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## From the Introduction

# The Sovietization of Eastern Europe

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The sovietization of Eastern Europe involved the transplantation of institutions and methods developed in the USSR into the very different environments provided by the states of Eastern Europe after 1945. This volume examines these processes. Sovietization was shaped both by Soviet ideology and by deeper Russian cultural values and assumptions. Whereas modernization in the Russian Empire had been equated with westernization and western civilization, after 1917, the Bolsheviks equated modernization with sovietization, which was collectivist and anti-capitalist, based upon state intervention in the ordering of economic and social life as part of a messianic project of creating a new Soviet civilization.<sup>1</sup> The Soviet regime lasted over seventy years, reaching its apogee in the Brezhnev era (1964-1981). Throughout this period, the Soviet model underwent significant internal transformations, which reflected, in part, the changes in the wider world.

The term sovietization implies the creation of a specific Soviet system with its own institutional structures and practices, comprising economic, political, social and cultural sub-systems, characterized by particular means of system integration, and distinguished by particular methods of rule. As such, it can be analyzed in terms of its capacities and potentialities, its structural limitations, and the factors that might lead to its breakdown or failure.

Sovietization had a dual aspect, firstly, as part of the Soviet imperial project in Eastern Europe in the decades after 1945, and secondly, as part of a Soviet socialist strategy of modernization. These two aspects of the sovietization project were held in tension, which shaped the model's development and ultimate demise. The volume examines how this transference of ideas and practices was effected, and the way in which these ideas and practices were absorbed, adapted and resisted by the societies into which they were implanted. Sovietization involved a radical re-conceptualization of the past, the present and the future. It was related to a strategy of indoctrination, which aspired to make the official ideology an integral part of the life of the individual, through the transformation of all aspects of human experience and the fundamental refounding of cultural life. This is explored in terms of the transformation of the structures of power and authority within society, and, linked to it, a fundamental new conception of the way in which the economic life of the society, and its engagement with developing technology, could be transformed. The study of this transplantation process will seek to bring out how far the

cultures, traditions and practices of the various countries of Eastern Europe proved receptive or resistant.

Sovietization, as a term, has both an analytical dimension, which explains the nature of the inner workings of the Soviet system of rule, and a normative dimension, which carries either a positive or a negative evaluation. It was first used in the Soviet Union itself, as a term that carried very positive connotations regarding the establishment of a new superior system for the organizing of human affairs. However, it came to be widely used in a pejorative sense in the 1940s and 1950s by critics of Soviet rule over Eastern Europe. Thereafter, the term, both in the USSR and in the West, fell into disuse. Since 1989, its use has been revived by East European and western scholars, and, in this volume, we argue for its analytical value.

Soviet leaders used the term 'sovietization' (*sovietizatsia*) amongst themselves, as shown by Lenin's correspondence concerning the consolidation of control over the Transcaucasus and over the Baltic states in 1918-21.<sup>2</sup> It was rarely, if ever, used by these leaders in public, but it appeared in press articles and even in party and state documents. This is one instance in which there was a certain distinction between private and public discourse. As sovietization was often done by stealth, it was impolitic to speak of it too explicitly.

We have no well authenticated use by Stalin of the term sovietization. It has been asserted that in a speech to the Politburo on 19 August 1939, on the terms of the Nazi-Soviet pact, Stalin offered a survey of the provisions of the treaty that would establish Soviet control over the Baltic states and Eastern Poland, and extend the Soviet sphere of influence to Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary. In this speech he is purported to have discussed the possibility of establishing a Soviet regime in Germany in the event of her being defeated in war, and to have also speculated on the 'sovietization' of France. The contents of this speech were published in a French journal already in 1939. They were published in Russia in 1994. The document's authenticity is strongly contested by some specialists, and the probability is that it is a forgery.<sup>3</sup>

In reality the extension of the Soviet sphere of influence over Central and Eastern Europe after 1945 involved regulating inter-state relations, delimiting the borders of these states, determining their ethnic composition through expulsions and population transfers, fixing their constitutions, and deciding on the compositions of their governments. This served as the prelude to the sovietization of these countries. Sovietization involved the adaptation of the original model to the very distinctive circumstances of the individual countries of the region. Over time the model was further modified to take account of new and changing circumstances.

### **Communization or Sovietization?**

The first countries to be sovietized were those which had made up the former Russian Empire. After the October Revolution, sovietization was first imposed upon Russia itself, then upon Ukraine<sup>4</sup> and Byelorussia.<sup>5</sup> With the Bolshevik victory in the Civil War, it was extended over the White and nationalist controlled areas of Siberia, North Caucasus, and then into the Transcaucasus and Central Asia.<sup>6</sup> The sovietization of most of these regions was a concomitant of

their conquest by military force. The establishment of political control also involved breaking peasant and working class opposition.

In the 1920s, sovietization took a new form, and was accompanied by a policy of fostering non-Russian languages and cultures (Ukrainization, Byelorussianization) and indigenization (*korenizatsiya*), as part of a process of state and nation building, whereby traditions were invented and adapted. In Stalin's memorable phrase, the aim was to create policies 'national in form, socialist in content'. After 1929, these policies were modified with a new emphasis on Russification. It was also reflected in the exportation of the Revolution, and the sovietization of conquered territories – initially in 1939 over the Baltic republics<sup>7</sup> and eastern Poland,<sup>8</sup> and again, in 1945, with the incorporation of these territories, as well as Moldova and Ruthenia, within the USSR.

Sovietization in the USSR went through phases that are well-known: War Communism 1918-1921, the New Economic Policy 1921-1928, and the Command Administrative Economy from 1928/9 onwards. Each phase constituted a specific variant of the Soviet model, and was intimately connected with wider aspects of the unfolding strategies of the Bolshevik regime; its policies towards the peasantry, the working class, the intelligentsia; its policies towards the Russians and non-Russian peoples; and its policies towards women. Sovietization created new structures of government, and established new relationships between the state and these disparate social groups. It was crucially connected to the way in which identities were ascribed to different groups and social classes.

Sovietization was an all-embracing, transforming conception of politics. At the temporal level, it involved the adoption of a new calendar, punctuated by public rituals, and the creation of a particular notion of historical time. Spatially, sovietization was reflected in the renaming of towns, streets, schools, farms and factories, in the new architecture, monuments and sculptures. It was reflected in the remaking of the countryside, the remolding of the non-Russian regions, in the conquest of the remote, inaccessible regions of the USSR, including the Arctic.<sup>9</sup> Stalin's plan for the transformation of nature in the late 1940s reflected another aspect of the visionary aspiration of sovietization to reshape geographic space.

The sovietization of the public and the private sphere was reflected in the intensification of indoctrination, the creation of new behavioral patterns, new communication codes, which sought to instill new disciplinary norms and to nurture an affective relationship between the individual and the state, embodied by its leader.<sup>10</sup> The new Soviet civilization was informed by a strong utopian, revolutionary, iconoclastic impulse, which, in the 1930s, was subsumed by the priorities of political control, and by the state direction of all aspects of development.<sup>11</sup>

The early Soviet regime enforced a program of social leveling, the re-structuring of society, and the proletarianization of the party and state apparatus. Proletarianization was also reflected in manners, dress and habits of speech. After the Revolution, the cities were proletarianized, with the disappearance of the high-class shopping areas, the financial districts, and exclusive residential quarters. Industrial development combined a strategy of implanting proletarian

centers to ensure control of rural areas and national regions. Modernization involved the eradication of all that was conceived as being non-proletarian and non-socialist.

