicalism of the Amin regime and construct a broader united front by enticing non-Communists into the administration. Efforts were made to neutralize or co-opt tribal and religious leaders into the government. Various religious bodies were sponsored to entice the Muslim clergy, and offers were extended to exiled political leaders, including King Zahir Shah and numerous resistance chiefs, to join a national unity coalition. Kabul focused its attention on moderate opponents, hoping to split them from religious fundamentalists and establish a nominal multi-party system. In November 1987 four political parties were formed, including one for the peasantry and another for the "patriotic clergy," but they attracted little public support. The armed resistance continued to reject government overtures for collaboration, demanding a full withdrawal of Soviet troops and the dismantling of single party rule.

The Parchamis favored a more gradual socialization in an attempt to raise production and subdue opposition. Their non-capitalist development path envisioned some restrictions on the private sector and a slower evolution toward collective farming. In their mixed economy model, the state would control all major industries, finance, energy, and transportation. Private enterprise would be permitted in handicrafts, retailing, and services, while agriculture would be socialized incrementally, thus allowing for the existence of modest private farms. But with a shrinking territorial base, Kabul was left with little land to confiscate or collectivize, and faced more pressing concerns than agrarian reorganization.

The government encouraged private manufacturing in the cities to help supply the state with essential products and returned some businesses to former owners along with pledges to protect investments. The free market also continued to predominate in both rural and urban zones even though officials tried to regulate domestic commerce more effectively.

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7. Valuable information on the Afghan resistance can be found in Oliver Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 84-97; and Thomas J. Hammond, *Red Flag Over Afghanistan: The Communist Coup, The Soviet Invasion, and the Consequences* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 70.
8. A chronicle of Russian atrocities can be found in Jeri Laber and Barnett R. Rubin, *A Nation is Dying: Afghanistan Under the Soviets, 1979-1987* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1988); and Marek Sliwinski, "Afghanistan: Decimation of a People," *Orbis* Vol. 33, No. 1 (Winter 1989): 39-56.

The Afghan Communist party alienated wide sectors of the population because its policies undermined traditional religious, social, and economic life. Rejection of Marxism and opposition to foreign aggression were closely interconnected for the insurgent forces. However, the Afghan resistance (or Mujahideen) remained split between traditionalists (or moderates) and Islamicists (or fundamentalists). Armed units were formed according to ethnic and tribal loyalties as well as religious and ideological affiliations. Attempts to unite the divergent resistance groups proved extremely difficult, although coalitions eventually emerged among the major traditionalist and Islamicist parties. A tentative agreement between the two main coalitions was finally reached but guerrilla operations were not brought under any unified command. Plans for a Mujahideen-based provisional government were not easily realized because of lack of agreement over its composition, location, and program. During the Soviet pullout in 1989, a tentative interim government was formed with representatives from most of the rebel organizations, but it has remained highly fractious and largely ineffective.

Kabul's failure to eliminate the resistance led the Soviet Union to reconsider its military involvement. Moscow sought to profit diplomatically from its troop withdrawal by improving its relations with the United States, China, and the Islamic states. The USSR calculated that the Afghan regime could be preserved through massive injections of arms, coupled with a political offensive to dissipate international and domestic support for the Mujahideen. The Gorbachev leadership concluded that Afghanistan could be maintained as a neutral state even in the event of a diluted Communist administration. During and after the Soviet withdrawal, the Mujahideen scored several notable victories and applied increasing pressure on the capital and major provincial cities. However, it remains uncertain whether the Communist regime will actually collapse, as has been widely predicted in the West. In fact, its well-supplied armed forces may be able to hold key cities such as Kabul and Jalalabad indefinitely.

