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INDIVIDUALISM IN THEORY AND PRACTICE:
AMERICAN LIBERALISM AND SOVIET MARXISM

A Thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
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By

Patricia A. Denny

School for Summer and Continuing Education
Georgetown University
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ABSTRACT

This project examines the influence of the political theories of John Locke and John Stuart Mill and of Karl Marx on the development of individualism in the United States and the Soviet Union. By examining the efforts of both nations to implement their respective versions of individualism, conclusions can be drawn as to the validity of the two ideologies as well as to the nature of individualism.

Based on Locke's opposition to political or economic restraints imposed by the "state", U.S. society emphasizes personal freedom and autonomy. The individual is responsible for his own well-being and place in society. Reinforced by Mill's utilitarian view that the activities of the individual and of society can be guided by the rational pursuit of interests, liberalism in the United States has been characterized by competition for profit in the free market and competition for power in the political arena.

Individualism, therefore, has tended to take on the characteristics of the marketplace. Individuals are divided from their fellow beings by a pervasive attitude of competition, values are judged in terms of "utility", 
and the objective expression of material and social worth sets the standards of individualism. The result has been the isolation and alienation of the individual from his social institutions, his fellow human beings and aspects of his own personality.

Marx's theories aim at granting the individual "human emancipation" by abolishing the alienation and the separation of the individual from society and his inner self by the "forces of production". Since these forces were created by man, they can be changed and controlled by him and used to create an environment of positive freedom in which the individual can develop a genuine, integrated personality.

Soviet society attempts to provide such an environment by replacing competition with cooperation and encouraging human values over utilitarian ones. By being freed from physical necessity and excessive labor, the individual gains psychological security as well as the leisure time and the educational and cultural levels required for genuine individuality.

In conclusion, although both liberal and Marxist philosophies contain elements of individualism, their concepts are very different, as are their methods of
achieving those concepts. The negative freedom of liberalism has failed to provide an adequate basis for a society capable of encouraging the development of the individual personality. American individualism, therefore, focuses on the objective expression rather than the subjective content of individuality. Marxism, while describing a more appropriate society and broader concept of individualism, has been only partially implemented by the Soviet Union. Soviet individualism, therefore, has more content but its expression is limited.
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Introduction

Although the problem of the individual and his rights is a development of modern political philosophy, a certain view of human nature is present in any theory concerning man's place in society. Aristotle, for example, saw human nature and, therefore, human society as a reflection of the order and hierarchy of the natural universe. For Hobbes, man's natural aggression had to be controlled. For Machiavelli, man was driven by a desire for power, and for Locke, by a desire for private property. These philosophers sought forms of political organization which would best serve and control a nature that was seen as basically unchanging.

However, in the contemporary world, it is widely asserted that, although human nature is not "infinitely malleable ... there is no fixed human nature." It is, rather, "the product of historical evolution." Man's nature is formed by the necessity of surviving in the society in which he lives and part of that necessity is to adopt as his own the view of human nature that is contained in the philosophy underlying that society and which is communicated by its institutions.

Thus, there is a tendency "to justify political, social, or economic systems in terms of their supposed conformity to human nature, or to condemn others because of their alleged violations of human nature." Each individual freely and willingly accepts his society's interpretation of human nature and expresses his own individuality in conformity with (or in rebellion to) the accepted rules and values. The result is what John Stuart Mill claimed for the people of any time and place: "The rules which obtain among themselves appear to them self-evident and self-justifying. This all but universal illusion is one of the examples of the magical influences of custom, which is not only ... a second nature, but is continually mistaken for the first."

This assumption of a universal, fixed "human nature" can cause considerable misunderstanding and conflict between societies holding different interpretations. For instance, a judgment of what constitutes "basic human rights" depends to a great extent on a judgment of what


constitutes human nature. Two societies may agree that freedom is fundamental to human nature, but if their views of human nature differ, misunderstanding and conflict are inevitable.

Such misunderstanding and conflict exists today between the United States and the Soviet Union. If, as is sometimes claimed, "all conflict is a conflict of values," one of the values most in contention by the two superpowers is "individualism," or how the individual can best pursue and express freedom within the limitations of society.

The concept of individualism emerged after the breakdown of feudalism, which had restricted the individual's social and economic mobility. No longer bound to the role and circumstances to which he was born, the individual began to seek ways in which he could express his freedom. However, with the advance of industrialization, new types of limits were imposed on the individual by the requirements of industrial structures and processes and the concept of individualism was adjusted accordingly.

One of the first uses of the term "individualism" was by Alexis de Tocqueville to describe the peculiar way in which Americans view themselves. Carefully distinguishing it from selfishness, which is "a passionate
and exaggerated love of self," Tocqueville defined individualism as "a mature and calm feeling, which disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his fellows, and to draw apart with his family and his friends; so that, after he has thus formed a little circle of his own, he willingly leaves society at large to itself.... Individualism proceeds from erroneous judgment more than from depraved feelings; it originates as much in deficiencies of mind as in perversity of heart."

In spite of this negative definition of individualism, Americans have embraced the concept and take pride in the term as the opposite of "collectivism" or "socialism." Yet, "if individualism as a social doctrine involves a commitment to the moral primacy of the individual in society and the right of the individual to freedom and self-realization," its application to socialism cannot be automatically excluded. The meaning of "individualism" depends on "one's conception of the nature of individuality."


5. Wood, pp. 6-7.
The American version of individualism grows out of the classical liberal theories of John Locke. Based on a free-market economy, these theories stress the importance of private property and self-interest to individual freedom. All men have certain natural rights which entitle them to freedom from restraints on their private activities. Men enter society in order to preserve their natural liberty while gaining the state's protection of their life and property. The state's responsibility is limited to providing a social environment in which the individual can exercise his freedom.

Individualism, however, is not unique to the United States or to liberalism. The Soviet Union also advocates individualism under Marxist socialism. Marx placed the individual within the context of the social whole, where individual well-being depends on the well-being of society in general. Society was responsible for freeing the individual from economic necessity and the stress of competition in order to seek identity and integrity as a human being through his interaction with other human beings. Individualism required not only freedom of activity but also the opportunity to participate in society as an "authentic" individual.
Each of these models advocate the primacy of the individual in society and both the United States and the Soviet Union claim to present the best politico-economic structure for the enhancement of individualism. Although neither nation practices its respective philosophy in a pure form, both do at least pay lip-service to adherence to these theories.

This paper will examine the nature of individualism as defined by the liberal and Marxist philosophies and how it is practiced in today's United States and Soviet Union. No examination will be included of any of the variations or combinations of these philosophies as practiced by other societies, past or present. The implementation of both interpretations of individualism by the political, economic and social systems of the United States and the Soviet Union will be assessed and compared in an effort to better understand the nature of individualism and the validity of both systems' claims to the promotion of individualism.
Two Common Modes of Thought

On the surface, most industrial societies give the impression of endless diversity, especially if they contain a variety of ethnic, religious, and racial groups, as do both the United States and the Soviet Union. This diversity is often presented as evidence of a society's commitment to the freedom of the individual and to the development and expression of "individualism". However, in the final analysis, each individual is a product of the environment in which he grows: of the home, the schools, the church, the workplace and other institutions which carry out his socialization.

These institutions are created and influenced, if not necessarily controlled, by the politico-economic system that they serve. They, therefore, reflect the general ideological outlook that is espoused by a particular system and it is their purpose to instill in each member the values which are consistent with that outlook. If a society is grounded in a specific political philosophy, as are the United States and the Soviet Union, the governmental and social institutions will be structured on the ideas contained in that philosophy. However, a philosophy not only contains ideas, it also presents a certain
epistemology which, though less obvious, is also transmitted through the institutions. Thus, a society takes on a "common mode of thought," which is consistent with that philosophy and which contributes to the forming of the attitudes, opinions and beliefs of each member of that society.

The "common mode of thought" affects the way individuals see themselves and their place in society. It also helps to form the definition of "individualism" and to set standards by which individuality may be judged. To the average citizen in the United States and the Soviet Union, the definitions and standards of individualism are very different. Consider, for instance, how an American and a Russian would go about getting acquainted with someone he or she had just met. The American wants to know what work the person does, where he lives and other facts about his private life that may indicate his place in the social structure. To the Russian, such questions are in bad taste and not really relevant. He wants to know what books the person reads, what art and theater he likes, and what is his approach to life. In other words, the American wants to know how he expresses his

6. Ibid., p. 8.
"individualism" and the Russian wants to know what kind of individual he is.

This example, though perhaps superficial, reflects the deeper differences in the meaning of individualism as promoted by American liberalism and Soviet Marxism. In the United States, individualism refers to personal freedom and responsibility. The "state" has some responsibility for the development of individuality, but ultimately it is left to the individual. Since it is part of human nature to be an individual, the state need only provide a free environment and not interfere with individual activity. Soviet Marxism, however, advocates the active promotion of individualism. While individuality is part of human nature, it can be inhibited by the political, economic and social structures, which must, therefore, be constructed to encourage individual development.