Sovietization was allied to the development of specific organizational principles, especially those embodied by the Party, in terms of democratic centralism. This was termed—at the time—as Bolshevization.<sup>12</sup> During the Stalin era, Bolshevik organizational principles were extended to all other institutions in the USSR.<sup>13</sup> In the 1920s, the communist parties in the Communist International were purged, re-organized and effectively Bolshevized.

At the outset, a distinction needs to be drawn between communization and sovietization. 'Communism' was always an on-going project, part of an ideological aspiration, many of whose utopian pretensions were modified or jettisoned. The Soviet system, in contrast, was constituted by concrete institutional structures and practices, established by the end of the 1920s, which proved extremely durable and which survived in a more or less modified form until 1985, although some of these structures and practices were adapted over time in order to cope with new tasks.

The political structures of this system were established early on, with the Communist Party occupying the central position within the one party state, buttressed by the state bureaucracy, the secret police and the military. The Party conceived of itself as an élitist, militant vanguard party. Its militarized conception of politics was shaped by the ideology of class warfare, and by the experience of the underground and of Civil War. In the mass organizations, such as the soviets, youth organizations acted as surrogates of the Party, whilst the trade unions, in Lenin's phrase, acted as 'transmission belts' which connected the political leadership with society. Soviet administrative practices were, in large measure, derived from military models which, in the 1920s, were already being criticized as primitive and at variance with the practices of the most advanced Western countries.<sup>14</sup>

Sovietization involved the politicization and ideologization of all aspects of life, which effectively negated politics as the free exchange of opinion, negotiation and the open articulation of demands.<sup>15</sup> The political sphere was monopolized by the party, and was neither constrained by any countervailing power nor checked by the rule of law. The dominance of the political regime severely limited the autonomy of the social, economic, and cultural sub-systems. The manipulative and coercive aspect of political power was highly pronounced, whilst the prevalence of systems of control and surveillance created opacity with regard to political and social processes.

The Stalinist system attempted to create a new culture, which encompassed the life of the individual in its diversity.<sup>16</sup> It aspired to the fundamental restructuring of society and culture, whereby class membership was ascribed by the regime, identities were remolded, and a particular Soviet conception of *kulturnost'*, which aimed at creating the new Soviet man and woman, was propagated.<sup>17</sup> Through the sovietization of the system of education (*obrazovanie*) and upbringing (*vospitanie*), the regime sought to restructure social consciousness, to inculcate socialist values, to foster Soviet patriotism, whilst subverting traditional thoughts and practices, in part through an unprecedented assault on organized religion.<sup>18</sup> The life experiences of people

were transformed; through the sovietization of the family, childhood, gender identities and relations,<sup>19</sup> through the transformation of workplace relations, recreation and leisure.

All fields of knowledge (textbooks, encyclopedias, dictionaries, manuals, maps) were restructured as part of the creation of a wholly new Soviet *weltanschauung*.<sup>20</sup> It was associated with the propagation of a 'consequentialist' conception of ethics and a new Soviet morality.<sup>21</sup> The regime sought to create its own language, its own concepts, its own value system, and its own discourses.<sup>22</sup> Stephen Kotkin coined the term 'speaking Bolshevik' to illustrate the extent to which the state achieved a remolding of mass consciousness and the internalization of the official value system in the 1930s.<sup>23</sup> But the official language could be subverted.<sup>24</sup>

Sovietization aimed at the transformation of mass culture; through education and censorship, and the development of artistic policies shaped by the ideals of 'socialist realism'. This represented a shift away from a narrowly conceived 'proletarian' conception of art of the early revolutionary era, and sought to establish something, more universal, more classical, and more related to the Russian realist cultural tradition.<sup>25</sup> Socialist realism encapsulated three basic principles: *narodnost* (the spirit of the people), *klassovost* (spirit of the class) and *partiinnost* (party mindedness).<sup>26</sup> In this, Stalin envisaged writers as 'engineers of humans' souls'. This also involved a commitment to the promotion of high culture, as well as to popular culture, with its sentimentalized, folkloric celebration of the people (*narod*) and their past.<sup>27</sup>

The closure of the public sphere in the Stalin era was associated with a profound change in political rhetoric, in a new language that defined the relations between the state and its subjects more rigidly. Stalin spoke of the Soviet state as a 'monolith' with every person acting as a cog (*vintik*) in a great machine,<sup>28</sup> exemplifying what Engels had characterized as 'barracks socialism' with its *étatisme*, regimentation, and uniformity. The Soviet model borrowed from traditional Russian practices, and drew inspiration from socialist ideas. The regime fostered a collective consciousness which aimed at creating a new *Homo Sovieticus*.<sup>29</sup>

In terms of economic organization, sovietization involved the socialization of the economy and the eradication of private property following the dissolution of the New Economic Policy in 1928/9. It combined the program of forced industrialization through successive Five-Year Plans, based upon state ownership and planning, which accorded priority to heavy industry. Through collectivization and de-kulakization, agriculture was restructured, and the private sector virtually abolished, although the small peasant plots and the collective farm (*kolkhoz*) market remained important to the economy. The labor market continued to operate to some extent, although labor conscription and severe labor laws were introduced during the Second World War. Money, notwithstanding the official ideology, which sought its abolition, remained a vital medium of exchange.

The power of the state was reinforced by the legal system, with its notion of class justice, and the criminalization of behavior based on the demarcation between those defined as the fiends and those defined as the enemies of the new socialist order. In areas such as Central Asia, with its Muslim population, the notion of crimes of daily life (*bytovye prestuplenia*), related to polygamy, child brides, *etc.*, was introduced. From 1930 onwards, the system of forced labor of the Gulag

became a central aspect of the economic system, and was used with the aim of re forging (*perekovka*) the mentalities and behavior of criminals and political offenders.

Under Soviet socialism, the state, which was supposed to wither away, became the dominant force, the instrument whereby socialism and communism was to be built. Socialism, which was to liberate the individual, severely circumscribed individual rights, imposing duties and obligations that counter-balanced the new 'right' and freedoms that were offered. The economic model introduced in 1929 was defined as 'socialist', but it allowed workers no control over the productive process. The system of industrial management was hierarchical, with the role of managers constrained by the needs to meet plan targets. The forms of labor participation that were allowed took the forms of 'initiatives' such as shock-work, *Stakhanovism*, and socialist emulation campaigns.<sup>30</sup>

Notwithstanding Soviet communism's autarkic aspirations, it also borrowed and adapted ideas, technologies and practices from the West. Already under Lenin, the Soviet regime embraced Taylorist methods of labor organization and Fordist methods of mass production.<sup>31</sup> Lenin summarized his technocratic image of modernization in a memorable phrase concerning the famous Goelro project: 'Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country'. Bolshevik enchantment with American civilization was summarized in Stalin's assertion that they aimed to combine 'American efficiency and Bolshevik sweep.'

