

Although the title of the book refers to poetry, the anthology opens with a prose item, an extract from the panegyric sermon of Clement in honour of Cyril and Methodius. As is well known, however, this sermon belongs properly to the Old Slavonic branch of Letters. Next follows demotic (folk) poetry, of which thirteen examples are given, three of them in prose. Then the poets begin to appear, starting with Gr. Parličev in the second half of the nineteenth century. One can only wonder what justification there is for such a leap over ten centuries with only demotic poetry in the interval. Evidently, for a thousand years Macedonian literature can have produced nothing worthy of inclusion in the anthology.

Included among the works of Gr. Parličev is an extract from his poem "Le Serdar". But this poem was composed in Greek and received an award at a poetry competition held in Athens; it belongs, therefore, to Greek literature, and is quite out of place in this anthology. Perhaps the editors were misled by the fact that Parličev was born in Achrida, a small town in what is today Yugoslavian Macedonia — hardly a sound justification when it is considered that as well as Parličev, two other writers included in the anthology, Rajko Zinzifov and Konstantin Miladinov, also regarded themselves as Bulgarians, wrote in the Bulgarian language — except when they wrote in Greek — and devoted their lives to the revival of the Bulgarian nation. They have absolutely no place in present collection.

The remaining and greater part of the anthology (pp. 87-232) contains works by contemporary poets. From the introductory notes we learn some useful and enlightening facts about the Macedonian language and its literature. The first book in the Macedonian language was printed in Yugoslavia in 1938 (p. 89). One of the creators of the Macedonian literary language is Bl. Koneski, born in 1929, who published his first book in 1945 (p. 99). The first Macedonian novel was published in 1953 (p. 111). The earliest evidence of the musical and poetical vigour of the fledgling Macedonian literary language is a collection printed at the end of the Second World War. (p. 119). I should also like to observe that R. Pavlovski, the most significant poet included in the anthology if the criterion of quantity is taken as indicative, was born only in 1937 (pp. 173-191).

With the omission of a considerable number of pages, the book might have been published as an anthology of contemporary poets of Yugoslavian Macedonia. As such it would rate as a most welcome contribution to letters, free of today's artificiality.

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Jerome M. Gillison, *British and Soviet Politics. A Study of Legitimacy and Convergence*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972.

I

It is risky but potentially fruitful to ask a historian to review a book by a political scientist, particularly when the theme is the comparative approach. Historians are likely to broaden the frame of reference and to alter the rules of the game, which is always a dirty trick. But who knows what the rules of comparative studies are? Let the occasion be used then not only for a scrutiny of Professor Gillison's book on British and Soviet politics, but also for venturing some basic reflections on the nature of comparison between different political «systems» (as a historian I prefer the more inclusive term «policy») in the present state of world affairs.

It may be best if I put my cards on the table at the outset in order to establish the framework within which to judge Professor Gillison's book and others like it. All observers will agree, I trust, that comparison — and invidious comparison prompted by a pervasive craving

for both equality and security — is a commonplace in our world. Whether as tourists, scholars, journalists, or power politicians, Americans look abroad: How is the United States doing in world affairs? Citizens of other Countries compare themselves, for better or worse, with the US as well as with each other. Certain themes stand out in such comparison: Soviet development since 1917, Japanese economic growth, the reemergence of China, the self-assertion of Israel. How has it been done? Many of the «developing» countries have not been catching up to the global pacesetters despite all efforts to overcome the gap. Why? The search for answers invites and reinforces comparison: what do some politics have which others lack? Developmental studies, like foreign area studies, are by their very nature comparative. Comparative studies, in short, are crucial in a world searching for greater equality and forced willy-nilly to cooperate in this as in other basic respects.

Let me make a second and equally important point: Comparisons of this kind inevitably invite summary assessments. Examining the success or failure of large human aggregates, of governments, of polities, of social, economic, and political «systems», or of cultures, means taking into account every factor — or at least every known factor — contributing to the divergent political orientations or economic growth rates which we observe. In other words, the kind of comparison which our present world condition invites as a commonplace of thoughtful observation cannot but be holistic. It must be all-inclusive, even when we are concerned only with partial manifestations like political «systems» or GRN curves. For in the depths of our minds we know that the partial aspects we select for careful study in separate academic disciplines are set into a vast interlocking network of conditioning factors. Effective, i.e., meaningful, comparison is impossible without some recognition of that crucial fact. Every effort at drawing comparisons must therefore aim at grasping, at least in outline, the totality of factors involved.

In the same breath we should concede, however, that by this rule precise dynamic comparison is over our heads: we know all too little about the social, political, or cultural factors and their complex interaction which account for the evolution of nations, polities, or cultures. Every year new perspectives into social and cultural dynamics are thrown open. At the moment, for instance, historical demographers are exploring a vital set of factors centered on the family, an aspect hitherto unsuspected as a significant agent of «development». Yet the recognition of the unmanageable hugeness and complexity of the task cannot — and should not — stop the effort. The age of the global confluence requires it for obvious political reasons and as an intellectual challenge as well. The only question is whether to put the comparison into the hands of the ignorant or of the more knowledgeable members of the community (there can be no experts on the subject). Even among the savants, it should be understood that effective comparison, no matter how necessary, will for a long time baffle even the wisest. For that reason the comparative approach remains an art; it eludes scientific precision.