Kabul's long-term strategy is to wear down the resistance support base, restrict the Mujahideen's international arms supplies, and entice neutrals and sectors of the opposition into some form of coalition government, while moderating its socialist objectives for the near future. The success of such policies, particularly when confronting a deeply divided resistance movement and with virtually unlimited arms supplies from Moscow (at least for the time being), cannot be ruled out. On the other hand, with continuing restiveness in the armed forces and factional struggles in the defense and interior ministries, the possibility of a successful military coup cannot be discounted. Any new administration will probably contain a sizable military component which could seek a workable peace settlement at least with some of the resistance groups while further scaling down—though not fully discarding—its Communist agenda.

Ethiopia: Communism Defended

The Communist takeover in Ethiopia occurred in a 1974 coup orchestrated by a group of disaffected army officers led by Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, who styled themselves as a Marxist-Leninist vanguard known as the Derg.[9] According to Derg ideologists, in the absence of a Communist party, the Ethiopian army was the only institution capable of building a new social order. By 1986 the armed forces had been expanded from 45,000 to some 250,000 troops. Defense expenditure grew tenfold between 1974 and the mid-1980s to support the largest standing army in Africa. Absorbing nearly 35 percent of the national budget, the military build-up drained resources and manpower from productive activities and undermined the economy. The army became increasingly politicized as the Derg purged many traditionalist military officers whose dissatisfaction sparked several unsuccessful coup attempts. The regime also eliminated prominent officials of the previous government and brought all organizations under military control. Landlords and other "exploiters" in the Ethiopian countryside were disinherited, imprisoned, or executed.

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In 1981 the Derg renamed itself the provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia, which combined the roles of government, supreme military council, and party politburo. In September 1984 the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) was finally proclaimed and Mengistu was named secretary-general. The WPE permeated all government organs and mass organizations; in September 1987 the country was declared the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) to signal the creation of a Marxist-Leninist state.

Even though comprehensive central planning and full-scale collectivization were initially beyond the Derg's organizational capacity, the ruling party

9. For an insider's view of the Derg see Dawit Wolde Giorgis, *Red Tears: War, Famine, and Revolution in Ethiopia* (Trenton, New Jersey: Red Sea Press, 1989). Valuable background on the Ethiopian revolution can be found in John W. Harbeson, *The Ethiopian Transformation: The Quest for the Post-Imperial State* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988); and Christopher Clapham, *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 65-100.

established various bodies to supervise all major economic activities. The goal was to establish a "socialist property sector" and to destroy traditional patterns of authority and ownership. The state became the sole owner of all agricultural land; peasants obtained rights to use small tracts but were prohibited from hiring labor and renting or selling land. The government launched a major resettlement program to strengthen state control, depopulate rebel provinces, and sever farmers' attachment to the land. Peasants were transported to government-held areas where socialization could be initiated.

By 1988 up to one million farmers had been uprooted and about 100,000 peasants perished during the campaign.[10] The pace of collectivization remained restrained until the mass famine of 1984-1985 when the resettlement and depopulation campaigns facilitated an acceleration. In a more sustained effort to control the peasantry, break regional resistance, and encourage collective production, the authorities adopted a program of "villagization" in which dispersed homesteads were concentrated into government-controlled villages.[11] By 1989 about 33 percent of the populace had been officially collectivized into these units. Mengistu planned to "congregate" about 75 percent of the population, or 33 million peasants, into the new villages over the next decade.

Anti-Derg insurgency movements have sprung up throughout Ethiopia seeking greater regional self-determination and an abandonment of forced resettlement. Ironically, the strongest groups in Eritrea and Tigray also possess a Marxist-Leninist ideology.[12] Their grievance with Addis Ababa has focused on national autonomy and the methods rather than the goals of socialist construction. Mengistu has refused to negotiate with the rebels, underscoring the importance of state integration and central control in order to successfully build a socialist system. From 1978 onward, a series of major offensives were launched to destroy the guerrillas. Neither side has been able to gain an outright victory or permanently control large stretches of countryside. Tentative peace talks have been arranged on occasion but significant differences remain even in designing a durable ceasefire. Other separatist and regional insurgencies have also challenged the Derg, and various political groups including monarchists and liberals have formed combat units. But as in Afghanistan the formation of a coherent opposition front has proved unworkable because of diverse ethnic, religious, and political affiliations.