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviet government signed contracts with companies such as Ford and International Harvester, for the building of western model of cars and tractors. Foreign planes were also built under patent. The USSR borrowed a wide diversity of technologies and production system from Germany, the USA and Japan.<sup>32</sup> Agricultural collectivization was partly inspired by N.M. Tulaikov's studies of modern agriculture in the USA.<sup>33</sup> Whole sectors of industry—metallurgy, oil, and rail transport—were based upon the adaptation of ideas from the West. The Moscow metro drew on the experience of the building of the London and Berlin undergrounds. The restructuring of Moscow was based upon the study of western urban models. In 1936, a commission, headed by Anastas Mikoyan, studied the development of retail networks and department stores in the USA to see what could be applied in the USSR.<sup>34</sup>

Soviet socialism aspired to become a new technological-based civilization.<sup>35</sup> The Soviet economic system demonstrated a formidable capacity for the mobilization of manpower and resources. Its modernization strategy aimed to catch up speedily and overtake the advanced capitalist countries. Projects were developed with the aim of creating what was bigger and better, for reasons of efficiency and prestige, and to demonstrate the superiority of the Soviet model. In industry large units, with large scale production volumes, dominated. The adverse side of this were the problems of 'gigantomania' and poor co-ordination.

In the field of military technology, the USSR was compelled to adapt itself, like all other states, to the needs and requirement of modern warfare; in terms of productive capacity, the development of new weapons system, and in the training of manpower. The primacy of defense considerations profoundly shaped industrial development, and created a dual economy, with the emergence of the closed cities and limited access regions.



In the field of science, the USSR sought to seize the lead in promoting the policy of the mass training of scientific cadres and the application of planning and direction to scientific research and development. It adopted science and technology from the capitalist world in the confident belief that socialism could ensure the fullest exploitation of their potentialities.

Marxism-Leninism, as an ideology, provided only limited guidelines as to what policies the Soviet government should pursue. The state's security priorities dictated in large measure the decision to follow the course of forced industrialization and agricultural collectivization. In the development of the Soviet state, the recourse to older more authoritarian and coercive methods of government, of control and regimentation, and of mass mobilization, profoundly shaped the way in which the model evolved.

The Soviet regime underwent significant changes under Stalin, through an extraordinary ritualization of politics, the sacralization of politics, which was reflected in the leader cult, the language of political communication, and the practices of denunciations and informing.<sup>36</sup> It was marked by a reliance on state repression, and a turn to more conservative social policies with regard to the family, divorce, abortion, and education.<sup>37</sup> The era of experimentation gave way to an era of uniformity and discipline, in which the fragile remnants of democratic practices were crushed, and a new emphasis was placed on social discipline and hierarchy. Soviet development was characterized by huge rural-urban migration, and by high levels of upward social mobility. Moshe Lewin famously characterized the paradoxical processes of the 'ruralization' of the towns, the 'peasantization' of the working class and the transfer of traditional attitudes into the new society.<sup>38</sup>

The Second World War provided a basis for rebuilding the regime's legitimacy on the basis of its military victory and its status as the leading communist world power.<sup>39</sup> Soviet patriotism was allied to the notion of Soviet power as the continuation and culmination of the progressive trends in Russian history.<sup>40</sup> The post-war years were less marked by the mass mobilization and political upheavals that had characterized the inter-war decades. They also saw the rise of official xenophobia, anti-westernism and anti-Semitism as devices deployed to control public moods and attitudes.

During the Stalin era, egalitarianism was repudiated and emphasis was placed on social hierarchy, on respectability, culture and civility.<sup>41</sup> Within this society, the distribution of power, status and wealth was largely determined by the ruling authorities. The social hierarchy was shaped by the official *nomenklatura*, and the provision of rewards, services and access to scarce goods and resources.<sup>42</sup> Status and honor were dispensed through titles, awards and prizes. Access to those with power was closely regulated, but the system of *blat*, of connections, favoritism and nepotism was an integral and pervasive part of the system.

Social control was maintained in other less subtle ways. The public discourse reflected the class ideology of the Party, and the intrusion of Marxism-Leninism into all public, intellectual and artistic spheres. The discourse reflected a preoccupation with both internal and external enemies. Social control was exercised through the Party, the youth organizations, the trade unions; through the system of committees set up in work places and in residential blocks;

through the system of internal passports and residence permit; through work books; as well as the more obvious system of police surveillance.

### **Sovietization and Modernity**

Stephen Kotkin coined the term 'Stalinist civilization' as a realization of the ideals of the eighteenth century Enlightenment in the USSR, with Stalin as a kind of enlightened despot, using state power to transform a recalcitrant, backward and primitive society into one that was modern, scientific and rational.<sup>43</sup>

The British philosopher Bertrand Russell, in *The Theory and Practice of Bolshevism*, published in 1920, announced the failure of the Bolshevik's experiment in Communism.<sup>44</sup> The communist project as an ideological goal, Russell believed, had already lost its energizing force, and he predicted that the regime would substitute the goal of attaining communism with the goal of the industrial transformation of the country and the creation of a powerful state. Russell also recognized a central duality within Bolshevism – its commitment to a certain conception of modernization, and its commitment to an ideological world view, which, in many ways, was unmodern, shaped by ideological zeal and intolerance of other world views, which was a denial of the Enlightenment commitment to rational discourse. It was, he asserted, a regime that had the capacity to produce its own Inquisition. This duality provides a key to understanding the metamorphosis of Leninism into Stalinism, which was shaped by the regime's internal logic and by the objective difficulties with which it was confronted.

How far the Soviet regime might be considered to be a modernizing regime is itself problematical. Alongside its economic, social and cultural achievements, the Soviet regime was, in many senses, profoundly anti-modern—the restriction of civil society, the impingement on any sense of citizenship, the impediments to free communications, the restriction on individual freedom and free expression.<sup>45</sup> These negative features of the Soviet model cannot be dismissed as part of a general equation of plus and minuses. There is a real sense in which these negative aspects seriously restricted development in all other spheres, and indicate how far the Soviet regime profoundly misunderstood the nature of modernity.

### **The Sovietization of Eastern Europe**

Whilst the Soviet leadership's attitude towards Eastern Europe predisposed them towards a policy of sovietization, the full implementation of the Soviet model in these countries was not inevitable. In 1945, Stalin considered the possibility of placing priority on the continuation of the wartime alliance with the USA and the UK. However, the tensions within the alliance and the growing distrust, undoubtedly heightened by Soviet measures to consolidate its power in the East European states, resulted in the adoption of a policy of full sovietization after 1947.

Stalin intended to turn Eastern Europe into a buffer zone that would guarantee Soviet security. From this zone, he intended to exact reparation payments for the war damage caused by the Germans. In Soviet propaganda, it was presented as the liberation of these countries from

Nazi tyranny. The sovietization process was intimately connected with the onset of the Cold War, the creation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and the partition of Germany.