Soviet Marxism aims less at the expression of individualism and more at what psychologists like Erich Fromm and Jean Piaget call "individuation." Individuation

7. This conclusion is the result of my own experiences, but, similarly, Robert Kaiser explains that: "Wealth and fame mean less to a Russian than to us. Their standards of accomplishment are more modest, and in a way more Christian." Russia: The People and The Power (New York: Pocket Books, 1976), p. 293.
is the full development of the self and it has two aspects. The first is the integration of physical, emotional and mental strength as a child grows—the development of the subjective self. The second is the overcoming of the "growing aloneness" and anxiety the individual experiences when he leaves the security of childhood and enters the adult world. The subjective self must be integrated into the objective world in a way that "is productive and does not end in an insoluble conflict"; a way that will result in "a spontaneous relationship to man and nature, a relationship that connects the individual with the world without eliminating his individuality." However, the development of individuality is limited "partly by individual conditions, but essentially by social conditions.... Every society is characterized by a certain level of individuation beyond which the normal individual cannot go."

American individualism recognizes the limitations of individual conditions, the limitations of intelligence, ability, talent, etc. However, its concept of an "open" society tends to dismiss any notion of social limits. To the extent that they exist, it is assumed

9. Ibid., p. 44.
that they can be overcome by anyone who wants to overcome them. Indeed, faith in the opportunity to overcome limitations is a major aspect of American individualism. Marxism, however, recognizes the limitations of society and seeks to expand and, more important, to equalize these limits for all people beyond those inherent in the political and economic conditions created by liberalism.

In the United States, the process of individualization is essentially private. Each person has the right and also the responsibility to determine his own road in life. If he works hard, he will be rewarded with material and social success and, presumably, with personal happiness. If he lacks the necessary ambition and initiative, he must accept the consequences of his failure. These rights and responsibilities are possible because of the political and economic freedom granted the individual by the limits imposed on interference from forces outside his personal life.

These limits are at the heart of the liberal theories of John Locke. Locke was, of course, reacting against monarchical power and sought to counteract the divine right of kings with the "natural" rights of the individual. When man left the "state of nature" and made his social contract, he gave up some natural rights in order
to gain the advantages of protection and security. However, he retained the natural freedom inherent in being human. For Locke, that freedom focussed on the right to private property and the advancement of private interests.

Locke's freedom for the individual was largely in the form of limited government. Although he laid the basis for individualism in his "privatization" of man and property, the development of modern individualism is better credited to John Stuart Mill. While Locke seeks to free individuals as a group from restraints imposed from above, Mill seeks to free individuals from the restraints of the group, that is, public opinion. Mill promotes individual freedom of choice and expression because they contribute to the "utility" of human happiness. Individual happiness is the greatest pleasure and absence of pain that can be achieved without infringing on the rights of others by causing them less happiness or more pain.

In his principle of utility, Mill attempts to set standards of freedom that will meet the practical and moral needs of both society and the individual. He recognizes the potential for the individual pursuit of pleasure to slide into egoism and selfishness and notes that utilitarianism "could only attain its end by the general
cultivation of nobleness of character."

Also if the individual has a moral and ethical responsibility to society, society likewise has a responsibility to the individual. Mill advocates socially beneficial institutions like education, which should be "the inheritance of everyone born in a civilized country." If individuals are to be able to take advantage of freedom, they must have the cultural and moral, as well as the practical, ability to create and maintain a free society.

By the time Mill developed his theories, however, his cultured and noble individual was already threatened by the conformity and mediocrity of industrial society and the selfishness of capitalistic accumulation. His hope that the exceptional individual could rise above society is a reflection of the elitism that is Mill's final resort. His view of individuality is too limited for application to "the masses" because it remains tied to class and property. The individual remains identified with "the externalized, objectified conditions of his class, his place in society or the market, the division of labor, and so on." As long as individuality is


primarily a response to external objects and circumstances, it is confined to those with the means to express it.

Mill is also unable to provide an adequate moral basis to ensure "nobleness of character." In creating utilitarianism, Mill tries to find a practical application of moral principles which he felt was lacking in philosophy. "Our moral faculty, according to all those of its interpreters who are entitled to the name of thinkers, supplies us only with the general principles of moral judgments; it is a branch of our reason, not of our sensitive faculty, and must be looked to for the abstract doctrines of morality, not for perception of it in the concrete." However, by making utility the moral basis of society, he objectifies morality and takes away the intrinsic value that philosophy (and religion) gives it.

Utilitarianism, therefore, fails to provide the individual with a means for transcending either conformity or common moral standards. The negative character of "freedom from" other individuals and society tends to override Mill's proposed positive freedoms to think and act creatively. Mill is very concerned, for example, with freedom of thought and, especially, with freedom of public

expression of thought. However, as Erich Fromm observes, "the right to express our thoughts ... means something only if we are able to have thoughts of our own." In other words, external freedom is only worthwhile if "the inner psychological conditions are such that we are able to establish our own individuality."  

While Fromm is not suggesting that freedom from restraint is not important, he is suggesting that by itself it is an inadequate freedom. Positive freedom consists of the "spontaneous activity of the total, integrated personality." An individual must not only be free to choose his activity, he must have the ability and opportunity to pursue "the quality of creative activity that can operate in one's emotional, intellectual and sensuous experiences and in one's will as well." Positive freedom encourages the individuation process so that the individual is aware of his own uniqueness through identification with others and integration into his social environment. Without such freedom, the individual is unlikely to develop his full potential for creative activity and may become anxious, fearful, frustrated, and unable to cope with external freedom.


15. Ibid., p. 284
Mill's utilitarian individualism also fails to present a sustaining basis for a "good" society. It assumes that "in a society where each vigorously pursued his own interest, the social good would automatically emerge." The workings of the free market holds society together and gets its work done. The individual is, at worst, forced to participate by the necessity of self-preservation and, at best, is spurred on to greater effort by competition. But competition is by its own nature divisive, and a "life devoted to the calculating pursuit of one's own material interest" does not encourage the development of the inner self or a common social effort. Instead, it encourages the separation and atomization of the individual, which leads to "growing isolation, insecurity, and thereby growing doubt concerning one's own role in the universe, the meaning of one's life, and with all that a growing feeling of one's own powerlessness and insignificance as an individual". Such an individual risks losing the will for independent self-determination.

17. Ibid.
and self-expression and conforms to the forces of his environment.

It is not surprising that the seeds of utilitarian individualism should be found in Locke's political theories or that they should grow in Mill's. Their theories were consistent with the common mode of thought of the "Newtonian age." Empiricism and reductionism were prevalent in philosophy as well as in the sciences. Ideas, like the physical universe, could be broken down into increasingly smaller parts, isolated from each other and examined, measured and evaluated objectively. This standard of scientific investigation influenced the conventional wisdom of the age.

Utilitarian individualism was born into this empirical "atomic model of reality" which Alvin Toffler claims "industrial capitalism needed as a rationale for individualism." Individualism was required to justify the competition of the free market and the separation of people "from the extended family, the all-powerful church, the monarchy." The individual was like the atom, "the basic particle of society." He was isolated from his fellows except to the extent that he was forced to

associate with them in the marketplace. And, like the atom, man was subject to the physical laws of the "clockwork universe." Human activity, like Newton's billiard balls, required an external push from the incentive of reward for his labor combined with the fear of physical deprivation. The notion that man had to be coerced into action by some outside force took on the character of natural law.

This was reinforced by the Calvinistic view of man as basically wicked and only able to redeem himself through "good works." Moral activity also needed the motivating force of punishment and rewards and, though these were ostensibly of the soul, they were easily transferred to the physical world. Work, responsibility and self-discipline were spiritual imperatives. "The individualistic relationship to God was the psychological preparation for the individualistic character of man's secular activities." Thus, man was isolated and powerless before God, the laws of nature, and the forces of production.

Socialism was also born into the Newtonian age. The Comte de Saint-Simon, one of the early socialists, named the top level of his socialist hierarchy the Council of

20. See Fromm's analysis of Calvinism in Escape From Freedom, pp. 103-22
21. Ibid., p. 129.
Newton, because it had been revealed to him "in a vision that it was Newton and not the Pope whom God had elected to sit beside Him and to transmit to humanity His purposes." But for Saint-Simon and his philosophical offspring, Newtonian empiricism was mitigated by "a doctrine of Rousseau's which so permeated the air of the time that one did not need to imbibe it by reading: the doctrine that mankind is naturally good and that it is only institutions which have perverted it." This is the doctrine that, in the final analysis, gives socialism its moral appeal because it recognizes the human need for belief in humanity itself. This optimistic view of human nature, and the philosophy from which it springs, endows the individual with a will capable of creative activity and transcendence of objective limitations. This view contrasts significantly to liberalism's portrayal of the individual as limited to utilitarian choices and objective moral judgments.