Yet even as a species of art, comparative studies require a commonsense understanding of the major methodological problems involved. Unfortunately, however, these problems have been but poorly illuminated; no widespread agreement exists on how to cope with them. The field has been monopolized, to a large extent, by social and political scientists; historians have as yet made little systematic contribution. As a result, some fundamentals have been completely left out of sight.

A historian trained in old-fashioned political history, for instance, is constantly nonplused by the almost total omission of the hard facts of power politics from major comparative studies undertaken by social scientists. In the United States and wherever else American political and social science outlooks prevail, comparative studies are guided by liberal and Marxist sociological perspectives. Yet both liberalism and Marxism suffer from a signal lacuna

in regard to the social and cultural effects of political competition between states and nations. Both assume that the source of socio-political change lies *within* the polities studied, in the group pressures of a pluralist society or in class war, or in the inner structural and organizational pressures and necessities of social or political institutions, or (in the case of psychological studies) in the inward mechanisms of the individual psyche. The forces of change, in other words, are discovered within the «system»-however «systems» are defined (and always too narrowly).

What is left out in this approach is the other, and sometimes more important, half of the story: the competition and interaction between «systems», above all between the polities in the European framework (if we think of western development into the 20th century) and subsequently in the global state system. The effects of this power-oriented interaction can be observed over a wide spectrum of phenomena ranging from forms of government and political «systems» to sex attitudes and family structures, in ways frequently not yet studied. It was war, the threat of collective extinction, foreign invasion, or some other form of external pressure, that left their marks on every facet of human existence. We cannot overstress the fact—and it is one totally obscured in both liberal and Marxist ideology—that in the last and most important four centuries *western culture has been shaped, historically, within nation states organized in response to a murderously intense and incessant power challenge originating from without*. The only «system» within which we can adequately explain whatever facet of past European achievement we pick for close comparative study is the all-inclusive European state system, right into the 20th century.

In that «system» human and non-human factors interacted. Among the latter we note not only the entire human capital of western and central Europe, but also plain chance, the accidental or premature death of a ruler, or the necessities of the balance of power within the entire framework. War or aggression—to cite but one crucial factor in the larger interaction—is not, as the run of liberals, Marxists, and Freudians will have it, the eruption of internal pressures into the social surroundings, but a matter of challenge and response between men, and between groups of men in societies and polities. Internal and external pressures interact in a constant dialectic of give and take, offensive and defensive, that can be understood only by careful historical examination within the complete framework. Anyone trying to explain, as the sociologist Barrington Moore has done, the rise of modern democracy and dictatorship without taking into account the constant and bitter pressure of power politics in the European and world context, offers both faulty analysis and untenable conclusions, no matter how learned or subtle the argument. Yet it is not only the sociologists who are at fault. Political scientists, who ought to know better, fall into the same ideological trap.

II

Take for instance the well-known book by Brzezinski and Huntington, *Political Power: USA/USSR* (1963), which obviously inspired Gillison's work. These authors offer a comparison of the performance of the two Super Powers in their rivalry by analysing the internal workings of their respective political systems. They ask three major questions: What are the principal similarities and differences between the Soviet and American political systems? What are the strengths and weakness of each? Are the two systems becoming more alike or less so? These questions lead up to a fourth and even more crucial one: Which system provides an ordering of power more adequate to cope with the challenges of the age? Yet when we ask what the challenges of the age are, the authors introduce us to four aspects, all internal to the respective «systems»: the relation between political ideas and politics; the interaction between the political system and the society of which it is a part; the character of the system's leader-

ship; and the relationship of values and ideologies to the process of policy-making. From their detailed and knowledgeable analysis they conclude in their summary on the strengths and weakness of the two systems that «the Soviet political system was created to serve as an instrument of communist rule and reform. The American political system was created to provide a loose government framework for American society». In other words, their answer to the question of how each system meets the challenge of the age is that each is designed to suit domestic requirements: the preservation of Communist rule or the promotion of the American high standard of living. It is like the proverbial comparison between apples and oranges; there are similarities and differences, yet the latter predominate. Comparison merely accentuates the contrasts, no common denominators for comparison having emerged.