Sovietization proceeded through distinct stages in most of the East European countries. From 1945 to 1947/8, the local Communist Parties ruled in alliance with other left of center and peasant parties. In this initial period, the government introduced reforms, particularly land redistribution, as well as limited nationalization of industry. From 1947/8 to 1953, it was the Stalinist model of sovietization that was enforced in its most intense way, through consolidation of the one party state, collectivization of agriculture, and the nationalization of industry and the rapid development of heavy industry.

After 1945, the USSR extended its control over Eastern Europe, as a border region and buffer zone. Control over the states of Eastern Europe was established by the Red Army, the security police, the governmental and party bodies of the USSR, and through their close links with the institutions of each individual country. Sovietization, however, was not solely a matter of military subjugation. The USSR withdrew the Red Army from Czechoslovakia in 1945 and Bulgaria in 1947. But the Red Army retained bases in East Germany, Poland, Romania and Hungary, ostensibly to maintain communication lines. Under the Warsaw Pact, the retention of Soviet bases in the East European states was purportedly on the basis of mutual agreement.

The first institutions to be sovietized were the armed forces and the security apparatus. The security agencies were modeled on those of the USSR: in Romania – the *Securitate*; in Bulgaria – the Committee of State Security; in Hungary – the State Protection Authority (*ÁVH*); in Poland – the State Security (*SB*); in Czechoslovakia – the State Security (*St.B*), and in the GDR – the *Stasi*.

Sovietization was carried through by cadres who were Moscow trained, who had spent long periods in exile in the USSR, and who were themselves thoroughly sovietized. The leaders of the post-war People's Democracies – Walter Ulbricht, Mátyás Rákosi, Josip Broz Tito, Enver Hoxha, Georgi Dimitrov, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Bolesław Bierut and Klement Gottwald represented a distinct generation of Marxist-Leninists, schooled in the Stalinist tradition and molded by the anti-fascist struggle. These states of the 'peoples' democracies' were viewed as following the Soviet model of development, albeit at a lower level. The rapid imposition of sovietization meant that the developments in the USSR were telescoped. The term sovietization came into general currency after 1945, to describe the process of transformation imposed on the Soviet occupied countries of Eastern and Central Europe.<sup>46</sup> It was a term used before the term 'totalitarianism' was widely applied to these states.

The imposition of the Soviet model transformed the intellectual and cultural life of the satellite states, wherein the USSR was seen as the embodiment of the future. It was a conception of modernity that was non-capitalist which seemingly offered the prospect of rapid advance. It was a model which, in 1945, was thought to have demonstrated its strength and viability through its defeat of Nazi Germany, and by the transformation of the USSR into a super-power, and the undisputed leader of the world communist movement. It was based upon a radical critique of western individualism, and posited the view of a modern, dynamic society based on collectivist principles. In this, communism was projected as the embodiment of a new form of politics, based

upon the realization of a conception of a new planned order of human society, in which those who wielded power were not politicians in the conventional sense, but were also socialist philosophers, who sought to combine the practicalities of the political management of society with the realization of the longer term philosophical goals of remolding society and the individual.

The social base of the new people's democracies varied considerably as between states. Czechoslovakia was the one country in Central and Eastern Europe where the establishment of socialism commanded broad public support. The wartime persecution of communists in Czechoslovakia provided a major legitimating force for the communist regime after 1945.<sup>47</sup> In Poland and Hungary, the support was small. In Yugoslavia and Albania, the generation of wartime partisans dominated the political life of both countries for the next 30 years. In Yugoslavia, the Tito government attempted the sovietization of the system in its full Stalinist variant early on, but, after the break with Stalin in 1948, it drew increasingly away from the Stalinist model, and adapted the Soviet model, primarily through its experiments in worker self-management. Albania, on account of its break with Yugoslavia, clung more stubbornly to the Stalinist model the longest. The people's democracies emulated the Soviet model, but also drew on the authoritarian methods of rule of the pre-communist era in their own countries, and adapted, in part, to the political cultures of their own countries.<sup>48</sup>

The internal developments within the peoples' democracies were shaped by the wider international context: the Soviet triumph over Nazi Germany, and the discrediting of pro-Nazi regimes and movements in Eastern Europe, which created an extraordinary imbalance in the domestic politics of these states. The imposition of sovietization in 1948-53 was associated with intensified repression, with the show trials of alleged enemies of the regimes in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, although not in Poland. Although the period of 'terror' and 'High Stalinism' in most East European countries was relatively short, its impact was immense.

By 1953, the countries of Eastern Europe had, to a large extent, been successfully sovietized. Thereafter, the transplantation of cultural and social practices to these countries became part of a more ambitious project to remake Eastern Europe in the image of the USSR. The re forging of Eastern Europe was conceived in terms of applying the Soviet model of modernization, and the application of specific Soviet notions of modernity, which were socialist and collectivist, and which accorded the state the central role as the agency of modernization. In Czechoslovakia, with its developed industrial culture, the imposition of the Soviet model of modernity encountered considerable difficulties, notwithstanding broad popular support for the communist government in 1948.

### **Sovietization and Empire**

The founding of the Soviet imperia also involved elements of self-sovietization by local communist élites, operating under Soviet tutelage. Sovietization as an imperial project, and as the negation and antithesis of western imperialism, was inseparable from the projection of Soviet civilization as being superior both in its capacities and in its moral claims. Sovietization, in terms

of relations between states, and between states and regions, should also be seen as part of an imperialistic conception, whereby a system of domination and subjugation was effected and rationalized, and whereby a subaltern identity was ascribed to the subjected peoples.<sup>49</sup> In the 1930s, official Soviet spokesmen vehemently denied that the relationship between the central authorities and the non-Russian republics was one of colonial exploitation.<sup>50</sup>

Soviet imperialism, including cultural imperialism, drew its inspiration, in part, from the experience of the Russian Empire, even though Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe purported to be based on socialist principles, and on the fraternal relations between socialist states.<sup>51</sup> The project advanced in the USSR in the 1920s, that the future new socialist states in Central and Eastern Europe would become republics within the USSR, was never attempted. This would have provoked an international outcry, and would have generated intense opposition within these states, and creating potentially unmanageable tensions within an enlarged USSR. Whilst the new people's democracies were granted nominal sovereignty, they were bound to the USSR by treaties of friendship and mutual co-operation.

In his Memoirs, Khrushchev refers explicitly to the 'sovietizing' in 1944-45 of the annexed Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, western Byelorussia and western Ukraine.<sup>52</sup> This re-established the frontiers of the former Russian Empire. The incorporation of the Baltic states was 'approved' by referenda. The annexation of the Byelorussian and Ukrainian territories was justified as part of projects of national unification.