Rousseau's doctrines were strong motivations for the early socialists. Inspired by the French revolution's drive toward equality and justice and disillusioned by its failure, philosophers like Charles Fourier in France and

23. Ibid., p. 106.
Robert Owen in England sought new social structures that could avoid the growing inequities in wealth and status caused by industrialization. Although their structures and methods often proved impractical, the root of their philosophies would remain as the origin of modern socialism: the notion that the free market and the entrepreneurial spirit was detrimental to the nature of man. Owen wrote, "I was completely tired of partners who were merely trained to buy cheap and sell dear. This occupation deteriorates and often destroys the finest and best faculties of our nature. From an experience of a long life, in which I passed through all the gradations of trade, manufactures and commerce, I am thoroughly convinced that there can be no superior character formed under this thoroughly selfish system. Truth, honesty, virtue, will be mere names, as they are now, and as they have ever been. Under this system, there can be no true civilization; for by it all are trained civilly to oppose and often to destroy one another by their created opposition of interests."  

Owen's condemnation of the free market may over-emphasize its contribution to the destruction of human values. Nevertheless, the competition it engenders is one

24. Ibid., p. 105.
aspect of the divisive quality of liberal individualism. Man's economic activities are a major part of his life. When the competition of the free market is combined with a political philosophy that stresses privacy and the utility of rational self-interest, any natural sense of social unity that the individual may have will be subordinated to his need to survive in his world. His psychological individualism, therefore, will also be subordinated to his public role as producer and consumer and his individuality will find expression in the materiality of the marketplace, and the competitive attitudes of his economic activities will form the basis of his view of human nature and his approach to life in general.

As a philosopher of a later stage of the industrial age, Karl Marx is aware of the effects of its economic and social structures on the development of individual psychology. He emphasizes the emancipation of man through the development of the individual personality. He wants to do away with the limits on individuation imposed by the liberal structure of society so that the individual can break free of the alienation caused by the division of labor and the separation of man from society.

The first steps toward this goal are the traditional socialist restructuring of the economic and social systems to provide for the public welfare. Economic exploitation,
class division, and inequality of opportunity must be eliminated if every member of society is to have the right to freedom from necessity and the fears and anxieties that accompany physical deprivation. Individuals who are cold, hungry, sick or illiterate tend not to care about individual freedom of expression. However, economic and social welfare can be provided under capitalism by any society that chooses to do so. Marx is more concerned with the conflict between the nature of man and the nature of production and with the construction of a society that can deal effectively with this conflict. Only then can the possibility of individuality exist.

What liberal capitalism cannot do is free man from the process of alienation of the producer from the product by the division of labor. Labor, for Marx, plays two roles in the nature of man. One is a social relationship, in which the individual produces the necessities of life. This labor entails "a certain mode of production, or industrial stage, [which] is always combined with a certain mode of co-operation, or social stage, and this mode of co-operation is itself a 'productive force.'" The other role is labor as natural activity, "the active

relatedness of man to nature, the creating of a new world,
including the creation of man himself." The two roles
are, of course, closely related by the natures of man and
society.

Due to the development of private property and the
division of labor demanded by industrial processes,
however, the worker is separated from the thing he
produces and from the activity of production. Assembly-
line methods of production cause a "loss of reality" for
the workers, who often have little to do with the final
product. In addition, "labor does not only produce
commodities; it produces itself and the worker as a
commodity," so that the worker and his work become objects
of use and products in themselves. Labor, therefore, not
only becomes "an object, an external existence, but ... it
exists outside him, independently, as something alien to
him, and ... it becomes a power of its own confronting
him; it means that the life which he has conferred on the
object confronts him as something hostile and alien."

26. Erich Fromm, Marx's Concept of Man (New York:
28. Ibid., p. 72.
The separation and alienation caused by the division of labor extends to every aspect of society. It is the cause of class division, which implies not just material inequalities, but also differences in political, economic and social status. In class conflict, "workers" are deprived of opportunities for education, better standards of living, leisure time for "intellectual" activities, and full participation in society.

Individuals are, therefore, divided and opposed to each other because of the competitive nature of production and of private property. The "productive forces" take on a material form and are no longer under the control of the individual unless he is involved in the ownership of the means of production. Those who are not lose their sense of reality because they are "robbed ... of all real life-content" and "become abstract individuals" through the loss of labor's meaning as self-activity. Therefore, the only way individual reality can come about is through the appropriation by the workers of the productive processes, and the return to them of the meaningfulness of their labor as self-activity. "Only at this stage does self-activity coincide with material life which corresponds to

the development of individuals into complete individuals."

An even more significant form of alienation for psychological individualism is the estrangement of man as a species being. Marx sees man as having a universal nature which finds expression both in his use of the resources of nature and in his treatment of himself as a living, and therefore a free, species being. Man's "physical and spiritual life is linked to nature because man is a part of nature." His awareness of nature as part of his spiritual nourishment carries over into human activity, and free, conscious activity becomes an expression of man's species character. However, the estrangement of man from the meaning of that activity results in the separation of the individual from his species life and activity becomes merely a means of staying alive. The individual, then, is alienated from his own "spiritual essence" as well as from other individuals.

Implicit in this theory is Rousseau's view of human nature as basically well-intentioned except when corrupted by external influences. Marx, therefore, does not need to resort to incentives and punishments. Although the

30. Ibid., p. 192.
injustices and inequalities of society may be caused by
the "productive forces," these forces are created by man
and can be changed by him if he takes control of his
environment. But he must control it as a species being
rather than as an individual; only in that way can he
avoid the alienation that prevents true individualism.

Individualism, for Marx, is not grounded in rights
granted by a political system as it is for Locke and Mill.
In fact, Marx sees the political state as encouraging
alienation by holding itself separate from civic or human
society. Thus, the individual is required to separate the
expression of his public or species life in the political
state from his private life in civil society. This, of
course, is precisely the purpose of liberal societies—to
remove the state from the private life of the individual.

However, Marx sees political "rights of man" as not
founded upon the relations between man and man, but rather
upon "the separation of man from man.... The right of the
circumscribed individual, withdrawn into himself." 32
These rights are limited, in other words, to individual
interests and serve to separate the individual citizen
from the human individual so that "the only bond between

men is natural necessity, need and private interest, the preservation of their property and their egoistic persons."

Political emancipation, therefore, is not adequate for the task of human emancipation, which is the individual's awareness of himself as a member of the human community and recognition of his own creative powers. Human emancipation can only occur when man creates and controls the social environment of the human community, that is, removes the limitations placed on individuation by liberal capitalism. Then alienation can be overcome and the individual can exercise the freedom that is inherent in his human "essence."

By basing civil society on self-interest, liberalism institutionalizes individual separateness and violates man's fundamental need for community, which must inevitably develop as a result of his experience in society. That need, whether conscious or unconscious, then comes into conflict with the society itself. The institutionalization of separateness encourages acquisitiveness, competition and a struggle for power. Therefore, the message transmitted by society to the individual is that his fellowmen are opponents of his own self-interest. Any

"natural" feelings of mutual humanity are mitigated by concern for self. The result is that social relations become generally antagonistic, "antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of one arising from the social conditions of life of the individuals." The individual is limited by the very social conditions that liberalism claims frees him to the extent that he can be limited only by his own capabilities.

Marx, on the other hand, advocates the institutionalization of the natural dialectical process of uniting self and other in society. The individual's conscious experience in society gives him his individual identity and he recognizes, through that experience, his need for community. As a member of the community, the individual is part of the general will that creates the political, economic and social environment. The individual and the community reinforce each other mutually: "Man is in the most literal sense of the word a zoon politikon, not only a social animal, but an animal, which can develop into an individual only in society."


Control of the productive forces will not only do away with the economic and social distinctions brought about by the division of labor, but also with the distinction between mental and physical labor. For Marx, a man's consciousness is formed by his activity, especially his role in production. "Division of labour only becomes truly such ... when a division of material and mental labour appears." An individual limited to manual labor is not likely to have an opportunity to develop intellectually and will not be able to participate fully in his community or fulfill his potential as an individual. "The forces of production, the state of society, and consciousness, can and must come into contradiction with one another, because the division of labour implies the possibility, and the fact that intellectual and material activity—enjoyment and labour, production and consumption—devolve on different individuals." These individuals, then, will lack the knowledge and mental development necessary to an integrated personality.