The authors' emphasis on the internal workings of the two systems also prevails when they examine the universality of Soviet ideology: «Soviet ideology, pointing to certain allegedly fundamental laws of historical change, asserts that the Soviet Union represents the highest form of social organization ever achieved by man and is thus not only in keeping with the laws of history but in its forefront. It thus justifies the power of the elite and the existing system». There is no recognition here of the fact that Marxism-Leninism is a world force designed to compete with the universality of western «capitalism». It is typical, incidentally, of the inherent uncomparative bias of the authors that they never mention the identical presumption inherent in the dominant American ideology (they avoid the term «American ideology», commonly substituting the more refined euphemism «American political beliefs»). In short, the American perspective is written over the entire work, which may seem less an exercise in comparison than in intellectual imperialism, annexing Soviet realities to the American value system. True comparison between two «systems», one might stipulate as a basic rule, exists only when the spokesmen for both agree to the form and the conclusions of the analysis; in other words, when they recognize the existence of common denominators. Anybody familiar with Soviet thinking will recognize at once how unacceptable Brzezinski's and Huntington's method is for even the least militant Soviet reader. *

The main point, however, is the authors' preoccupation with each «system's» internal objectives and operations. By the criteria set forth in this essay, their approach would seem to preclude any meaningful comparison. They never consider the full range of factors in response to which these «systems» were evolved and continue to develop; they do not compare the most essential aspects of their subjects. Considering how crucial the relations are between the two Super Powers, a faulty methodology of comparison can have serious consequences.

What then should be the theoretical framework and the landmarks of more effective comparison between the political power of the United States and the Soviet Union? First of all, a historian is bound to insist that the proper contexts include full historical depth. His insistence on inclusiveness applies not only to contemporaneous factors but to time as well; the past is forever part of present political reality. The comparative assessment even of current phenomena, therefore, calls for some comparison of the underlying historical experience as well. For lack of space this can be demonstrated here only by a mere outline.

American historical experience, we should say (using by necessity rather general terminology), stems from British historical experience which, up to the development of rocket weapons was unique among the European powers for its insular security and for the early development of democratic institutions and sense of public responsibility to which such security lent itself. Starting in North America with the self-discipline of puritanism and subsequently the optimist rationalism of the 18th century; untrammled by a central authority on a continent virtually empty to their penetration and in external relations coping, for the most part, merely with the nonpolitical adversity of the frontier; more collectivists than individua-

lists and more cooperative than competitive among themselves, and ruthless in their superiority toward Indians or Africans who could not match their power skills; having settled a vast territory with only one major experience of war (the Civil War); Americans emerged during the First World War as an exceedingly wealthy nation and one increasingly powerful in the world at large as a result of no more collective effort than leaving each other largely to their own devices. As Brzezinski and Huntington rightly say, the American government was no more than a loose framework for American society, i.e., for collective purposes evolved by consensus.

The character of American society, we might elaborate, has been determined by a highly permissive national environment under a historically unique freedom from external pressure. Under these conditions, spontaneity was trump. Collective power and individual freedom combined in the rise of American global preeminence which attained its peak in the aftermath of World War Two: the United States assumed the quality of a universal model for human development everywhere, changing and subverting all other cultures, challenging or denying their right to cultural self-determination. The subversive power of the American model is commonly excluded from the comparisons of the political scientists, although it is one of the most potent forces in the invidious comparisons of power politics. Quite apart from American armaments the American model and, with it, the American ideology are a profound threat to the Soviet regime, which is reduced if not discredited by it. How many Americans, by contrast, follow the Soviet model for their open or hidden aspirations?

What in this necessarily foreshortened comparison stands out as the heart of the Russian historical experience is something very different: an excruciating adversity of both nature and the human environment, a profound insecurity of individual and collective existence. The Russian state reached its modern prototype form in the age of Peter the Great. He created what historians have called a «service state», i.e., a state which survived only by drawing all its subjects — subjects not citizens! — into unconditional service to itself. As a result, the Russian Empire was a polity deeply divided, the autocrat ruling by force and continually building up a popular undercurrent of anarchism and irresponsibility, always afraid of his own subjects as well as of more powerful neighbors in the European state system. Twice in the 20th century (not to mention earlier ages) the Russian polity was threatened to its jugular, in 1917/18 and again in 1941/42. Until the development of ICBM's the Russian state was the most vulnerable of the Great Powers in the European state system. It was the most vulnerable culturally as well. Backwardness hung as a bane over its development ever since the Tatar invasion, creating a necessity of imitation, of bending Russian pride to alien models, calling forth a sense of inferiority and xenophobia sometimes converted into its opposite: a burning desire for superiority and pan-humanism.

The Russian state was designed to cope with these basic disabilities; it was built from the top down to meet, hand to mouth, the ever recurrent emergencies and humiliations, with never enough time or money to explain itself honestly to its uncomprehending subjects, forcing them constantly into an imported mold of citizenship copied from western models and thereby reducing their self-respect and resourcefulness still further. Like its predecessors, the present political «system» was not created as an instrument of preserving the rule of those in power (although that necessarily was part of the larger effort), but as an emergency improvisation to prevent the annihilation of Russian sovereignty and to enhance Russia's external security as a precondition for the eventual growth of individual freedom. These improvisations (whether of Peter's service state or Stalin's first Five Year Plan and forced collectivization) had to utilize perforce an uncomprehending, basically illiterate, and sullen population sometimes driven to fierce uprisings. To this day the peoples of Russia have never experienced the boons

of participatory citizenship or democratic consensus. Granting them the spontaneity of the American experience would mean blowing apart the Russian (or Soviet) polity. What is needed, therefore, is «consciousness», i.e., the deliberate recasting of human motivation to suit the needs of the state as the sole guarantor of collective — and therefore also individual — survival and material improvement.