In order to prevent further catastrophic economic decline and compensate for likely cutbacks in East bloc military support, the Ethiopian regime has

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10. See Survival International, *Ethiopia's Bitter Medicine: Settling for Disaster, An Evaluation of the Ethiopian Government's Resettlement Programme* (London: Survival International, 1986); and Dr. Claude Malhuret, *Mass Deportation in Ethiopia* (December 1985), Médecins Sans Frontières, Confidential Report.

11. For valuable studies on villagization see Survival International, *For their Own Good . . . Ethiopia's Villagization Programme* (London: Survival International, 1988); and Jason W. Clay, Sandra Steingraber, and Peter Niggli, *The Spoils of Famine: Ethiopian Famine Policy and Peasant Agriculture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cultural Survival, 1988), 103-228.

12. For essential reading on the separatist movements see Paul Henze, *Rebels and Separatists in Ethiopia: Regional Resistance to a Marxist Regime* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1985).

undertaken several steps to entice foreign investment in specific industries. To obtain more substantial Western development aid and improve agricultural output, Addis Ababa will need to lift the burdensome restrictions on private investment and production. Even the Soviet Union has urged Mengistu to reintroduce some private commercial farms for export crops and provide greater state support for the private sector. The government has allowed some incentive schemes for peasant households in recent years, enabling farmers to raise incomes through sales on a partially free market. However, these steps have not signified the abandonment of rural collectivism.

Through massive injections of Soviet aid—in the proximity of $10 billion during the 1980s—the regime has managed to survive. But in the face of serious economic stagnation and limited Western interest, Mengistu will need to make some major political concessions to the insurgents and far-reaching land concessions to the peasantry if the government is to have any hope of boosting production and salvaging state integrity. Alternatively, continuing economic decline, shrinking official funds, persistent ethnic rebellions, mounting disaffection within the armed forces, and growing opposition even in the majority Amhara population could sooner or later dislodge the Mengistu clique, imperil the unity of the Ethiopian state, and dissolve the socialist experiment.

Reformist Prospects

These three case studies indicate that the disintegration of Communist regimes throughout the Third World cannot be considered either imminent or inevitable. Although all Communist states share some similar problems—such as stagnant productivity, technological retardation and widespread impoverishment—and most will face substantial cuts in East bloc aid and trade, their survival remains contingent upon diverse national variables. A great deal depends on the entrenchment and consolidation of party control mechanisms, the degree of state integration, the extent of regional armed conflicts, the reformist trends present or absent in the government leadership, the public's exposure to political and economic alternatives, and the opportunities available for various social strata to form independent pressure groups.

In the immediate future increasing diversity among Communist states will become evident, including among those countries that have been closely linked with Moscow, such as Vietnam, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and Cuba. Ruling parties may either perceive Soviet *perestroika*, or some of its elements, as a necessary endeavor (as Mongolia has demonstrated) or simply as inapplicable to their own national conditions (as Cuba has asserted). As each party-state assimilates or rejects various reformist measures, further crises, changes, and conflicts can be expected. The next few years may witness the emergence of numerous hybrids of state socialism and capitalism, and of Leninism and pluralism, as officials engage in diverse domestic experiments. Attempts to modernize and adapt to changing internal and external circumstances, com-

bined with an inability to manage growing socioeconomic problems, could also spark public protests and military coups, and could even presage a severe weakening of Communist controls in some developing countries.

In terms of ideology, Marxism-Leninism is being reformulated in much of the Communist world to account for unforeseen developments, such as the continuing successes of capitalism and the perpetual shortcomings of state socialism. But readjustment does not necessarily signify abandonment; some mix of ideology and pragmatism should continue to occupy a prominent role in determining government policies. Third World states may swing away from certain Leninist organizational precepts and adopt reformist elements without a full-scale crisis of faith in long-term Marxist prophecies. A future return to revolutionary fundamentals cannot be discounted either, especially if the reformist winds fail to steer the socialist ship into calmer waters.