Sovietization combined both 'hard' controls and 'soft' controls – the cultivation of identification with the dominant power, in terms of values and aspirations. In the emerging bipolar world of the Cold War, with its designated spheres of influence, the *Pax Americana* confronted the *Pax Sovietica*. Both the sovietization of Eastern Europe after 1945 and the Americanization of Western Europe involved significant differences in the way that, and the extent to which, economic and military hegemony was exercised, as well as through the importation of ideas, managerial methods, mass culture and consumption models as auxiliary methods of influence.<sup>53</sup>

The sovietization of Eastern Europe was effected with the help of Soviet advisers and specialists, who offered advice both of a technical and of a political kind. In some cases, it was more than simply advice: the Soviet Marshall K. Rokossowski became the Polish Minister of Defence. Sovietization required the adaptation of the model to local circumstances, in order to root the model in local traditions, values and practices. Notwithstanding these qualifications, the Soviet model aspired to great uniformity and homogeneity across cultures.

The Soviet model, in its Stalinist variant, was based upon an extensive model of development which drew upon a large supply of labor and material resources, and tended to be wasteful of these resources. It functioned at a lower level of efficiency than capitalist enterprises operating within a competitive market economy, in which consumer preference remained important. The Stalin model of industrialization showed a low regard for social costs in development, and little concern for environmental degradation. This system of forced development, with taut planning, reinforced the difficulties of resource management and low consumption levels in this shortage

economy. Consequently, the adaptation of the system to a pattern of more intensive development in the post-Stalin era incurred serious difficulties.

Soviet hegemonic rule over Eastern Europe was driven primarily by military, security, and ideological considerations. Economic motivations, in terms of gaining access to markets, raw material supplies or providing outlets for investment, did not figure strongly. Economically, it might be argued that the Soviet bloc was, for most of its existence, always a financial burden to the USSR, through subsidized defense expenditure and subsidized fuel and gas supplies. Soviet domination of Eastern Europe did not involve large-scale colonization by citizens of the USSR. Only in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was there such an influx of Russians, Ukrainians and other Soviet citizens.

The Empire was bound together institutionally, economically and culturally. The main binding force linking these countries together was provided by their ruling parties, and by their links at the very highest level with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. After the Yugoslav break with the USSR, the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau) was established to ensure that the other East European communist states and non-ruling communist parties in Western Europe were kept in line. The links between leaders and parties, and their relative ranking were a central component of this system of relations between states. Party congresses in the satellite states were periods of intense contact, with the attendance by fraternal delegates from the other bloc parties, with a special place of honor always reserved for the Soviet delegation. In periods of crisis, these contacts assumed central importance.

With sovietization, the East European economies were incorporated into an enlarged Soviet dominated economic space. Long-established trade links between these countries and other western countries were abruptly severed, and all foreign-owned assets were nationalized. The industrialization of many of the backward countries of Eastern Europe based upon the Soviet model involved the creation of heavy industry, an urbanized population with a large industrial working class, and the acculturation of a peasant population into urban and industrial life. Sovietization meant state ownership and planning, but in the East European countries, especially in Poland and Hungary, the private sector in agriculture, in manufacturing and the retail sector was tolerated to a much greater degree than in the USSR.

The countries of the Soviet bloc shared the same symbols and rituals; the most important events such as May Day, the October Revolution anniversary, and Victory Day were celebrated as part of a common experience. They shared the same revered texts, and looked to the same founding fathers. They shared a similar socialist iconography, as well as the same heroic conception of workers, women and soldiers. The renaming of towns, streets, squares, factories, and collective farms created the same image of the advancing socialist revolution, of states which followed a common destiny and were being drawn ever closer together. The transplantation of the bombastic architectural style of 'High Stalinism' to Eastern Europe, as with the Palace of Culture in Warsaw as a gift to the Poles, a copy of the Stalin towers in Moscow, illustrated a similar drive towards cultural integration.

### **Sovietization Domesticated**

With Stalin's death in 1953, this intense phase of sovietization was eased with the adoption of the 'New Course', political repression was relaxed, and the policy of forced industrial development moderated. By this time, the sovietization of the satellite states had been effectively completed. Thereafter, policies were adapted to domesticate the Soviet model, to adapt and adjust it to local conditions, as a way of building support. This allowed a certain diversity in the interpretation and application of the Soviet model.

The Soviet system of rule, as Terry Martin argues, combined both hard and soft controls.<sup>54</sup> War Communism relied on hard controls, the New Economic Policy (NEP) relied more on a system of social management, whilst the Command Economy of the Stalin era was heavily reliant on hard controls. De-Stalinization after 1953 marked a conscious shift from hard control to a system based upon the management of social and economic problems, but with hard controls as an auxiliary, always on call. In the East European satellites, de-Stalinization required an adaptation of the sovietization process, now tempered by a new emphasis on consumerism, and new self-sovietizing strategies.

Sovietization was advanced as the creation of a new 'civilization' that claimed universal relevance. The Soviet model shared, in exaggerated form, many of the assumptions regarding modernity that were held in the capitalist West in the post-war decades; the belief in the efficacy of social planning and of state intervention for promoting social improvement. The Soviet model was to be profoundly affected by economic and technological changes, and changes in patterns of welfare provision, consumption and leisure that were already being developed in the West.

Each of these regimes endeavoured to mobilize broad public support, behind a program of post-war reconstruction, and to offer the prospect for a more dynamic modernizing economy and society, in which the state would be the central vehicle of modernization, to which individual and group interests would be subordinated, and by which a new sense of social justice and fairness would be established. These regimes appealed to idealism, to the elevation of collective interests above individual interests, in which the party-state sought to present itself as an embodiment of the common good, and as an instrument that was able to resolve long-standing and deep-seated problems of national development.

### **Sovietization and Regime Legitimation**

The existence of the USSR as a 'guarantor' of Soviet power in Eastern Europe placed the domestic regimes in a position of duality, as they were caught between the demands of their own people, and the demands of their Soviet masters. This itself posed a danger to legitimization strategies, where regimes claimed to embody the interests of the nation and people, as a means of building popular allegiance and consensus. The paradox of these strategies of political mobilization was that their actual purpose was to secure the political de-mobilization of the population and their effective exclusion from the political sphere.

The new regimes in Eastern Europe, as indeed the USSR itself, sought to base themselves upon a new notion of 'legitimacy'. In the Weberian sense, these regimes did not attempt to base their claim to legitimacy upon 'tradition', 'rational-legal' authority, or upon 'charisma', although

each of these three elements was drawn upon. Instead, these regimes were 'self-legitimizing', basing their claims to legitimacy upon past, present and future achievements.<sup>55</sup> It was based upon a claim to a superior, scientific understanding of history. In this, they sought to construct legitimacy around the symbols, the trappings of communist power, in the conviction that, in time, the regimes would become more strongly rooted in society.

The question of legitimacy was related to other crucial aspects of the regime. The restriction of the public sphere through tight control of communication effectively destroyed public opinion, which requires the existence of alternative sources of information, and alternative sources of interpretation. Where these are absent there exist only public moods and public attitudes, which the communist regimes all showed a keen interest in tracking and manipulating, by playing on insecurities, and upon the themes of the internal and external enemy. Public attitudes varied from outright opposition to full support, with an immense range of complex responses in between, of compliance, conformity and resistance.<sup>56</sup>

The restriction of the public sphere encouraged a retreat into the private sphere, the life of the self, the family, friends and the *dacha*, whilst it eroded any sense of civic consciousness.<sup>57</sup> It reflected attempts to use the existing circumstances for personal advantage, a sense of powerlessness, and a resigned acceptance of the realities of the political sphere, albeit without any necessary willingness to accept the demands made upon them by the state, but to advance counter demands.<sup>58</sup>

The restriction of the public sphere had profound implications in the shaping of individual and group identities, with the regime ascribing roles for individuals and groups, and prescribing and proscribing attitudes, beliefs and behavior. The regime's insistence on its right to define the accepted conception of the present, and the vision of the future was also connected with the rewriting of public memory in accordance with the regime's conception of the past.