These deep-seated collective experiences, both American and Russian, still adhere to present political reality: no comparison of the two «systems» is valid which does not allow for their persistence. No comparison of political power, furthermore, is valid unless it proceeds from an investigation of how each polity meets the power challenge posed by their relationship in the common framework of power competition. For both the US and the USSR the common framework now is the global world organized in a global state system, with a global economy and a growing network of universals ranging from coca (or pepsi)-cola to science, technology, and human aspiration in general. The nature of that competition is all-inclusive; no aspect of life anywhere in the world is untouched by it. Its essence is the struggle for security from external attack and alien domination, direct and indirect. At its heart lies political and, even more important, cultural sovereignty: having one's own way, being able to stand up against all foreign invasions whether of armies, ideologies, or ways of life, with the help of whatever natural protection and human resources are available. The greatest security — and both the United States and the Soviet Union have their maximum foreign policy goals envisaging that ultimate bliss — lies in universalizing one's rule or the sway of one's way of life or form of government over the entire outermost framework, the global state system. In this endeavor offensive and defensive go hand in hand, using any means of one-upmanship. In terms of pride, there can be no disarmament.

How in these grand perspectives of the emerging global state system from 1917 to 1960, does American and Soviet power compare? The United States, we might say, achieved its preeminence as the First Super Power essentially through a *laissez-faire* policy. Out of the self-propelled ambition of its citizens left largely to their own devices; out of the basic spiritual and philosophical values inherited from English parentage and the Enlightenment; out of a uniquely sheltered sanctuary; it rose to universal significance in terms of the standard of living, industrial efficiency, a widespread sense of freedom. Its power resources were, and to a large extent still are (comparatively speaking), the skills of voluntary social cooperation and citizenship, a basic loyalty to certain fundamental instruments of government like the Constitution or a work ethic glorying in attention to detail. Wipe out the physical assets and the top leadership, and, as Herman Kahn has argued, you could reconstitute the country in short order from the hinterland and from the ranks. Where but in the United States would the run of Americans wish to live? Where else did the upwardly mobile people around the world tend to drift in such large numbers? In all invidious comparisons the United States emerged triumphantly victorious. With such superb resources of equipment and attitudes (including a common set of political beliefs — or ideology — which required little deliberate indoctrination for its popular acceptance), it took rather little additional effort to mobilize the country for war or for otherwise meeting the power competition of global politics. Under the ordinary circumstances of peace, the essence of American power was fielded with a minimum of government effort (it still is, though to a lesser degree). To this day, at any rate, the challenge of global politics has not caused any basic institutional changes in the American polity, though one can see evidence of readjustment in the emergence of powerful agencies alien to past American experience: the F.B.I., the product of the red scare after World War I, compulsory military service, the rise of the military-industrial complex, the C.I.A., products of the second world war; the growing preponderance of the Executive branch of the government, resulting

from the Cold War and the Vietnam intervention. Yet whatever the drift of change, the basic fact still is that Americans manage to combine an unusually large degree of individual freedom with a collective preeminence in world affairs.

How in this competition has Russia and the Soviet Union fared? Very badly, by comparison, and yet remarkably well, all told. In 1917/18 Russia was on the verge of being wiped out as a political entity. In the summer and early fall German troops roamed at will through southern Russia up to the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea; German bankers and businessmen had their plans ready for taking control of central Russia, with the support of the generals and the politicians. What saved Russia were not the Bolsheviks, though they played a part, but the armies of France, England, and the United States, which (through no marked effort on the part of Russians) defeated Germany on the western front. The Soviet regime can only be understood as a desperate effort to mobilize the human and natural resources of the Russian Empire for the sake of preventing a recurrence of that supreme danger. Lenin supplied the essential blueprint, Stalin the brutal application. Private property certainly was not allowed to stand in the way of that ruthless mobilization. A single will was to pervade the country; all inhabitants were drawn again into an obligatory service obligation, their wills made pliant by mass terror. Everything had to be sacrificed for the sake of the political kingdom and the most rapid, helter-skelter industrialization. For Stalin, as for Lenin, this was a time of final solutions: both Russia and Marxist socialism were mortally threatened by the western (or «capitalist») powers. The Bolsheviks did not foresee the Nazi attack of 1941; yet it fitted perfectly into their vision of the nature of the age; they had to take their precautions. Stalin's simplistic boast of 1946 that Soviet Communism had passed the supreme test was essentially justified: it had carried the Russian polity through the most destructive and decisive war in all its history.

Yet even then basic weaknesses persisted. For a time, Soviet Russia did not possess the atomic bomb. Moreover, it was burdened by the subjugation of millions of hostile peoples in eastern Europe; the loyalty of its own subjects was uncertain, their work habits unsteady. With the development of atomic weapons and ICBM's, and especially with the launching of *sputnik I*, some of Russia's basic disabilities in the power struggle were overcome. Indeed, one might venture to say, from the mid-fifties Soviet Russia had permanently escaped the weakness which had haunted the country for centuries. Its atomic weapons ruled out a repetition of the Swedish and Polish wars, Napoleon's invasion, and the disasters of the first and second world wars. Henceforth, Soviet Russia, «The Other Super Power», was as safe of unsafe as its chief rival, the United States.