Marx sees individualism as the positive development of a balanced personality that functions in cooperation

36. Marx, "German Ideology" in Tucker, p. 159.
37. Ibid.
with rather than in competition with his society.
Individuals must be freed from necessity, both physical and psychological, in order to create an environment which will encourage individuation. Such an environment allows for human as well as material expression of individuality. The point of socialism is to provide a society which serves the needs of man, rather than man serving only the producing and consuming needs of society. Liberal society creates false needs which can make man unconscious of his true needs, the fulfillment of which "is necessary for the realization of his essence as a human being."
Socialism aims at providing an environment where man can become "aware of the illusory false needs and of the reality of his true needs."

38. Fromm, Marx's Concept, p. 62.
Liberal Individualism in the United States

In the United States, the primacy of the individual is the very basis of society. Each person has the right to determine his own road in life and express his individuality in personal tastes and lifestyles. Each individual is also responsible for his own success or failure. If he works hard and capably, he will be rewarded with wealth and success; if he fails, the fault is his. This view is supported by political democracy, a free-market economy, and an "open" society, all of which aim at preserving individual rights and the fruits of individual effort. U.S. institutions, therefore, reflect the view of Locke and Mill that the nature of man is essentially private and the pursuit of interests and the accumulation of property are not only his natural rights, but also his natural goals.

America's "individualistic" society, then, is characterized by the "privatization" of property and activity. Property is the incentive that will create the competitive activity in the marketplace, which will result in a diverse and thriving society in which each individual can find his place. This, at least, was the vision on which the U.S. politico-economic system was founded. However, that vision was created in an era of a decentralized economy, based on seemingly endless resources, and a
relatively simple social structure based on the extended family unit. Public and private life overlapped and the interests of one individual did not differ greatly from those of the others.

These conditions were somewhat altered by the pressures of a growing population and advancing technology. Modern industrialization "ripped apart the underlying unity of society, creating a way of life filled with economic tension, social conflict, and psychological malaise." The cohesion of private life was disrupted by the division of labor and interests required by the processes of mass production. At the same time, new forms of integration and centralization took place on the national level within and between the political and economic realms. These changes in the structure of society have had an effect on the nature of individualism.

The division of public and private life demanded that the individual function in two different worlds under two different sets of rules. At home, with family and friends, and involved in community, church, leisure and other interests, the individual could express his "human" nature with its values of love, compassion and fellowship. In contrast, his public nature was determined by the objective

forces of the marketplace and were largely beyond his control. There, the individual adopted a different set of values based on competition, manipulation and bettering his position either through aggressiveness or defensiveness, depending on his place in the productive heirarchy.

Robert Bellah refers to these two sides of industrial man as "expressive" and "utilitarian", and claims that their division was "incipient in American life" from the beginning. Indeed, he sees the seeds of division in the separation of the objective and the subjective by the same empirical sciences that influenced Locke. At that time, "science seemed to have dominated the explanatory schemas of the external world" and "morality and religion took refuge in human subjectivity, in feeling and sentiment." As American society grew and advanced in the nineteenth century, subjectivity was relegated mainly to the private world of the home and family and the split widened.

In today's society, the nature of "expressive" individualism has been influenced by the effects of the "criteria of economic effectiveness" on private life. In spite of broad freedom of choice, individuals are considerably influenced by social attitudes and economic

40. Bellah, p. 46.
41. Ibid.
values. As consumption and economic success become more and more the determinant of social class, as well as set the standard for "the good life," the values of expressive individualism become less relevant. The quantity and quality of possessions appropriated to the individual tend more and more to become related to personal identity, not only as a means of expressing identity but of being an identity. The result is what John Dewey described as, "I own, therefore I am." The self responds primarily to material and sensual things and neglects the psychological and emotional side of its nature.

Individual activity also becomes more object-oriented. The value of work tends to be determined by its material reward and the status it confers. "Success" is measured by how well one serves one's material and social status. Work, therefore, becomes more of an object that is owned by the worker than an activity: "A man's deeds are imputed to him as their owner, not merely as their creator." This kind of "possession" of one's labor goes beyond Locke's theory that every man "owns" his labor and is free to sell it as he chooses. Dr. Wood explains that Locke and the liberal economists began by making


43. Ibid.
labor a form of private property and, therefore, no longer a "condition external to man." But in modern society, the products of labor and the activity itself as a commodity take on "an independent objective existence of which man then becomes a passive function."

The individual personality, therefore, is very much influenced by the work performed and by the conditions imposed. The circumstances of private life—time available for family and leisure, place of residence, choice of friends and social interests—are all affected by work. At the same time, the value of work itself is less of an expression of individuality, in part because of the shift of work from individual control to that of society. America's definition of individuality grows out of the concept of the self-employed craftsman or farmer, who achieves self-sufficiency, and therefore individuality, through his own labor. Thus, the worker is endowed with a sense of usefulness and respect. Robert Bellah notes that "in the mid-nineteenth-century small town, it was obvious that the work of each contributed to the good of all, that work is a moral relationship between people." Work provided "a crucial link between the individual and

44. Wood, p. 134.
45. Bellah, p. 66.
the public world" and contributed to a sense of community. However, as work has become more of a "self-interested activity" and more involved with large-scale industry, it is "more difficult to see work as a contribution to the whole."  

This separation of work, product and reward gives work "an abstract quality" which Lasch believes leads to a narcissistic view where the individual "sees the world as a mirror of himself." Work becomes a "game" and loses its value, which, in turn, deprives man of an important source of satisfaction and self-identity. He, therefore, turns to excessive consumption and tends to live solely for immediate self-gratification rather than for a long-term goal. The traditional work ethic is replaced by an "ethnic of self-preservation."

In a sense, today's man has reverted to the motivations of his earlier days when work was performed for the sake of survival and its products consumed immediately. However, today survival is judged on a higher standard of materiality. In addition, the level of materiality achieved reflects the status and power of the worker,

46. Ibid.


whose identity is tied to his objective success rather than to his subjective development. This process is encouraged by large organizations that can provide the number of people over which an individual can exert power and against which he can measure his status and success. The result is "careerism," which has "emerged as the dominant national orientation." 49

Michael Maccoby explains that careerism is based on fear--fear of failure, of lacking the required knowledge and of losing control. The careerist must be constantly on guard against the competition of others who may be more capable--or better at the game. In addition, careerism fosters guilt in individuals who chose their career over "the higher needs of self, family and society" and over the loss of identity, integrity, and self-determination, "when he treats himself as an object whose worth is determined by its fluctuating market value." 50 Filled with fear and guilt, the individual careerist is in a constant state of anxiety, which he attempts to relieve through materialistic consumption.


50. Ibid., 205.
Robert Bellah sees the careerist as no longer striving to fulfill his potential but, rather, seeking only to "get ahead" of others in competitive self-advancement. Referring to one of the people interviewed for his study, Bellah explains that "mastery of a discipline ... mattered less than finishing first in the class, since learning itself was chiefly a means of making it to the top of an organization structured by chains of supervisory control and salary scales."

Competition in work or career is, to varying degrees, based on the individual's need to sell himself as a commodity. This demands separation and detachment of what Macobby calls the head and the heart. "To sell himself, he detaches himself from feelings of shame and humiliation. To compete and win, he detaches himself from feelings of empathy and compassion. To devote himself to success at work, he detaches himself from family feelings. Ultimately, to gain his goals, he is detached from social responsiveness." The qualities demanded by competition are in the "head," which means "tough-minded, realistic thought." Such qualities are opposed by the compassion, generosity, and idealism of the "heart," which do not

52. Maccoby, p. 205.
contribute to the ability to compete and are therefore left unneeded and undeveloped.

An individual in this situation, therefore, does not have any balance in his life or personality. Maccoby described the 250 executives and managers which he interviewed as brilliant and innovative and not "exceptionally greedy or hungry for power." However, "they are not a particularly happy group. They lack passion and compassion. They are cool or lukewarm. Intellectually open and interested, they are emotionally cautious, protected against intense experience."

Maccoby's observations could be compared with an earlier description of Americans by Tocqueville: "I have seen the freest and best educated of men in circumstances the happiest to be found in the world; yet it seemed to me that a cloud habitually hung on their brow, and they seemed serious and almost sad even in their pleasures," because they "never stop thinking of the good things they have not got." He claimed that this sadness, together with their "restlessness", was intensified by "the competition of all." For both Maccoby and Tocqueville, competition is seen to exert a pervasive influence on the

53. Ibid., p. 186.
54. Tocqueville, quoted in Ibid, p. 147.
social environment and the individual character. It tends to be divisive by nature and because of its direct relationship to the marketplace, it encourages the view that other men are objects for use in the pursuit of self-interest. In this kind of environment, Bellah notes, relationships become more intense, but also more transitory and limited. Although people can, and have to be, useful to one another, "the concept of a common good that the relationship served became ever harder to specify in a world where individuals mainly sought their own private good or the good of the organizations that employed them."