Marxism-Leninism envisages the probability of reversals in historical development. To justify some restoration of political pluralism and private enterprise, ideologists can argue that Marx was correct in positing that socialism will only emerge once capitalism develops the productive forces and disintegrates from internal contradictions. Pronouncements by Soviet ministry spokesmen and debates in the influential Institute of World Economics and International Relations in Moscow have underlined the productive potential of capitalism in the Third World. But such admissions about the comparative advantage of capitalism in the developing world place socialist regimes in a difficult predicament: for example, how long should they tolerate capitalist expansion and how should they exploit the market to lay the foundations for socialism?

In Communist ideology almost any policy twist can be justified as a specific "national road to socialism." Even the introduction of major market elements can be depicted as a socialist innovation. Reformers in search of historical legitimation can posit Lenin's New Economic Policy in the early 1920s or the Comintern's united front approach in the 1930s as examples of necessary adjustment in a period of transition. Short-term compromises with non-socialist elements may be necessary to gain long-term advances for the revolution and avoid serious economic imbalances and political disruptions.

As indicated in the three case studies, revolutionary gradualism and reform do not guarantee a free range to political pluralism, although they may stimulate social pressures which officials will try to contain. According to Leninist explanations, open pluralism is redundant under real socialism. Political parties purportedly represent the interests of specific social classes, but since classes are in the process of dissolution with the creation of an egalitarian society, there is no need for separate political organizations. The Communist party and its subordinate bodies avowedly combine the interests of all "non-antagonistic" social sectors.

The reintroduction of capitalist elements will raise the question of whether separate political representation is admissible or whether all public interests can be contained within the existing system. It can be argued that the state's political controls will inevitably decline as it loosens its grip over irresistible

economic processes. But despite partial liberalization, Communist regimes are reluctant to permit a major role for rival parties which may seek to restore "bourgeois democracy," and may ultimately outcompete the party in national elections. Recent electoral developments in Nicaragua may strengthen this perception. Economic relaxation may in fact be followed by the reconsolidation of party control as witnessed recently in both China and Vietnam. The experiences of Eastern Europe could serve as a potent warning that unregulated political relaxation could have disastrous consequences for the party's preeminent role and indeed for the survival of Communist rule.

Various concessions can nevertheless be offered within the confines of the party-state; these are now commonly described as ingredients of "socialist pluralism." Some policies are more symbolic than substantive, such as the toning down of class struggle rhetoric, the co-optation of non-Communists into official institutions, a loosening of censorship, and the creation of ostensible consultancy councils. Afghanistan, for example, has pursued several such policies. Internal party changes are also feasible, with the elimination of some bureaucratic levels, a purge of conservative functionaries, and the removal of party cells from various institutions. Much depends upon the size of the party apparatus and whether it is still in the process of consolidating power or can afford to streamline its operations without losing overall control.

Entrenched Leninist regimes in China, North Korea, Vietnam, and elsewhere may afford to trim their repressive bureaucracies, whereas younger parties may feel more vulnerable to disintegration and loss of control. Some administrations may place greater emphasis on united fronts with non-Communist elements and tolerate nominal political pluralism, with partially free local or national elections. Non-Communists could even be given responsibility for certain spheres of the economy or culture, while the party retains command over the chief instruments of administration and coercion.

A period of political liberalization need not be permanent, however. The reformist process may be stalled by inertia or deliberately reversed. It may also create serious rifts and conflicts within the Communist leadership which could be exploited by either dogmatic or reformist forces. What the party permits can be outlawed again, particularly if reforms are not legalized and institutionalized. While the absence of a large entrenched bureaucracy in newly formed Leninist states may facilitate some liberalization, it can also prove less of an impediment if the regime decides to reverse the reforms.[13] Observers have pointed out that the relative weakness of state institutions in countries like Mozambique allows the Communist leadership to arbitrarily change its policies and reverse its course more rapidly than in more consolidated states such as China.