Yet, if the basic weakness had been overcome, other debilities remained. The Soviet space effort, one telling index of non-military competitiveness, has lagged behind the American counterpart; the same applies to computer technology and its application. More important: the loyalty and work ethic of the Soviet population still leaves much to be desired; nor does the standard of living stand comparison with that of western Europe, Japan, or the United States. Such successes as we find—and they are very respectable indeed—have been achieved by large doses of compulsion and repression. The enforced common ideology of Marxism-Leninism imparts, for the bulk of the population, a false and artificial consciousness; it is not a set of internalized common political beliefs like the ideology of American («capitalist») democracy. The individual feels cramped; alienation and lethargy permeate Soviet society even more than «capitalist» society. In unvidious comparison with western countries, therefore, the Soviet Union still suffers daily defeats. Hence the government must still provide extensive ideological and institutional defenses, which perpetuate its weaknesses as much as they resolve them. Its earlier appeal to the Third World likewise has suffered.

Under the conditions of nuclear stalemate, the secondary and more obscure sources of power are all the more important. Yet where do they receive mention by Messrs. Brzezinski and Huntington?

In the light of these observations, their statement that the Soviet political «system» was created to serve as an instrument of communist rule and reform is certainly one-sided. It reflects the general tendency among western liberals and socialists to ascribe the political motivation of Bolsheviks to the rank ambition of individuals, to a «power-hunger» monstrosity epitomized by Lenin and particularly Stalin, or by the Bolshevik elite in general. It would be a fairer assessment of the role of politics in human affairs to argue that political ambition may be taken for granted as a constant factor in any political system. The point deserving analysis is not the fact of political ambition but its scope, whether ordinary or extraordinary, and its justifications in the light of the challenges facing the polity. If we want to judge Lenin's or Stalin's reach for power, we have to understand the circumstances as well: their political ambition was shaped by the stupendous dangers facing their country. During the formative phases of Bolshevism (1903-1918) the scale of political action in Russia was much vaster and more murderous than the range of politics in the infinitely more secure polities of western Europe, let alone of North America. In short, judgment not covering *all* aspects of the destiny of the polities compared is intellectually indefensible; measuring Lenin or Stalin by American standards is merely another form of imperialism. The aim of Soviet rule, then, is not «to serve communist rule and reform» (although that is a necessary part of it), but to mobilize the recalcitrant and unsuited human resources of the Empire to meet the challenge of the western «capitalist» model and, above all, of the American way of life and power. Invidious comparison in the highest circles of the power elite as well as among the common people is prompted by a desire for equality: the aim of the Soviet political «system» is to make Soviet Russia the equal of the best in the world and to surpass it, becoming a global model itself.

What then of convergence in American and Soviet development? Brzezinski and Huntington, in line with their previous argument, argue the case almost exclusively in terms of the continuing force of internal factors, concluding: «the very fact of evolution makes convergence unlikely». In the course of their discussion they do, however, allude, although far too briefly, to the «unprecedented impact of international affairs», to the point of admitting that «the very fact of the (global) competition justifies the internal mobilization of resources, not to speak of armaments, and the related attempts to generate popular hostility to the U.S.». They are aware, in short, of the factors which in this essay have been taken as the crux of any effective comparison, though in their main analysis they do not recognize their pivotal significance.

How does the problem of convergence in the development of the US and the USSR appear in the perspective here set forth (with ten years of experience added since Brzezinski and Huntington planned their book)? The key, it would appear, lies in the relative security or insecurity of each polity in the common nuclear arms race. In this respect there has been indeed the most spectacular convergence. The U.S. has been expelled from its geography-based traditional security; it is now open to nuclear attack, as open as the USSR, its only defense consisting of its nuclear arsenal. The USSR, in turn, has experienced a profound improvement in its condition. It is safe from invasion of the kinds it has suffered in the past. In the age of the nuclear overkill it is «The Other Super Power», an equal in the hardware of overkill to the US, and superior to any other Power, including China for some time to come. The change in basic condition has perhaps been greatest for the US — the traditional tenor of American life has been adversely affected, it is fair to say, by the threats of Communist power, real or imagined. In the marked ascendancy of the Executive branch of the gov-

ernment, the rise of state security organs for internal and external defense, the continuing power of the military-industrial complex, the restrictions on internal freedom of communication, etc., the US has become more like the USSR. At the same time, one might argue, the USSR has converged toward the western model. The improved over-all security of the USSR has resulted in an increasing consumer orientation plus a considerable relaxation of internal compulsions. It is not affluence which has brought about the change, but rather the affluence-producing external security: more resources are available for consumer satisfaction. And consumer satisfaction increases domestic tranquility.