Once established as a social characteristic, competition has tended to carry over into other aspects of society. The political structure, with its ability to accommodate different and often conflicting interests, has offered a natural home for the less desirable aspects of competition. Locke and Mill both recognized the potential for conflict in the free pursuit of interests and attributed to the state some responsibility for overseeing the common good. And there is, in modern America, a common perception that political activity should be above self-interest or, at the very least, should accommodate all special interests in an effort to achieve the most good

55. Bellah, p. 118.
for the most people. This coming together of interests is, in theory, guaranteed by the democratic process in which "everybody, directly or through organized groups, has some power and nobody has or can have too much of it." As long as there is "universal suffrage, free and regular elections, representative institutions, effective citizen rights ... and both individuals and groups take ample advantage of these rights, under the protection of the law, an independent judiciary and a free political culture," all interests will eventually be served. The assumption is that through a combination of honest, well-meaning leaders and systemic checks and balances, special interests will be transcended through compromise and everything will work out in the end.

However, such compromises may not necessarily facilitate the best end and it is not clear that Americans really trust the system to work for the greatest good. Bellah's study of American political attitudes came up with "at least three distinct conceptions of politics, with attendant notions of the meaning of citizenship." One view saw politics as the process of reaching a moral consensus of the community and tended to take a positive attitude toward local government and "'getting involved'  

with one's neighbors for the good of the community." The second view focussed on "politics of interest" and included a negative reaction to professional politicians, the "mediators and brokers" of special interests. This process of "playing politics" was "seen as a kind of necessary evil in a large, diverse society, as a reluctantly agreed-to second best to consensual democracy."

The third view reflected the positive attitudes toward national politics where "the high affairs of national life transcend particular interests." Here, the dirty business of politics is expressed in terms of "national purpose." 57

As the study observes, these three understandings of political activity are quite distinct and even contradictory; "yet in practice they are often held simultaneously." 58 This indicates considerable ambiguity in the attitudes of Americans, which results in a certain amount of alienation. Much of the problem is the result of the difference between the idealized version of the political system contained in American historical traditions and the actual workings of the system, which is less than ideal. This difference is one which the "man in the street" often would rather not acknowledge.

58. Ibid., p. 200.
As the Bellah study indicates, people know that government is largely the brokering of special interests. However, there is a deep distrust of special interests, especially "big" interests which are perceived to be beyond the control of and antithetical to those of the individual. The conflict of such interests means "conflict among groups that are quite unlike one another in goals, values and lifestyles." Since "there is no way to discuss or evaluate the relative merits of values and lifestyles in the culture of individualism," this type of conflict is especially threatening because decisions may be brought about by coercion or manipulation, and the one likely to be coerced or manipulated is the individual or group with the least political and economic power. However, there seems to be a natural reluctance to acknowledge this position because it contradicts their ideal of an equal, just, individualistic society. The hope is that the elected leaders will rise above special interests and protect those they represent from the powerful special interests, which, for some reason, political leaders, are not expected to represent.

This attitude is encouraged by political office-holders who do not want to be perceived as having ties to special interests. "On the contrary, they are the most
ardent and eloquent exponents of the view of the state, and of themselves, as above the battles of civil society, as classless, as concerned above all to serve the whole nation, the national interest, as being charged with the particular task of subduing special interests." It is, therefore, difficult for voters to recognize and evaluate relationships among politicians and special interests.

In part, the difficulty involves the connection between the concept of a "national" interest and special interests. Indeed, it is not even possible to define "national interest" because it is composed of the diverse and competing interests of individuals and groups. The conflicts among these groups keep changing the focus of national interest, depending on where the power lies at any given moment in the complex interaction among political and economic power and public opinion.

America's lack of a stable national interest, and goal, has become more prevalent and more visible in the post-World War II era as social diversity has increased and as the United States has become more involved internationally. For example, in the 1970s, national interest was posed in domestic terms and focussed on the public welfare, concern for the powerless segments of

59. Miliband, p. 72.
society, the environment, and world peace. However, the disruption caused by all that expression of individualism led to the "conservative" eighties, where national interest has become synonymous with defense against external enemies. Putting it in terms of popular culture, Coke's desire to "teach the world to sing in perfect harmony" has given way to "Pepsi in the USA."

These slogans represent several of the conflicts contained in America's individualism. Coke's plea for harmony implies a recognition of the diversity of interests in America and the world. However, Pepsi not only limits its focus to the USA, but also implies that unity is best achieved by conformity, i.e., everyone drinking Pepsi. While Coke expresses the human desire to relate to others and to transcend political and cultural differences through common humanity, Pepsi, reflecting the nation's current nationalistic mood, indicates that unity stops at America's borders and the nation itself stands as an individual apart from the rest of the world. The two messages reflect "the classic polarities of American individualism: the deep desire for autonomy and self-reliance combined with an equally deep conviction that life has no meaning unless shared with others in the context of community."

60. Bellah, p. 150.
The influence of rational utility is not limited to the individual's external expressions. With the separation of the head and the heart, the heart also adopts the objectivity and values of the head. Development of spontaneity, what Fromm claims is the essential element of individualism, is inhibited. "Positive freedom consists in the spontaneous activity of the total, integrated personality ... by the active expression of ... emotional and intellectual potentialities." However, emotional expressions are not trusted and, indeed, emotion is in bad taste. Society is suspicious of a choice or action that may be morally satisfying but is not perceived to be in an individual's best interest. "In our society emotions in general are discouraged"; however, "there can be no doubt that any creative thinking--as well as any other creative activity--is inseparably linked with emotion." Without emotions, the individual is "greatly weakened; his thinking is impoverished and flattened."

The culture of society is also weakened and flattened. Since emotions cannot be totally abolished, they are separated from the intellectual side of the personality. Culturally, "the result is the cheap and insincere

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sentimentality with which movies and popular songs feed 

\\[63\\] millions of emotion-starved customers." This type of "popular" culture provides a certain outlet for emotions, but it does not encourage the development of an integration of emotions and intellect in individuals. Instead, the blandness of popular culture and the immature emotions of the individual feed on each other and there is little opportunity for the development or expression of an integrated subjective, human individuality.

Although "high" culture is available, it tends to be limited to those who can afford it or have the educational level required to appreciate it. Because both cultures are subject to the forces of the market, they contribute to the divisiveness of society. In addition, Bellah claims that the "high" culture is further separated in terms of specialization and disciplines. In a society where science, philosophy, theology, etc., pursue their own ends, there is no sense of universality, no union of beauty, goodness and truth for the artist to describe. Art is merely another specialization and the artist "is consigned to speak about his own feelings." But those expressions of personal feelings must be marketable and, 

\[63. \text{Ibid.}\]

\[64. \text{Bellah, p. 278.}\]
therefore, be within the bounds of popular tastes.

Thus, the highest form of creativity is also privatized and is considered to be another demonstration of an individualistic society. However, the direction and purpose of national culture as a whole is weakened and its contribution to society's values or to raising the level of human consciousness is lessened. If, as Kant claimed, "human aesthetics" are the essence of a successful society and essential to human freedom, then individuals who are deprived of that aspect of society will have a limited opportunity to develop individuality in spite of a political and economic right to individual expression.
Individualism in Soviet Marxism

Although Marxism provides the philosophical base of the Soviet Union's political, economic and social structure, Soviet roots are in Russia's culture and traditions. Soviet society, therefore, reflects Russian as well as Marxist characteristics. Individualism, in the American sense of the word, has not played a major role in Russian tradition. In America, the concept of individual freedom and civil rights developed together with the entrepreneurial drive for free commerce and enterprise. In Russia, the opportunity for individual accumulation of property and, therefore, of political and economic power was limited. "There was no powerful and autonomous landed aristocracy ..., the industrial bourgeoisie was relatively weak and politically inert; and rural society was based upon a network of self-regulating communes which collectively administered the social as well as economic life of the population." Such groups lacked the ability, the philosophical background, and the political experience to reform or change the character of society.

Modern ideas of freedom, equality and justice were introduced to Russia largely by the intelligentsia of the

nineteenth century, beginning with the Decembrists, the young nobles whose experiences in Europe at the end of the Napoleonic wars "had stirred in them shame and deep resentment at Russia's backwardness." However, the Decembrists and subsequent movements did not seek to abolish autocracy and replace it with western liberalism. The solutions offered by liberalism were considered inadequate to cope with the monumental problems of serfdom and the country's general backwardness, and often conflicted with the intelligentsia's vision of a new Russian society. They could not, for example, promote the sanctity of private property while demanding the abolition of the private ownership of serfs, and private enterprise was not well-developed enough to restructure their existing society.