Sovietization involved not only the construction of notions of legitimacy, based upon past, present and future achievements, but also sought to forge affective relations between the people and the state and its leader. Within this system, great importance was assumed by the symbolism of power, the aura attached to institutions, personalities, past events, and to the ideology itself. Much of the authority of these regimes was bound up in this investment in symbolic capital, which underpinned the relations between the state and its subjects. The fragility of these processes of 'self-legitimation' became visible in moments of crisis. Sovietization was also seen as an alien imposition. In the East European countries, the attempt to equate sovietization with proletarianization was unsuccessful, with industrial workers often being the most vocal critics of the very regimes which claimed to rule in their name.

The successive crises in the Soviet bloc were associated with the failure of these regimes to control the public sphere. The protests in 1953 in East Germany and Czechoslovakia (Pilsen) were prompted by the changes inaugurated following Stalin's death. The 1956 Uprising in Hungary and the protests in Poland were influenced by Khrushchev's attack on Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress. The 1968 crisis in Czechoslovakia stemmed from attempts to carry through domestic reform. These crises were followed by efforts to 're-sovietize' or 'normalize' these



countries, through the closure of the public sphere.<sup>59</sup> Soviet military intervention on these occasions, served to de-legitimize these governments, and exposed the shallow nature of their claims to autonomy and sovereignty. The reliance on hard control compromised attempts to foster more subtle forms of soft control.

The attempt by the USSR to project a positive and benign image of itself encountered the strong historical antipathy towards the Russians, notably in Poland, Hungary and Romania. Its role as a guarantor of the frontiers of the Eastern European states and as an advocate of greater national homogeneity could not overcome its image as a hegemonic power and the sponsors of regimes that lacked the basis of popular sovereignty.

Here, sovietization involved an attempt to occupy the high moral ground. The Soviet victory was depicted as the triumph of Soviet civilization over Nazi barbarism, and the discredited governments of Eastern Europe that had been its allies. The Soviet war memorials that were erected across Eastern Europe were intended as tangible symbols of Soviet wartime sacrifices. This constructed a taboo against questioning the sovietization process or the benign role of the USSR in the transformation.<sup>60</sup> The constraints imposed by the Cold War, and of East-West rivalry, with the closing of the Iron Curtain imposed their own logic upon the official discourse.

The extent to which ordinary citizens could disengage from the demands of the state was limited. The state was the direct employer of the great majority of its citizens, including many who served in the police, the security forces, and the armed forces. In the GDR and Czechoslovakia, many people were required to act as informers on their fellow citizens. A high proportion of the adult population were party members, and a high percentage of young people and children belonged to youth and children's organizations. The educational system and the mass media were used to disseminate the regime's ideology.<sup>61</sup> With foreign travel severely restricted, the mass media closely controlled, and almost all external sources of information and opinion excluded, these were very much closed societies.

Whilst the public sphere was tightly regulated, the private sphere remained an area which remained, to some degree, isolated from outside regulation. There was always a tension between what the authorities desired and what the public expected. In the process of 'self-legitimization', the authorities were keen to demonstrate their ability to deliver, not only in terms of goods and services, but also in terms of symbolic capital that served to create a sense of public satisfaction, pride and well-being. At a basic level, there was the need for the authorities to demonstrate a basic competence in the provision of public, municipal services, as well as in dealing with the larger questions of domestic and international relations.

The conception of the public good advanced by the governments of the people's democracies was heavily colored by socialist ideology which informed all aspects of public policy. It reflected a specific approach to basic, existentialist questions. It elevated the collective above the individual, and highlighted the provision of public goods and services as opposed to private provision. It saw the goal of the good society as the full development of the individual within the framework of a socialist order. The value placed upon self-enrichment, property, and status based upon lifestyle was largely negative. A high value was placed upon self-improvement, and

the attainment of excellence in fields such as learning, the arts and sport. The notion of individual rights was heavily counter-balanced by the obligations laid upon socialist citizens to the party-state. The people's democracies, like the USSR, but to a less extreme extent, were characterized by the lack of pluralism, the weakness of civil society, and by the absence of countervailing forces to balance the power of a highly-centralized party-state apparatus. The gap between the protestations of the government, and the experience of ordinary citizens, and their perceptions of the motives and aims of their government, could be very great. 'Self-legitimation' was often perceived as a hypocritical mask that concealed the self-interest of those in power.

### **De-Stalinization and Adaptations of the Soviet Model**

Stalin's death in 1953 led to major modifications of the Soviet model as it had developed after 1928/9. Terror as a system of political control was abandoned, and the system of forced labor was wound down. With Khrushchev's 'Secret Speech' at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 the excesses of the 'cult of personality' were denounced, with the erasure of Stalin's name and the removal of his statues and images from public buildings and places. Khrushchev sought to cleanse the Soviet model of the excrescences of the 'cult of personality' and its criminal distortions. With de-Stalinization, the mature Soviet model emerged, whose operational codes and practices differed significantly from that of the original model in its phase of establishment. The relations between the party-state and society underwent significant changes, with a new emphasis on mediation through soft controls, inducements and strategies of incorporation. But the monopolistic structures of party-state rule and of economic management remained fundamentally unchanged.

Khrushchev's speech inaugurated the systematic dismantling of the Stalin-cult in the USSR and in the East European states. The political culture of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the GDR did not provide a propitious soil in which the notion of a leader cult could grow. The situation was different in Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria, where the substantial cults of Tito, Hoxha, and Dimitrov, and later, in the 1970s and 1980s in Romania, the cult of Ceaușescu, were central components of these political systems and their strategies of legitimation.<sup>62</sup>

The attack on Stalin dealt a major blow to the Soviet regime's credibility and moral authority. It hastened the internal division of the communist bloc, into polycentrism, with Moscow, Beijing and Belgrade as rival centers. But this allowed a new emphasis to be placed upon socialist legality and socialist humanism, and a limited revival of civil society, represented by the 'Thaw' in the arts. In place of the system of control, coercion and exhortation, new emphasis was placed upon material incentives and, with this, the development of a consumerist strategy. Khrushchev's prediction that the USSR would out-produce the USA in twenty years was the basis of the claim that communism would be established. A more managerialist, technocratic style of government emerged, reflected in the new generation of leaders, Kádár in Hungary, Gierek in Poland, Honecker in the GDR, and Zhivkov in Bulgaria.