Regardless of such convergence the competition for ascendancy between the two Super Powers is still at work, with continued apprehension felt by both governments. The mutual apprehension promotes further convergence. The Soviet mobilization of scarce resources calls for an ever more refined industrialism, which creates its own equalizing necessities and consequences. It works best by voluntary cooperation, under the aegis of freedom. This is most obvious in the Soviet scientific community, which continues to take the lead in pressing for an overall «thaw» the Soviet society. At the same time, the least democratic of American business skills, management techniques, are being studied in the USSR, resulting in more conformity to the American model (as does the growing application of computer techniques). The patent interdependence of all affluence-creating activities in state and society also contributes to a greater sense of social coherence and solidarity, which in turn allows further liberalization in the Soviet system. Every triumph for consumerism in the USSR, such as the decision to produce automobiles for private use, has the same effect; it reduces the Soviet disadvantage in invidious comparison with «the advanced countries» (plenty of disadvantages still remain for the foreseeable future). On the American side, in turn, we observe a continuing apprehension in government circles over American competitiveness and the American capacity to negotiate from strength. The challenge is no longer exclusively that of Soviet power; now it is the over-all deterioration of the American position in the world. Whatever the source of danger, the rising apprehension has already led to a marked improvement in the overall planning techniques available to the government for economic and even social control. The golden age of laissez-faire democracy is now a memory of the distant past.

Both systems also converge in regard to other consequences of industrialism. Its growing complexity and cumbersomeness create a growing indifference and alienation among the best elements in society, as well as widespread inefficiency. In this respect the USSR seems to face an even worse handicap than the US, despite the fact that in the latter the discontent is more articulate and open. In the fact of such discontent, the power elite of the U.S. (if one may use that term) has recently been inclined to use some markedly un-American methods which have prompted comparison with Soviet practices.

Adjustment to the pressures of global competition is a long-range phenomenon and its forms are never entirely clear except in retrospect. Suffice it here to reaffirm the perspectives basic for any discussion of convergence. They may be briefly stated as follows: The internal development of both the U.S. and the USSR is best understood, from the distant past into the future, as a response to external pressures. Convergence takes place to the degree to which these pressures are the same for both, though the response will not necessarily take the same form. As in the past, convergence will continue to result from the Soviet necessity to match the power resources of the West (meaning mostly the U.S.) and to match them by imitation. Yet while the command adaptation of the western model to the alien conditions of the Soviet Union will lead to continued divergence, these differences will diminish the more secure, basically, the Soviet leadership feels from the pressure of global power politics. Since the weak-

ness of the Soviet Union is not measured, however, in terms of armaments or even technology alone, but in the capacity to withstand invidious comparison covering *all* aspects of life, its greater vulnerability will tend to perpetuate its Leninist-Stalinist inheritance. By the same token one might argue that the greater the vulnerability or weakness of the United States will be, the greater, most likely, also the erosion of its democratic freedoms, thereby proportionally enhancing the security of the Soviet «system» against invidious comparison. Under the pressure of their mutual power competition and the general instability of global politics, both polities, incidentally, can be expected to be conservative forces in the world. Their internal needs are best met by maximum stability in the over-all framework. Here too we observe convergence.

III

To go on now to Professor Gillison's book. His comparison is between British and Soviet politics, with special reference, so the title says, to the principle of legitimacy and the problem of convergence. Gillison rightly states that the two «systems» have been usually viewed in stark contrast and that the contrasts are perpetuated by the leaders of both societies. His own work deliberately takes the opposite course: antidotally he stresses the similarities. The similarities are accentuated by the structural-functional approach he employs; it provides the common denominators of comparison. Both «systems» are viewed — his discussion is limited to the 1960's — as mass industrial societies composed of specialized, interdependent organization men and enjoying a large measure of consensus and internal stability. Both create legitimization through party organizations and representative assemblies, which establish public support for the top leadership and serve as feedback mechanisms. They furthermore require consensus for their successful operation and skill in producing that consensus, both relying for best results on hand-in-glove accommodation. The politburo, in this perspective, is very much like the British cabinet — it is even more collegial, because a Brezhnev has less power over his colleagues than the British Prime Minister. Both «systems», moreover, suffer from a marked discrepancy between legitimizing myths and political practice. Gillison writes with a healthy disrespect for the democratic myth, pointing out the irrationalities and irrelevancies in the behavior of the British electorate. He also shows some commendable insight into the fallacies of common sense (and tourist) comparison, which tends to match the realities of the Soviet Union against the democratic myth in the West (or, one might add for symmetry's sake, vice versa, when we think of communist propaganda).