In addition, there was a reluctance to adopt the western idea of civil freedom. Neither the "Westernizers," who favored the adoption of European progressive ideas and methods, nor the "Slavophiles," who rejected anything from the West, sought a duplication of European


society. They saw Russia as having a special destiny, and Russian freedom, equality and justice were envisioned as going beyond merely the individual to encompass all of society and set a standard for the world to follow. Freedom was seen as a social, and even a spiritual, characteristic rather than a political or economic right. Influenced by the philosophies of Hegel, Kant, and, eventually, Marx, Plekhanov, and the Russian idealist Vladimir Solov'ev, the intelligentsia's longing for a better society was involved, to a great extent, with moral responsibility. This concept of "social thought" (obshchestvennaia mys'l) was so broad that "there is no exact equivalent for this category of thought in Western culture." It involved "a free play of the mind and heart" and was "so morally pure" that Soviet ideologists still claim its theorists as the forefathers of Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

The social thought of Lenin, however, was more practical and focussed attention on the achievement of social goals by means of political power, industrial and technical progress, and economic growth. Nevertheless, the Russian vision of a morally human society wherein all aspects of society would work for the same ends remained.

This vision combined the existing "broadly 'collectivist' character of social and political life, with its direct concern for the moral as well as the material well-being of citizens." The two were, in many ways, mutually supporting.

The notion of freeing society rather than the individual fit in with the Marxian theory that man could only be emancipated by creating the appropriate economic, political and social conditions. This theory still obtains in the Soviet Union. Economic and political activities are tied to the development of social goals, which, in turn, demand a specific moral character that will promote the objectives and values set by society. These are "the negation of the traditional morality" (i.e., the aboliton of a class structure which keeps individuals socially powerless) and "the affirmation of a new 'communist' morality, which is in its entirety subordinate to the interests of the proletarian class struggle."

Soviet society is structured to reflect and encourage socialist values, including individualism. But for Marx, the individual could not flourish until his basic needs

69. White, p. 65.

were met. Under Soviet Marxism, therefore, the state has an obligation to provide at least the minimum requirements of food and shelter and, to the extent it is able, education, health care, and other social services.

Since the Bolshevik revolution, the cost of basic necessities have been kept low in the Soviet marketplace. In today's Soviet society, education, health care and other social securities are provided so that individuals do not need to prepare for personal economic disaster and can use their money as they please. According to a Time 71 magazine report, a three-room apartment in Moscow rents for $37 compared to $1000 for an equivalent apartment in New York, and a month's heat and electricity is $4.50 compared to $82. But luxury items are another matter: a television set costs $1,094 in the Soviet Union compared to $710 in the United States, and a Zhiguli car is $10,000 compared to $6,200 for a comparable U.S. car.

Although figure comparisons of prices or of wages are not a dependable standard, the Soviet state does seem to set prices according to what it judges to be necessities or luxury goods, and makes an effort to provide the essentials so that concern over material survival does not become an inhibition to individual freedom of choice.

Unlike the liberal view that individual freedom is found in the right to determine one's own economic responsibilities, Soviet Marxism sees these responsibilities as imposed on the individual by the demands of organized, specifically industrialized, society and the division of labor. Therefore, the removal of social services and production of goods from the private realm is considered to be a positive move towards freeing the individual from objective necessity.

The Soviet populace appears to agree. Russians I have spoken to thought it presented a considerable advantage over U.S. society. Stephen White notes that this assessment also pertains among Soviet emigres, even though they could be expected to be hostile toward Soviet practices. He quotes the Harvard study, The Soviet Citizen, as finding "a deep-rooted expectation among Soviet citizens that government and society should provide extensive social welfare benefits, including job security, universal education, medical care and other securities and guarantees."

The state is also seen as having "a right and a duty to limit" extremes of income and status inequality. While differences in individual abilities and justified

72. White, p. 100.
73. Ibid., p. 99.
rewards for greater effort were considered normal and acceptable, the notion that one individual should benefit at the expense of others seems to go against the Soviets' sense of "distributive justice," as one of White's emigres described it. It is probably this sense that is disturbed by the privileges accorded to the elite class of bureaucrats. Ronald Hingley tells of walking down a Moscow street, "swinging that hated symbol of unmerited privilege, a leather briefcase," when a young woman approached him and "hissed the accusation 'Soviet bourgeois' ... through her elegant teeth."

According to White, the Harvard study also showed "a widespread belief that it should be the function of the government, not simply to attempt to regulate 'anti-social' beliefs and behaviour, but also to exercise an active and improving influence upon the lives of its citizens." Although it was thought that matters like personal activity, religion, political opinions and home life were outside the proper boundaries of state responsibility, "most respondents were willing to conceive

74. Ibid.


76. White, p. 100.
of a wide ambit for the legitimate exercise of state authority."

Here, White is addressing an aspect of Communist morality that is even more foreign to Americans than a controlled economy: the direction of society by the state toward collective rather than individualistic attitudes. To Americans, the collective implies the suppression of the individual, and the direction of society by the state often appears to be merely the use of human and social values for "political" ends. However, the purpose of collective values is to raise human society as a whole to a higher level in order to provide the individual with greater opportunities for development. The idea is that the parts cannot function any better than the whole and, as the "traditional morality" disappears, the "instrument" of socialist morality becomes "an end in itself." That end is the "free development and fulfillment of all human faculties" for all members of society. As Marcuse explains, the familiar formula, "from each according to his abilities; to each according to his needs," "reestablished the individual as the ultimate point of reference for ethical norms: what furthers the free development of the individual is good."

Although the achievement of this formula in its pure form may be as far away as the "withering away of the state," it reflects the Soviet approach both to the economic progress of society and to the psychological progress of the individual. That approach is to live for a better tomorrow. Just as production goals must be increased, man's purpose must be constantly raised: "The higher a man's purpose, the more rapidly and more productively his abilities and talents develop.... Anticipated joy is a true stimulus of human life."

This is a basic tenet of Soviet psychology, which is founded on dialectical materialism, the history of conflict between materialism and idealism. "Since idealism accepted the psychic factor as independent, it attempted to explain the entire mental life from out of itself, from the laws of the psyche. In doing this, it ignored the most important fact which is offered by our knowledge ... namely, that consciousness is itself only a property of matter, a product of the brain, and that it develops as a result of the action of an objective reality which is outside us and independent of us."


This may sound very close to liberalism's objectivity, or what the Soviets call American behaviorism, which is "the sum of mechanically produced reactions" by the economic and social environment. Part of the difference is that the American individual cannot control his environment and his behavior is limited to reaction to the productive forces; whereas in socialist society, the individual (as part of the whole) can control those forces. The Soviets are also removing the subjective "psyche" from the realm of God and religion and recognizing it as an aspect of the living human being. In doing so, it is no longer separated from the objective environment where it tends to be subordinated to the objective personality and materialistic individualism. The subjective and objective aspects of the individual can, therefore, develop through a dialectical process in a congenial environment so that "the psyche" can become "a special way of expressing life."

High educational and cultural levels are essential to this process and both are given priority in the Soviet Union. In accordance with the theories of the development of the individual psyche, education is conducted on the "anticipated joy" theory, where learning is rooted in

81. Ibid.
82. Kostiuk, in ibid., p. 92.
the joy of solving increasingly difficult problems rather than limited to training. This entails not just moving to a higher level of math or reading, but also the "acquisition of entirely new knowledge, feelings and qualities of will." The child, or adult, should not only understand how something is done but also the reason for doing it. "One of the most important theses of Soviet psychology ... is the theory of the unity of man's consciousness and activity."

Moral training, therefore, is a major part of education and is stressed by the schools and by the youth organizations. In his study of Soviet education, Nigel Grant concludes that the aim of Soviet moral teaching "is to produce a person who will be willing and able to put all the effort of which he is capable into work for the common good ... and, furthermore, finding joy and fulfillment in the task." Moral, like general, education is necessary for an understanding of and commitment to the collective psychology as well as to the individual.

A high level of education and moral development is also, of course, beneficial to the state. But it would

83. Ibid., p. 93.

84. Smirnov, ibid., p. 25.

seem to be overly cynical to deny that individual growth is part of the Soviet goal. The stress on cultural and leisure activity would seem to support such a view, since political and social control could be accomplished without raising the general cultural level. Culture seems to be seen as essential to the "psyche's" ability to express life in a special way and, indeed, attachment to such activity is highly visible in Russian society. Writers, artists and performers, both past and present, are granted the highest status and recognition. Hedrick Smith observes that "Nowhere else in the world is poetry accorded such religious reverence or the poet so celebrated as priest and oracle as in Russia." And other artists are not far below the poets.