The confident belief was that state ownership and planning provided the basis for a more fully-rounded policy of economic development, by shifting more resources into agriculture and

light industry, and by the development of the Soviet welfare state with the extension of its provisions to the collective farm workers. It was believed that this system could be adapted to allow the full development of new economic sectors, which reflected the changing patterns of industrial development to cope with the growing demand for mass consumer goods. Moreover, it was believed that this system would provide the underpinning of political stability, shifting from a system that relied on controls, coercion and ideological exhortation, to one that relied increasingly upon economic self-interest, and the benefits provided by the state.

In the 1960s, the Soviet model attempted to adjust itself to the modern world by incorporating western technologies and adapting to the consumer goods revolution through the supply of televisions sets, refrigerators, and more modern furniture. The signing of a contract with FIAT to build a giant car plant at Togliatti in 1961 for volume car production in the USSR marked an important turning point. The FIAT car, the *Zhiguli (Lada)*, stood in contrast to its simpler, more basic Soviet models such as the *Volga* and *Moskvich*, or the GDR's *Trabant*, and Czechoslovak's *Škoda*. Nevertheless, the transport priorities of the regime placed emphasis upon public rather than private provision for both ideological and economic reasons.

The Brezhnev era attained a new degree of development, with major urban conurbations boasting the achievements of modern technology, functioning public utilities, the provisions of shops, theatres, cinemas and entertainment centers. The urban landscape adopted an international style: as witnessed by the modern boulevard with skyscraper blocks of Moscow's Prospekt Kalinina (now Novy Arbat) in contrast to the post-war, heavy ornate buildings of Gorky Street (now Tverskaya), the Ostankino television tower built in 1967, the new suburban tower blocks, office blocks, hotels, and the new stations of the metro with their cleaner modern lines in contrast to the classic designs of socialist realism from the Stalin era. The increased presence of tourist and foreign students in centers such as Moscow imparted a new atmosphere to urban life. For foreign students from Third World countries, institutions such as the Patrice Lumumba University provided training for future cadres of sovietization.

Soviet consumer culture, despite attempts to develop advertising and market research, was plagued by low quality, lack of diversity, lack of innovation in design, and unresponsiveness to changing needs.<sup>63</sup> Soviet department stores and public catering in restaurants, cafes (such as the ubiquitous *stolovaya*) imparted a basic, utilitarian, functionalist character to consumption. The exclusion of western products, clothing – especially denim jeans and music, *etc.*, invested these rare goods with an exotic character, which could only be procured through personal contacts. The lack of diversity in the spheres of production and distribution was reflected in banal design, low quality, and standardization of mass products which reflected the sovereignty of the supplier rather than that of the consumer. This imparted a grey, monotonous quality to much of urban life. The communist regimes were also obliged to address important social changes, the gradual emergence of a new youth culture,<sup>64</sup> and the changing role of women in society.<sup>65</sup>

The adaptation of the Soviet model to the more flexible, more complex, multi-varied output of a modern economy was impeded by the rigidities in the centrally-planned economy. This prompted extensive debate. In the USSR, E.G. Liebermann promoted the ideas of the use of

computers to cope with the growing complexity. In Czechoslovakia, Ota Šik advanced the idea of combining elements of the market and the plan. In Hungary, the New Economic Mechanism, developed from the early 1960s onwards, represented the most ambitious attempt to introduce market reforms within the communist system.<sup>66</sup> The Council of Mutual Economic Development (COMECON) established in 1949, became the agency co-ordinating economic links between the countries of the Eastern bloc, encouraging a division of labor and specialization between states, reflecting their own traditions and expertise. *Škoda* cars from Czechoslovakia, *Ikarus* buses from Hungary, and Bulgarian wine. The communist regimes were obliged to address new questions: the development of consumer culture, the growth of the mass media, and the question of leisure.

These developments within the communist bloc prompted criticisms from more ideologically driven regimes, such as Communist China's denunciation of Hungarian 'goulash socialism'. In the West, however, it prompted debate as to the capacity of communist planned economies to catch up and overtake the West, and led some commentators to speculate as to whether communist and capitalist systems were not converging on a common model, shaped by the priorities that regulate the organization of all industrial societies.<sup>67</sup>

Sovietization in Eastern Europe saw the adaptation of many of the public policies developed in the USSR: full employment, and the drawing in of a larger proportion of the female population into public employment; the provision of public housing to cope with rapid urbanization; the development of the socialist welfare state: maternity rights; sickness benefits, pensions; the extension of educational provision via pre-school nurseries, primary and secondary schools, and the expansion of higher and technical education, aimed at increasing educational provisions especially for workers and peasants as part of an active policy of positive discrimination.

The subsidizing of housing, transport and foodstuffs, and the provision of basic necessities on a mass scale, reflected the priorities of state socialist paternalism. This precluded production of more exclusive, select products that were, nonetheless, disparagingly dismissed by the official ideology as the trappings of Western consumerism. Western capitalism's preoccupation with consumption, the commercialization of human relations, and the satisfaction of egotistical needs, was seen as a mark of its decadence, in contrast to the original, Spartan, egalitarian ideals of socialism.

The public provision of services was central to the strategy of 'self legitimization' of the people's democracies. Whilst the Soviet model was able to create a reasonably educated, well-housed, well-fed, healthy, labor force, the policies of social leveling, restrictions on wage differentials, the uniformity in the provision of social amenities, and the limited development of the consumer sector served to de-moralize and de-motivate workers.

East European societies were restructured on the model of the USSR. The large-property owning classes, in industry and agriculture, saw their property nationalized by the state. In time, the relative standing of the professional classes was eroded. Those classified as skilled manual workers tended to benefit, whilst routine clerical, white collar professions saw their position weakened. The higher administrative, managerial strata, including those in the armed forces, saw an increase in their status, their political influence and their economic privileges.

At the highest intellectual level, sovietization was reflected in the commandeering of science, through the academies and universities, and their effective subordination to a Soviet model, whereby the primacy of Soviet science was celebrated, and direct links were forged with Soviet research institutes and universities, whilst links with western centers of learning were severed or closely regulated. As in the USSR, the party occupied a central role in directing science and harnessing it to the socialist project. Whilst the physical sciences were accorded priority, the humanities and the social sciences tended to be neglected.

The sovietization of the educational process in schools, universities and institutes drew them close to the Soviet model.<sup>68</sup> The most significant trend was the incorporation of political education and military training as a required part of the curriculum. The sovietization of curricula and of textbooks reflected the new ideological line with regard to history, literature, and the social sciences, with a new emphasis on 'patriotic' themes, and the cultivation of collectivist values. The fostering of educational, cultural, tourist and sporting interchanges between the USSR and the other member states of the bloc were part of the process.

Alongside the role of the educational system in instilling political values into youth, note should also be made of the impact of the sovietization of the armed forces, and, with this, the key role of these bodies, as in the USSR, in instilling political and patriotic values into a generation of youth subject to conscription. The conspicuous role of the armed forces within the wider society, in sports, in mass displays, and as a focus of national pride, was a hallmark of these regimes. The tension between the armed forces as bearers of non-communist values from the past, and as institutions that were subject to political control and sovietization early on, by their subordination to the Soviet armed forces through the Warsaw Pact alliance, demonstrates the multi-layered process at which these influences operated.