Seen from this angle, the structure and function of the British Parliament and the Supreme Soviet, to which Gillison assigns an equivalent role in the Soviet «system», appears rather similar, at least to him. Neither of them, he argues, is a true mirror of society, but they represent the most experienced and public-spirited members of society, generally oriented toward the status quo, and easily led: they favor gradualism; they won't rock the boat. Neither Parliament nor Supreme Soviet originate government policy, but they play a central role in the subsidiary function of legitimizing the political leadership, which takes its decisions *in camera*. The fact that the British have traditionally followed a two-party system does in this perspective hardly matter: «A system in which two hierarchical parties formulate marginally differentiated policies based on an established consensus in society bears some resemblance to a system in which one party hierarchically organized but consisting of marginally differentiable interest groups formulating policies based on an established consensus that has been largely structured by the Party itself». He also finds much similarity between British parties and the CPSU in terms of the discipline and loyalty to the top leadership motivating their members, going so far as to contend that «the unstated guiding principle of Bri-

tish party organization is remarkably close to the Leninist doctrine». (Interrupting his dispassionate exposition, the reviewer may be forgiven if he follows up this quotation with an indignant insistence that historically the imitation was the other way round. What the British, like the Americans, had evolved by a spontaneous recognition of the needs of voluntary political organization, Lenin under Russian circumstances had to create by deliberate and self-conscious effort).

In justice to the author, however, we should add that he is constantly aware of the differences as well. The British system allows better feedback, introduces fresh blood more easily into the top leadership, and promotes public airing of the differences existing within the decision-making elite. Above all, there is a basic difference of intent: the Communist Party is committed to changing the electorate into something which it is not nor necessarily wishes to be; the British parties exist in order to serve the electorate, which remains the ultimate arbiter. Yet whatever the differences, in the author's opinion the parallels are stronger — which, however, does not mean that the two «systems» converge; they merely have «some resemblance» to each other.

So much, in brief, for Gillison's thesis. Taking it within its own premises, we stumble over one basic flaw: Is it realistic, even within the flexible standards of such systems analysis, to draw a parallel between the British Parliament and the Supreme Soviet? What about the triennial congresses of the CPSU? And what about the monthly sessions of its Central Committee? The author makes no mention whatever of the Party congresses and only once, on an organizational chart and out of the blue, of the Central Committee. To be sure, very little is known about the inner workings of these bodies, particularly the Central Committee, whose role in the formation of the top party leadership — and therefore in the entire «system» — is crucial. Yet even granted our ignorance, any analysis of the Soviet «system» omitting these basic party organs is certainly off the mark. One wonders about Gillison's reasons for the omission, for the usual interpretation of their function is by no means incompatible with his thesis. While there exists more than one Parliament (or pseudoparliament) in the Soviet «system» — Stalin spoke of conveyor belts — the role of these bodies is still that assigned by Gillison to the Supreme Soviet: they help to legitimate the regime, select leaders, and provide feedback. In such extended comparison, however, the symmetry of the author's analysis would have suffered and the differences accentuated.

These is a further flaw. A comparison premised on the principle of legitimacy should have paid more attention to the various agencies creating consensus. Gillison plays down the role of the secret police and the instruments of compulsion, contending that the «soviet regime is based on the solid foundation of regime support». Police coercion, although admittedly it has a place in the Soviet Union, cannot explain, he argues, the wide acceptance of the regime. Whether true or not, a reasoned comparison of political «systems» ought to have included the operation of the hidden persuaders in the police or outside. It also ought to emphasize more than has been done in this book the fact that the Soviet political «system» is far more inclusive than its British counterpart. It monopolizes all public life, tolerating no private sector; whereas in Britain the role of private faces in public places obviously is still very considerable. For the sake of the equivalence needed for effective comparison the author should have at least sketched the operation of that private sector in order to demonstrate the complete mechanism of the British socio-political «system».

Here then we come to the problematics of the comparative approach. Needless to say, we can compare anything we want with anything else. The question is: what conclusions do we draw from our comparisons? Our conclusions depend upon the matrix of comparison, i.e., upon the net of common denominators we throw over our subjects. These common denominators are like a grid of sensors: out of the vastness of available data they select what fits

the pattern of comparison. Gillison has picked, somewhat arbitrarily as he himself admits, a set of schematic criteria and super-imposed them upon the realities of British and Soviet politics. He has reduced both polities to integrated «systems», thereby making them comparable. Concentrating on the principle of legitimacy he finds in Soviet Russia consensus and public support to a degree that must seem preposterous to the critics of the Soviet regime (who in turn carry their own grid of sensors which stress the prevalence of dissent). More crucial in the light of comparative methodology is the fact that Gillison's system of common denominators is not really comparative. It is lifted from a set of assumptions rooted in the British (and more generally, western) democratic experience in which legitimacy and consensus are landmarks. A Marxist-Leninist comparer would certainly pick a different grid of basic assumptions drawn from the ideology of class struggle and socio-economic conflict. Mr. Gillison's, comparison, like that of Brzezinski-Huntington, is a subtle form of intellectual imperialism, annexing one «system» to basic assumptions of another, rather than a valid exercise of comparison. True comparison presumably should be acceptable to the spokesmen of both systems; its common denominators must be truly common.