Ordinary people are also, to a considerable extent, judged by their cultural level. Individual status tends to be determined more by cultural level than by occupation or possessions. One of the greatest insults a Russian can pay is to accuse someone of "ne kultura," having no culture. This may refer to a lack of knowledge of the arts, to improper behavior in public, to inconsiderate treatment of others, or to the use of incorrect grammar. While waiting in line to check our coats at a theater, I

mentioned to a Russian friend that, in America, people take their coats with them to their seats. He thought such a thing was "not cultured." Believing that a rich country like America would also be a highly cultured one, he was astonished by such a practice, as he was to learn that some Americans did not have a "favorite painter" or did not believe in evolution.

The state's encouragement of individual cultural development can be gleaned in small ways. One is the quantity of museums, theaters and activity that goes on, all of which must be paid for by the state. Another is the amount of activity carried on by amateurs and professional hopefuls. There are numerous public bulletin boards which post notices of theater performances, art shows and poetry readings, often sponsored by trade unions, youth organizations, or a group of hobbyists, and held in public places like local "palaces of culture." One evening, I went to the small theater in what once was the Yusopov family mansion and is now a palace of culture. To get to the theater to see a young violinist play a program of American jazz, I passed through a room where couples were rehearsing ballroom dancing, a hall where young people were installing a photographic exhibit, and a snack bar (near the basement room where Rasputin was murdered) where children and parents were enjoying Pepsi diluted with mineral water.
Encouragement of such individual participation in the arts, as well as in sports and other leisure activities, can also be found in the pricing system. Although cars and pantyhose may be considered luxury items, theater tickets, books and records are apparently not and even artists' supplies and sports and hobby equipment are relatively inexpensive. One can see the Bolshoi ballet for $3-5.00 and buy a poster of Pushkin or sheet music for a few cents. The drawback is that one cannot always find what one wants and supplies and equipment are often of poor quality.

However, inability of supply to meet the demand does not appear to diminish the Russians' enthusiasm for the arts and, it seems to me, it is this enthusiasm that keeps Soviet society from being as dull and lacking in individualism as many Americans think it is. As in any society, the arts provide a means of expressing individuality. Perhaps this means is especially popular in the Soviet Union because there are less opportunities for personal expression in a material sense. Never having had much chance to develop a tradition of objective expression through material tastes, Russians seem to prefer subjective expression through the arts and through what Hingley calls "emotional self-indulgence."

The role played by emotion in Russian society is not easy to explain, as is demonstrated by Mr. Hingley's
Nor is there any way of determining whether or not Russians are really more emotional than any other people. However, it seems safe to assert that Russians are more comfortable with "emotional responses" than are Americans and that the "communication of emotion," including a "passion for self-dramatization," plays a significant role in individual expression. Since artistic and emotional expressions are highly compatible, they probably tend to encourage each other.

The relationship between art and emotion also aids in collective expression. Such expression is partly nationalistic and/or patriotic, like the universal admiration of the giants of Russia's artistic past or the enthusiastic audience response I witnessed to the Red Army Chorus's rendition of the World War II song, "Day of Victory." But even more, the arts provide a kind of common stream of experience and expression that crosses lines of individual or group interests. People with little else in common are likely to share an interest in the arts. A rather peculiar reflection of this is, I think, the tendency of all Russians to recite poetry in the same way. Certain levels of emotion and expression seem to be required, whether the recitation is by a professional

87. See Hingley's chapter on "Communications Systems."
actor in a theater, a teacher in a classroom, or ordinary Russians in their apartments.

The tradition of shared experience and expression can be traced to Russia's past. The most frequently cited example, of course, is the village commune (mir), which was "the basic unit of the social world for most Russian peasants." The mir's "spirit of secular collectivism has been linked with the special communal spirit known as sobornost, 'community-mindedness', often claimed as unique to the Russian Orthodox Church." White also cites trade cooperatives and the "broadly collectivist character" of the peasant household as strengthening collectivist predispositions. Such organizations instilled a collectivist tradition for political, economic, social and even spiritual organization, which is carried on by socialism.

However, collectivist traditions and concern for the common good do not preclude individual choices and actions any more than a subjective turn of mind precludes a desire for material well-being. American journalists like Hedrick Smith tend to focus on "the onset of bourgeois

88. White, p. 57.
89. Hingley, p. 123.
90. White, p. 58.
acquisitiveness." He notes that "the American middle-class way of life embodied the aspirations of a growing number of Russians.... People wanted their own apartments, more stylish clothes, more swinging music." Such observations are usually accompanied by examples of Russian efforts to obtain recordings by American rock stars and other samples of Western culture.

Such statements should, however, be seen in proper perspective. There can be little doubt that Soviet citizens want a higher level of material comfort. They want to be able to have the goods they need readily available in shops, to be of good quality and, hopefully, to even have some selection of styles. Material well-being is, after all, part of what socialism has promised them, and as citizens of a leading industrialized state, they expect a standard of living comparable to other nations. To a considerable extent, these promises have been fulfilled. The standard of living has been rising since World War II and Soviets are aware that they are living better. Robert Kaiser explains that, although the Soviet standard of living is not affluent in the American sense, Russians "can nevertheless be proud and satisfied ..."

91. Smith, pp. 70-71.
because they know how much has improved.... We're living well, Russians say repeatedly."

However, it seems to be part of the human condition that desires and expectations tend to rise together with fulfillment and Soviet expectations have also been given a lift by greater contact with westerners in recent years. Just as the officers of Alexander I returned from Europe with new ideas, so do contemporary Russians who visit the West or have contact with western visitors to the Soviet Union. Such contacts inspire considerable curiosity about western culture and society. Young people are especially anxious to discover and copy the latest styles in western clothes, music and lifestyles. And there is interest, often touched with envy, in the ready access to information and ideas that exists in an "open" society.

However, this interest should not be mistaken for a desire to replace their own culture or values with those of the West. There is a deep attachment to native cultures among all the Soviet nationalities, and the Russians are especially proud of their cultural accomplishments. Even when western styles are adopted, they are given a Russian interpretation which often transforms their fundamental character. For example, the tasteful simplicity of a Parisian dress design is lost

92. Kaiser, p. 49.
when copied in a fabric covered with large pink roses, and the "coolness" of a Sinatra song is lost when performed with the emotional theatrics of a Russian singer. As Kaiser observes, "A Russian's sense of what is normal or unusual is—by our standards—unusual."

It seems equally unlikely that Russians would be willing to give up their relatively easy-going approach to work and life and adopt the Americans' frantic pursuit of material freedom. As the Harvard study indicated, they appreciate the security and release from financial responsibility that the system provides. As one of the group of emigres that recently returned to the Soviet Union asked, "What kind of freedom is there in the United States? It's tough freedom. You have to worry about your life and your apartment, your bills every month, everything." Russians have no traditions in American-style competitiveness, independence or materiality. Even Hedrick Smith concedes that "Russians are less materialistic than Americans" and notes their lack of concern for appearances. "Russians are troubled much less ... by compulsive worrying about appearances, keeping up with the Joneses, being brightly scrubbed, having a

93. Ibid., p. 20.
95. Smith, p. 89.
well-deodorized body, perfumed breath, and a constant fresh look. In Russia, a person can be acned, homely, sweaty and seedy-looking and still be accepted."  

It is my impression that the Russian attitude is that life is too valuable to be wasted on such matters. Human energies are better devoted to good talk, good food and good friends and I suspect that Americans who have experienced this attitude envy it more than the Russians envy American affluence. Human relations are important to Russians and are "usually more intense, more demanding, more enduring and often more rewarding" than Americans are accustomed to.  

Even more, there is a sense of exhilarating freedom about being able to relate to people on a level of emotion and intellectual honesty that would, most likely, be considered eccentric or irrational in American society. Suzanne Massie explains, "With my friends in Russia, I talked whole nights away and the talk was of the soul and of destiny. It is impossible to describe the joy and the sense of relief that I felt. These encounters gave me strength. They changed my life and gave it a direction  

96. Ibid., p. 96.  
97. Ibid., p. 144.
and purpose it had not had before."  

The focus on human rather than material values is compatible with the collective concern for others. Russians commonly loan money to friends in need and it is expected that, if someone comes across a rare and desirable item in the shops, enough should be purchased to pass some on to friends and relatives. Such generosity is, in part, the result of the situation. But the scarcity of goods could just as well foster a "me first" attitude and the willingness to share what little one has is a recurrent theme in folk tales and literature and appears to be part of a general interest each individual takes in all other individuals. To westerners, this interest could seem intrusive. As I walked down a Leningrad street in January with my hands bare and my gloves in my pocket, a woman rushed up to me, pointed to my pocket and insisted that I put on my gloves.