A severe backlash could also be launched by Communist leaders who feel that the state apparatus requires strengthening. The sprouting of political

13. For example, see Marina Ottaway, "Mozambique: From Symbolic Socialism to Symbolic Reform," *Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol. 26, No. 2 (1988): 211-26.

opposition or a surge in social unrest can be used as pretexts for revamping party control. The emergence of full pluralism and political competition will also remain hindered by the lack of democratic traditions and institutional anchors in many Third World countries. The overthrow of Communist rule could herald new military dictatorships or authoritarian rule based on religious or ethnic nationalism, rather than the dawn of democratic participation as has been the case in Eastern Europe.

In multi-ethnic and traditionally unstable states, such as Afghanistan and Ethiopia, Communist regimes face pressing nationality problems which may not be resolvable simply through military force. In order to avoid dismemberment during costly armed campaigns, the ruling party may find it expedient in the future to offer political compromises to opposition forces. Concessions to diverse ethnic, religious, and tribal groups could help pacify public opinion without sacrificing the goals of state integration and socialist construction. But political liberalization designed to gain legitimacy and tranquility paradoxically could aggravate conflicts between the government and various oppressed nationalities.

A major danger for reforming states is the release of uncontrollable political aspirations among disgruntled minorities, as is clearly the case throughout the Soviet Union. Although officials may calculate that concessions to cultural and economic autonomy can satisfy local aspirations, they must equally fear that compromises will energize demands for full self-determination. Such pressures may not be easily accommodated, and the regime could ultimately

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face two alternatives: either allow the contested region to drift away from the center and jeopardize the socialist program, or crack down on the liberation movement and endanger all reformist experiments. Either way the political future looks precarious for many ruling parties; instead of solving problems *perestroika* could simply create new ones.

As the case studies demonstrate, Third World Communists have often seized control of countries with poorly developed economic infrastructures. Radical socialization and the elimination of the private sector have exacerbated underproduction even though they have enhanced the party's political controls. To avoid economic catastrophe some regimes, including the Afghan Parchamis and Nicaraguan Sandinistas, proceeded more prudently in their economic programs by retaining a productive non-state sector and exploiting it to their advantage. Recent years have witnessed a growing realization among Communists that their countries may need to undergo a period of free enterprise

and technological modernization before socialism can acquire a solid foundation. The impressive economic results achieved by some developing capitalist states serve as potent reminders that state control may not offer the best solution to unleash "productive forces."

Leninist governments face major policy dilemmas in their search for higher production. Regions, such as North Korea and the northern part of Vietnam, which have proceeded much further in implementing state control over the economy, may find it difficult to restore capitalist forms of production and distribution because of bureaucratic obstruction and the absence of entrepreneurial initiative. On the other hand, regimes which out of choice or necessity have not fully disbanded the private sector, like Afghanistan, may fear a greater resurgence of political opposition if the economic reins are completely released. As a result, each regime will place differing emphases on the extent of capitalist restoration and the precise components of a mixed economy.

Communist parties are reluctant to surrender the economic "commanding heights," especially their control over large industries, energy, banking, and foreign trade. Nonetheless, they may still have room for maneuver in streamlining the command economy, loosening controls over private enterprise, and taking steps to attract Western investments. An opening to non-socialist countries, through the easing of foreign investment laws, may be deemed essential because of massive cutbacks in Soviet bloc aid and the need to modernize decrepit economies. Various domestic reforms can also be initiated to improve economic planning, decentralize management, introduce new technology, and create worker and peasant incentive schemes. Communist governments may extend the private sector to small traders, manufacturers, and farm households. But even here state agencies could continue to control credits and distribution networks while imposing high taxes and other restrictions.