Inclusiveness is another basic requirement. Comparison must contain all elements relevant to the operation of the «systems» described, or better: it must include all elements needed to substantiate the conclusions which are attempted. Conceivably one can undertake a mechanical and static comparison between, say, apples and horse-droppings, which might lead to calling the latter «horse apples» (Pferdeäpfel), as Germans do. But so what (the joke apart)? Likewise, as Gillison does, one can compare British political institutions in the 1960's with some Soviet political institutions, on a matching basis and somewhat dubious parallels, concluding that the two «systems» are not as antithetical as it is often assumed. This conclusion may have its place in defusing an increasingly senseless anti-Soviet prejudice. But is it based on a sensible analysis? And is it a sensible conclusion after all? One is left wondering about the relation between that conclusion and the contrary and more popular assessment of Soviet realities which stresses the differences. Common sense still favors the latter. The two systems do not exist in temporal isolation, cut off from the past; tradition does matter in their operation. Political «systems» envelop men and women with memories. Memories determine attitudes, political action and general propensities of action. In the sixties Stalin was still very alive in the minds of Soviet citizens (as any conversation with them even at present will reveal), just as mid-Victorian parliamentarism still lingers in the British perception of the role of Parliament. In short, myths are operational parts of a political «system», especially when we consider it dynamically, making judgments about its present and future evolution.

And this we do when we discuss the problem of convergence. The heuristic benefits of a static, functional-structural comparison for a consideration of that problem are very limited indeed. They are of a factual nature: this is how things are here — and this is how they are over there, with similarities and differences duly noted. What we really want to know from comparison is much more: how well are we doing — how well are they doing? Whither are we, whither are they going? The underlying motive of comparison is invidious. Brzezinski and Huntington typically (and realistically) start out their comparison by saying: «The Soviet and American governments are rivals». It is that rivalry which prompted their comparison. Gillison deals with a topic more peripheral to American pride. He is more academic, therefore, arguing that the problem of convergence requires «careful investigation of functional similarities and differences». The usefulness of his analysis for convergence studies, he implies, lies in its modest contribution to the scholarly assessments of the future development of Soviet Russia and of Britain, and of the problem of convergence in general. How useful is his analysis?

From the line of argument here employed it would follow that a static, two-country comparison does not lead to the all-inclusive assessments necessary for speculation about future

development. First, the evidence has to be drawn from more than a ten-year time slice. The past does matter as an active ingredient in the present, and with it the totality of human experience embedded in it. Secondly, we have to consider the outermost framework into which a political «system» is set and the challenge of which it is trying to meet. As regards the outermost framework, Gillison perceives it sociologically, i.e., too narrowly. «The nature of the modern industrialized mass-society, its sheer size, its diversity of occupational roles, its diffusion of public responses, and its concentration of effort on private material rewards, have created a remarkably similar environment within which the Soviet and British political systems must operate». As argued above, this framework omits the most vital forces in contemporary society, its world-wide political competitiveness.

In the light of such limited insights, it is not surprising that the author's observations on the problem of conversion are both very short and irrelevant to the bulk of his argument. He thinks it «highly improbable» that the two «systems» will move toward ever greater similarity. His reasons? «History and Tradition», two factors left entirely outside his structural-functional approach. On the strength of these suddenly introduced factors, he finds it «more realistic to view convergence as an asymptotic relationship, reaching unity only at an infinite point in time, and with a decent distance maintained between the two systems for the foreseeable future».

This conclusion makes indeed good sense. The British and Soviet «systems» are located in very different corners of the global competition for preeminence and world leadership. The British «system» is endowed with remarkable, possibly unique, socio-political cohesion, secure both in the memory of past global hegemony and the acceptance of the present shrinkage of British power under the umbrella of American protection. Its members still manage to tailor their political and economic expectations to their capacity for achieving them. By contrast, the managers of the Soviet «system», although more secure than before from external pressure, are still anxious, in the face of considerable public apathy, to raise their country to the status of a universal model, admired for its productivity, humaneness, and freedom, yet in their anxiety paradoxically undermining their competitiveness. Although the material standards of living may no longer markedly differ between the two countries, the «quality of life», that elusive summation of individual judgement about the human and material environment, certainly will continue to do so. Whatever power and material comfort the British «system» represents is rather freely — or spontaneously — contributed by the bulk of British citizenry. The power and productivity of the Soviet «system», on the other hand, are obtained by the deliberate and occasionally forced creation of the proper «consciousness» among a vast and heterogeneous populace. That difference is not easily overcome, even over centuries.

Summing up, one can argue that the difficulties standing in the way of effective comparison will not be overcome either, perhaps even for centuries. The obstacles do not lie in lack of mental energy or intelligence among scholars. None of the authors here reviewed can be charged with ignorance or insufficient sharpness of wit. Indeed, had the orientation of this essay been different, they would have been duly commended for their academic prowess. What is lacking in their work stems from the shortcomings of the present age. No one — and certainly no one who claims to be representative of his society — is yet able to surmount the limitations of the cultural envelope into which he or she is born. We are driven to aim at world-wide, universal comparison even when dealing with only two or three of the major powers. Culture-bound as we are, we have barely started on the long journey toward true universality. All existing comparisons are too limited, too narrow, too loaded with one-sided judgements. And yet, all of them are on the right track, expanding our awareness, exploring wider perspectives, calling forth controversies, and sharpening our wits for the future.