Although this emphasis on human values is an aspect of the Russian rather than the Soviet character, it would seem to be encouraged by Marx's theory that human values can only be nourished in an environment where external social conflicts do not intrude. The Soviet system

99. Smith, pp. 80-81.
apparently has not intruded and its theories, if not always its practices, are aimed at nourishing the unity rather than the separation of society.

Unity, however, does not exist to the extent that Marx or even Lenin envisioned. First, the Soviet Union has not achieved full communism, which depends on such material abundance that all traces of economic competition are removed. Second, the Soviets no longer accept Marx's belief that communism will be the final stage of human history, even when reached. Marxist dialectic is, after all, a process of movement. It seeks progress and change for the better and recognizes that a certain amount of conflict is essential to change. As one Soviet writer explains, "all processes, things and phenomena in nature and society have internal contradictions which do not allow them to 'congeal', to gain 'eternal quiescence', and to stop their progressive development. They themselves are a source of development in both nature and society, in any system, including the socialist one."

"Contradictions," therefore, not only do exist, but a certain amount have been accepted as normal. But they are not the same as capitalism's competition of interests, which the Soviets see as being incapable of reconciliation.

They can only result in a complete victory for one side and the exploitation of the other. Therefore, competition must take an adversarial form, where the interests of one side can only be satisfied at the expense of the other, which leads to greater hostility and social disruption.

Social contradictions are not seen as adversarial by the Soviets. Although the characteristics and interest of individuals and groups may differ, they don't result in exploitation. This changes the relations between people and social groups, as well as between the individual and the state. Since all interests are aimed ultimately at enhancing the economic and cultural position of the entire society, contradictions are approached in a manner that will not create a winner and a loser, especially on the psychological level. In addition, since society's interests are concerned with problems such as crime, anti-social behavior, alcoholism, divorce, etc., society as a whole has an obligation to intervene, even at the expense of individual "rights".

Contradictions are resolved through a variety of social institutions, e.g., the courts, social welfare organizations, unions, and all levels of "soviets" from local housing committees to the republic soviets. For the individual, the common concern for his welfare means a
certain amount of interference in what Americans would consider to be their private lives but, on the other hand, no one ever need face a problem alone because there is always someone or some group to which an individual can go for support. In addition, support can be provided in an integrative way. For instance, if a child is having problems in school, a teacher or principal may go not only to the parents but to their places of work and residence to enlist help in correcting the cause of the problems.

In the final analysis, this cooperative approach to society may be what keeps Soviet society functioning. It allows for the interjection of the human element which can be precluded by the more stable but also more rigid approach of legal rights. It fosters a communal attitude that is consistent with traditional Russian attitudes and with which most Soviet individuals are comfortable.
other. Is the Russian better off in the relative calm and safety of his "police" state than the American in his "open" but more dangerous and disturbed society—and how would a Bernhard Goetz fit into either place?

Mr. Goetz is in trouble because his individual rights came into conflict with society's commitment to individual rights—the rights of the teenagers to determine their own actions—as well as with the law, which is designed to maintain public order. It is hard to imagine that any Soviet citizen could find any logic in such a situation, nor could he understand the conflict between public order and the rights of the teenagers. Under Soviet Marxism, public order would be the first priority because, without it, individual freedom would be curtailed. The individual cannot be free unless his environment is conducive to freedom.

In creating such an environment, Soviet Marxism does seem to offer advantages over American liberalism. One is that it offers a vision of what society should be and thereby provides a stable goal for both the leaders of the state and the general public. Planning how to get somewhere is easier if you know where you are going. Without a clear idea of what common social goals should be, solutions to social problems can be hard to find. And if found, solutions are difficult to
implement if there is no long-term commitment to them because of a constant pull of conflicting interests and ideologies, as frequently happens in the United States.

However, no complex society is without conflicting goals and the Soviet Union has its share (for instance, the class conflict between the growing group of technical intelligentsia and the workers and peasants). But here, too, Marxism seems to offer an advantage in its "dialectical" approach to conflict resolution. It permits a toleration of diverse interests that, in turn, allows for compromise without demanding a "winner" and a "loser". This method can avoid the more aggressive, confrontational approach of American competition of interests in business, politics and social life. The dialectical approach makes the "antithesis" seem natural. Therefore, opposition does not need to be judged as evil or wrong and the person holding the opposing interest is not necessarily the bad guy in the black hat.

Although such differences in Soviet and U.S. approaches may seem trivial, these approaches help form both societies' common modes of thought, including a definition of individuality. Liberalism's stress on private property and the competition of the marketplace has, as Marx predicted, tended to create an objective
common mode of thought which overwhelms individual subjective values. Although this was not the intention of Locke and Mill, their theories failed to provide a valid means by which individual subjective values and morals could be integrated into the objective society. Without active promotion, the social aspect of morality tended to be neglected as it increasingly came into conflict with the materialism, competitiveness and utility of the free market. The result has been a tendency to dismiss public morality unless it can be justified on the basis of public interest or cost-effectiveness, and an excessive enthusiasm for individual responsibility that has led to the tolerance of poverty, illiteracy, an extreme inequality in the distribution of wealth and benefits, and the general lowering of the whole culture. The individual, therefore, is often alienated from the social environment which conflicts with his subjective human instincts.

Soviet Marxism sees the integration of the individual with society as very important. Since the purpose of society is to provide a congenial environment for the individual, public and private values do not conflict to a great degree. The individual thus has more of an opportunity to integrate
the objective and subjective aspects of his personality in much the same manner as Fromm's "dialectical" individuation. It is also my impression that Bellah's division of the "expressive" and "utilitarian" sides of man does not exist in Soviet society to any great extent. Although the Russians may not express a public individualism as Americans do, they seem to be more willing and able to express their inner individuality.

Of course, individuality, like happiness, cannot be measured and it is, therefore, not possible to make a judgment on which society is more successful in fostering individuality, especially when each defines it differently. But it seems clear that each society could learn from the other.

Recently, the Soviet Union has shown signs of doing this. It is interesting that the new leaders should call their campaign of reforms glasnost, openness, which is obviously an American term. "Openness" does not, in fact, relate to all the reforms, which include the battles against corruption, alcoholism, bureaucratic structures, etc. But it is the best thing they can learn from the United States because, without it, freedom may not be suppressed, but it is stifled. However, even if glasnost eventually takes hold in the
Soviet Union, Americans should not look for it to resemble their own openness or individualism. Soviet individualism is the product of Marxist ideology and Russian traditions and the Soviets are not likely to welcome the negative aspects of liberal individualism nor give up the positive aspects of their own society. Their curiosity about the West and desire for a higher standard of living should not be mistaken for a yearning for American liberalism. They are well aware of U.S. shortcomings and "the attraction to the tangible, the shimmering superficiality, leaves impulse and attitude at the depths unchanged."

American society, on the other hand, seems unwilling to learn anything from the Soviets. This is unfortunate because it helps widen the gulf between the two nations and because they do have something to teach us. As Suzanne Massie explains, "The Russian capacity for compassionate understanding of suffering is perhaps the greatest gift that this great people has to give to us in the United States, lost as we are in our visions of perfection, of being forever healthy, young, beautiful, and strong. The burden of having to

101. Shipler, p. 349.
disguise the realities of human pain is a terrible one; it destroys many among us."

Part of this compassion is a rethinking of our concept of man and his individuality. The Soviets can justifiably point to flaws in our view of human nature and our social attitudes. "This is a hard discovery for Americans, one we often resist, for its implications corrode our creed that freedom is man's natural state, that all other conditions are abnormal, that the innate reflex of human beings is to strive against their bonds. After a time in Russia we become embarrassed by the nakedness of our naivete. And on some level, perhaps, we hate the Russians for giving the lie to our innermost assumptions about mankind."

Perceptions of human nature are colored by the environment in which human beings exist. It is not easy for any individual to understand that other environments may produce other, equally valid perceptions of human nature and of the social, political and economic institutions most able to facilitate human happiness and growth.

103. Shipler, p. 349.
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Conclusions

This paper's presentation of the two philosophies and societies, to some extent, over-emphasizes the negative aspects of U.S. individualism and the positive aspects of Soviet Marxist individualism. In doing this, the intention is not to deny the tremendous contribution of liberalism to the establishment of individual freedom and dignity or to denigrate the accomplishments of American society. However, these are well known, as are the shortcomings of Soviet society, and it has been my intention to broaden the common perceptions of both societies in order to achieve a more balanced view.

This effort presented some peculiar difficulties with regard to the comparison of values and societies that were not always comparable. For instance, there is the question of freedom. There is no way of measuring the human happiness quotient between freedom from economic necessity and freedom from economic restraint. Or, how much better off is a man who has the freedom but not the money to travel abroad than the man who has the money but is not permitted to leave his country? Even more difficult is the comparison of two values that are both valid but seem to contradict each