Several regimes have reduced their emphasis on heavy industry as the engine of socialist construction and economic development. For example, in recent years Vietnam has scaled down investments in industry in favor of agriculture. Rice production has been boosted in the Mekong Delta through investments in irrigation technology, the granting of long-term tenancy rights to local farmers, and the liberalization of the domestic market. In a period of necessary reform the administration may increasingly turn to agriculture and smaller manufacturing industries to improve domestic supplies and raise export earnings. Earlier this year the Ethiopian regime announced that it would introduce elements of a mixed economy by providing farmers with legal ownership of land plots, tolerating local free markets, and allowing commercial companies to construct a wide range of small industries. Other Communist states may follow suit. Ruling parties may also stimulate rural production through incentive schemes for collective farmers, land and input concessions to small peasants, and the restoration of some commercial farms which can benefit the state. But liberalization will bring variable results for as long as a sustained rise in output depends upon regaining the confidence of the private sector, providing the necessary technical and financial inputs, and curtailing government interference.

An increasing number of Communist policymakers have criticized the premise of launching from "pre-capitalism" directly into socialism—a strategy which places too much burden on the new state. Instead, a prolonged spell of capitalist development and economic diversification may purportedly generate larger surpluses. Propaganda chiefs in Hanoi have criticized unnecessary haste in socialist construction and the neglect of "objective laws in social development." Party leaders have emphasized the need to make intensive use of all economic sectors to enhance production and growth, including the "private capitalist, petty-commodity, and subsistence sectors." But officials remain fearful of giving too much leeway to private production as this can limit the surplus expropriated by state agencies and retard the growth of socialist agriculture and industry. Reforming Communist states will attempt to encourage peasant and commercial output but maintain control or supervision over much of the exchange and investment process to prevent the development of untrammelled free markets. They will find it difficult to balance such conflicting interests without either presiding over a capitalist restoration or reimposing a more rigid command economy.

The Soviet Dimension

Soviet policies in the Third World have oscillated between radicalism and pragmatism depending upon the global correlation of forces, Soviet military capabilities, and the domestic condition of targeted countries.[14] The most recent expansionist wave took place during the Brezhnev period in the 1970s. Moscow took advantage of opportunities in states such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Angola to help install and consolidate allied Communist fronts. The Brezhnev leadership viewed national liberation movements and newly formed Communist regimes as important socialist allies in the struggle with Western imperialism. The "revolutionary wave" is believed to have subsided in the 1980s, although the struggle between the two antithetical systems, capitalism and socialism, still continues on different levels. Despite the Kremlin's traditional overt commitment to world revolution, it has used its military muscle sparingly, preferring to employ proxy forces to prop up vulnerable socialist states, such as the Cubans in Angola and Ethiopia, and the Vietnamese in Cambodia and Laos. At the same time, clients like Havana and Hanoi have upheld their own regional ambitions which sometimes deviated from Soviet international objectives.

Soviet foreign policy under Gorbachev remains in a state of flux. It has downplayed the role of Third World Communist regimes in spreading socialism or furthering the USSR's state interests. Public pronouncements no longer assume the inevitable victory of socialism or the imminent extinction of capitalism. Analysts concede that the creation of new markets and the

14. See Francis Fukuyama, "Patterns of Soviet Third World Policy," *Problems of Communism* Vol. 36, No. 5 (September-October 1987): 1-13. For a thorough study of Soviet foreign policy see Margot Light, *The Soviet Theory of International Relations* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988).

application of modern technology has actually rejuvenated capitalism and underscored the material weaknesses of Communist states. The socialist camp needs to adjust to such conditions, gain a respite, restructure, and improve its prospects for a future resurgence. This change of approach is due as much to the recognition of economic stagnation in the USSR as to the mounting burden of supporting Communist movements in developing nations. Even before Gorbachev's ascendancy, the Kremlin's capacity for involvement in the Third World was limited by its declining growth rates, the increasingly costly arms competition with the West, and the United States' resolve to forestall or reverse Communist takeovers. These obstacles created uncertainties about the importance of the developing world for Soviet policy.[15]

According to Soviet theorists, the world revolutionary process experiences "ebbs and flows," both internationally in the expansion of communism and internally in socialist construction. In the estimation of leading Soviet foreign

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policy analysts, the choice of socialist orientation in the developing world does not necessarily ensure the victory of socialism or exclude the possibility of a return to the capitalist path for variable periods of time. While some specialists maintain that socialism will undoubtedly undergo a future resurgence, "scientific" Marxist predictions about future sociopolitical developments have become increasingly rare.

The current worldwide ebb, which could last indefinitely, has necessitated some major Soviet policy readjustments. The USSR has eschewed expansionism and may be experiencing a prolonged period of contraction. Moscow continues to provide military assistance and concessionary long-term credits to its socialist allies, but it will cut back on some of these commitments, require the most indebted regimes to shoulder more of the burden, and avoid accruing any new financial obligations.[16] In order to reduce spending, improve its

15. For a useful Soviet discussion of these issues see "The USSR and the Third World," *International Affairs* (Moscow) (12 December 1988): 133-46. For an excellent study of the deideologization of Soviet foreign policy see Sylvia Woodby, *Gorbachev and the Decline of Ideology in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989).

16. Analyses of Soviet Third World policies under Gorbachev can be found in Robert S. Litwak and S. Neil Macfarlane, "Soviet Activism in the Third World," *Survival* Vol. XXIX, No. 1 (January-February 1987); and Harry Gelman, "The Soviet Union in the Less Developed World: A Retrospective Overview and Prognosis," in Andrzej Korbonski and Francis Fukuyama, eds., *The Soviet Union and the Third World: The Last Three Decades* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 273-303.

international standing, defuse regional conflicts, and stabilize Leninist regimes, the USSR has urged peace settlements and political compromises in Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, Cambodia, and other states embroiled in civil wars. However, Moscow seems unlikely to completely abandon its most strategically prized states and could again increase assistance if these countries are seriously threatened with imminent collapse.

Soviet theorists continue to voice misgivings about the economic performance and aid requirements of revolutionary states. Soviet spokesmen and academic experts at the Moscow-based Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System now depict the pursuit of heavy industrialization with Soviet assistance in much of the Third World as premature and irrational, given the absence of a broad proletarian class base, a rudimentary economic infrastructure, and the insufficient consolidation of party-state control. These ingredients are viewed as a recipe for economic disaster, social unrest, and political instability which would further discredit socialism and decrease its global influence. Paradoxically, Soviet advisors have played a moderating role among militant Third World regimes, such as Mengistu's Ethiopia and Khalqi Afghanistan, by urging compromises with "petty-bourgeois" sectors and counseling a more gradual transition toward socialism. Mistaken government policies have apparently prevented socialism from realizing its full potential; hence in Kremlin estimations, restructuring has become imperative for all Communist states. Current Soviet policy endorses political relaxation, economic decentralization, and the stimulation of market mechanisms to supplement a renovated state sector. According to Soviet pronouncements, revolutionary regimes may also need to increase their dependence on capitalist markets to obtain vital technology and development capital—thereby easing the burden on the "socialist community."

It will be instructive to observe what long-term impact Soviet experiences with economic restructuring and political liberalization will have on radical Third World states. The admitted failures of the Soviet economy and the likelihood of cutbacks in Soviet aid will of course continue to send shockwaves through the socialist camp. Although each regime will attempt to make political and economic adjustment to ensure survival and avoid dangerous destabilization, their responses to unfolding Soviet developments cannot be easily predicted. While some developing nations will seek to emulate and apply some of Moscow's economic or political measures, others will remain cautious and skeptical, fearing that socialism itself could be dismantled or overthrown if reforms are not strictly controlled. A premium has been set on minimizing expenditure and maintaining a sufficient degree of political stability, especially if this can be combined with successful renewal and rising productivity. But the direction and consequence of reform will not be uniform and will remain heavily dependent upon complex and fluid domestic conditions. The prospect of further crises is one of the few certainties during the uncharted zigzags of history so often cited by Marxist ideologists.