Economic development was linked to urban development, and technological progress, encapsulated in the grandiose projects of industrialization, such as the new giant steel towns, based on Magnitogorsk, that were developed in Poland at Nowa Huta, and in the GDR at Eisenhüttenstadt. Magnitogorsk was modeled on Gary, Indiana; hence an American model of modernity was first sovietized in the USSR, and then exported to Eastern Europe. These two projects, based upon Soviet iron ore supplies, represented, in a very direct way, the integration of these economies into the Soviet economy. These prestige state projects, embodied the Soviet conception of modernity. These towns were envisaged as microcosms of the future socialist order and were intended to rival and surpass the equivalent steel towns of the capitalist West.

In terms of urban planning and development, the countries of the people's democracies borrowed from both the USSR and from the West.<sup>69</sup> The Soviet model itself adapted itself to international trends in architecture. In place of the communal apartments (*kommunalka*) of the Stalin era, were built the individual apartments of the Khrushchev era (later labeled as *khrushchoby*). House building from the 1960s was based upon high density complexes, of prefabricated concrete apartment units. Model housing estates, co-existed alongside the more typical cheap, utilitarian, grey housing suburban complexes, which stood in stark contrast to the grandeur of capitals such as Prague and Budapest.

The difficulties of transplanting Soviet models of industrial organization and technology to the countries of Eastern Europe which already possessed developed industrial cultures was pronounced. Alongside the plant director, the head of the trade union, and the secretary of the party cell, acted as two auxiliaries, who were intended to assist in promoting production. The focus on production, the creation of a sense of allegiance to the work-place, represented a new development, highlighted by the introduction of Soviet conceptions of 'Taylorism', 'norm setting' and the widespread use of wage norms based upon piece rates. These devices, which served to keep the labor force internally divided, were transplanted to Eastern Europe.<sup>70</sup>

In some areas of life, the model offered by the USSR was not well-suited for implantation in Eastern Europe. Where the Soviet model was deemed less sophisticated, the people's democracies sought to develop their own style and to innovate in ways that might be later introduced into the USSR. After the grim austerity of the post-war years, an increasing concern with design and style was in evidence in the socialist states.<sup>71</sup> The emergence of a burgeoning middle-class was reflected in a tendency towards a certain *embourgeoisement* of attitudes with regard to material culture and life-style.<sup>72</sup> Historically, East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary had a more sophisticated consumer culture and the socialist system was judged by its ability to meet the expectations of its people.<sup>73</sup>

The transplanted Soviet model was poorly attuned to the national sensitivities and political cultures of many of these states. In terms of cultural provision, the need to meet the expectations of a well-educated public with sophisticated tastes, posed the question of how strictly censorship could be applied. In film, TV and radio, and in books and the publishing medias generally, the operation of a restrictive censorship tended to alienate audiences.

The organization of many social, cultural and sporting activities around the work-place, common in many big capitalist companies, was widely used in the socialist states. Communist regimes allowed competitive sports, but restricted the commercial exploitation of sport, and laid more emphasis on mass participation, rather than on passive watching, but also sought to extract the maximum capital from international sporting success.<sup>74</sup> The work-place also increasingly became a focus of political activity as organized by the party and the trade unions.

Sovietization was not exclusively a one-way process. The Soviet model implanted in the satellite state acquired, in some cases, a life of its own. The most conspicuous success was the GDR, whose consumer culture and mass media was more sophisticated than those in the USSR, shaped in large measure by the need to compete with the FRG. In the GDR, socialist realism in art tended to reflect native German realist traditions. The pioneering in the GDR of the industrial combine modeled on Western corporations, as a way of achieving greater integration, and allowing a de-centralization of planning decisions, was adopted into the industrial system of the USSR in the 1970s as the combine (*obedinenie*).<sup>75</sup> The collectivized agricultural sector in Hungary was more efficient than its Soviet parent system.

## Aspects of Sovietization

In this volume, we explore various aspects of the sovietization processes. Tarik Amar studies the utilization of the concept of sovietization and its elaboration as part of a Soviet imperial project, and part of a Soviet civilizing mission in Eastern Europe.

The clash between Soviet conceptions of modernity and the more established models in the Eastern European countries was pronounced. Valentina Fava examines the specific case of the *Škoda* motor works in Czechoslovakia as a concrete illustration of what sovietization meant in terms of managerial methods, labor organization, the use of technology and planning methods in a key industrial enterprise.

The extension of Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe was reflected in the enormous imbalance in military and economic power between the USSR and its satellites. The Soviet Union's dominance of the Warsaw Pact was reflected in its monopolization of control on military technology and strategic planning. Matthias Uhl examines the case of the missile-ization of the Warsaw Pact forces from 1958 to 1965, which reflected the problem of maintaining control over the satellites whilst guaranteeing the primacy of Soviet strategic interests.

In the field of consumption the people's democracies were expected to develop more sophisticated provisions to meet the expectations of their peoples.<sup>76</sup> Marcello Anselmo explores the efforts to develop techniques of market research in the GDR, and the structural and ideological rigidities that constrained such initiatives. In the field of leisure, the people's democracies developed their own strategies independently of the Soviet model by drawing upon domestic traditions. This process is examined in David Crowley's study of the Polish film societies. Sybille Mohrmann analyzes the reception of Soviet films in East Germany in 1945 and explores the problems of meeting audience expectations, whilst satisfying the Soviet authorities' aspiration to instill correct ideological values and to impart a positive image of the USSR.

The implantation of Soviet style rituals in the people's democracies involved attempts to regulate the use of public space, to organize the lives of people and to remold public consciousness as part of a new system of regime legitimation. Roman Krakovsky examines the way the May Day parades in Czechoslovakia were developed as public rituals as a concrete manifestation of sovietization. Balázs Apor examines the spatial dimension of the cult of Mátyás Rákosi in Hungary, and the efforts made to link this with earlier cults in Hungarian history. Petr Roubal examines the Czechoslovak *Spartakiada* with its mass sporting displays, which, like the political rituals, symbolized the integration of the individual into the collective.

As part of the establishment of ideological control over the people's democracies, the cultivation of positive images of the USSR occupied a place of priority, as examined by Mohrmann. Jan C. Behrends explores the role performed in this field by the creation of friendship societies, such as the *League for Polish-Soviet Friendship*.

In the early phase of sovietization, the ideological struggle against religion was backed up with severe repression. The studies by Anca Maria Şincan and Mateja Režek of religious policy in Romania, and Slovenia and Yugoslavia illustrate the intensity of these anti-religious campaigns, and the forms of resistance that they encountered, and provide insight into how far the local

communist authorities drew lessons from the even more intensified assaults on religion in the USSR.

Sovietization involved the construction of new meta-narratives of national history in the East European countries, involving adaptation of the Soviet narrative that highlighted the 'progressive' trends in history, as part of a teleological vision that led to the triumph of communism. The studies by Árpád von Klimó, Maciej Górny and Péter Apor examine how far independent Marxist traditions in historiography survived in Hungary, East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia.