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Presidential Address

Shadows of Substance in the New World Order
Welfare concerns and "democracy" in the Russian Federation

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Shadows of substance in the New World Order. Welfare Concerns and "democracy" in the Russian Federation.

It was with some trepidation that I accepted the request of the Committee of this Congress that I chair the History, Archaeology and Culture Section on this occasion and that I make this statement of my interests before the Plenary Session. By specialization, I have been a historian of Russia and Europe, and many of the problems I am concerned with have been well removed from the ambit of the historian or social scientist concerned with India. Moreover, my prime area of interest is politics, and that too politics which is distant from the domain of fields, disciplines paradigms and epistemes which has come to mark the history of knowledge in recent times.

In the case at hand, however, i.e. the present concern of the Congress with a definition of the New World Order and the role of knowledge in the constitution and development of that order, a departure in the traditional concerns of the historian of India is undoubtedly required. For what we must deal with substantially is a consequence of events abroad and a challenge in other theatres to our own conception of the just and the expedient. Nor can we ignore the very real political contours of the new world order, however sceptical we may be of priorities that define it. In post-Cold War circumstances, it is one of the few concepts around which the consensual interaction of nations revolves: and, however dubious the significance of the consensus, its value cannot be ignored.

In such a context, I wish to share with members of the Congress an aspect of my recent work concerning one of the cornerstones of the new world system: I wish to present before you a sense of the priorities which shape the views adopted by those "democratic" movements which determine policy in the Russian Federation today and which have been crucial to the formation of the new world order in the recent past. Inside and outside the CPSU, since the onset of of M.S. Gorbachev's perestroika, these forces have played a decisive role in bringing the Cold War to a close; and since 1991 and the disintegration of the Soviet state, their opinions have undoubtedly been crucial to the course of international agreements on the environment, the economy as well as matters of disarmament.

In tracing the priorities of Russia's "democracy", I wish to focus on the approach of "democrats" towards "social protection" (through measures regarding public health, education and the treatment of age and destitution), and their critique of Soviet socialism on this score, assuming, in setting this focus, that "social protection" continues to be of contemporary relevance, however contested the means to ensure it (i.e. via formal or informal education, preventive or remedial medicine etc.)

In a historian's presentation, I shall show that contrary to general impression, despite preoccupations with political forms and growth, "democratic" public figures in Russia work with a legacy of concern with broad-ranging social wellbeing: that "democratic" Russia's participation in the new world order cannot, therefore, be marked solely by preoccupations with state systems or the fundamentals of economics. Although severely hampered by the economic crisis within which the Federation finds itself, official policy and public inclination (expressed through associative enterprise, local politics and philanthropy) will certainly be marked by the concerns with welfare which remain so strong in India, China, the USA and Europe, despite recent vicissitudes, and which must constitute a powerful impulse in the new world system.



In the course of the past decade, as criticism of statism in social and economic policy has gathered momentum in the West (to the point where it is almost an unquestioned assumption of public conduct), Russia's democratic movements (Demokraticheskaya Rossiya, the Dvizhenie Demokraticheskikh Reform etc.) have evolved their own critique of the pivotal position of bureaucracy and the country's Party apparatus in civic affairs. This has contributed to the atmosphere of hostility both inside and outside the USSR to government action in public matters, as adherents of Russia's "democracy" (the term normally employed for the recent fora and organizations), stressed that such aspects of Soviet life were responsible for the inadequacies of social welfare. And with the disintegration of the Soviet state, "democratic" arguments have become an integral part of the new regime: most especially their contentions that if bodies which deal with standard issues of welfare (education, public health, destitution etc.) had been marked by a substantial degree of public participation and decentralization in the past, their tasks would have been discharged more effectively.

Latterly, however, it has increasingly appeared that public figures associated with CIS "democratic" movements have shown themselves reluctant to address problems concerning the whole spectrum of welfare, as they had done earlier, and their focus appears to fall on the creation of a state system and to specific issues of privatization, national budget and investment. As a consequence, a number of occupations concerned with aspects of welfare not directly related to investment and growth, such as education and public health, have apparently receded into the margins of public concern. And activities related to the constitution of knowledge in these areas (the collection of data, specific research etc.) have ceased to be of general interest. Inevitably, in the literature on the evolution of the Russian Federation, it is argued that this trend will lead

to major distortions in the country's economy and social structure, and, on the surface, add a harsh edge to its international posture on such issues.

In this paper, taking issue with such contentions, I wish to argue that (Section I), Russian democracy's touchstones and reference points in the country's past were movements deeply concerned with measures for "social protection" broad issues of welfare, and their adherents directed the main disciplines of the time (both in the human sciences and in the "hard" sciences) to address themselves to these issues: that it will be difficult for the Federation's major policy makers to ignore that commitment. I then point out (Section II) that it was on the basis of personnel loyal to such concerns that the Soviet welfare establishment was constructed: the very establishment from which the "democratic" critics of Soviet socialism emerged. In Section III, and IV, I discuss the predicament, in such circumstances, of Russia's democracy today, stressing the duality in the posture of its major protagonists, who are concerned to establish a transition in the economic and political regime of the country, and who came to their current position from a critique of the policies of Soviet socialism towards public welfare (and are hence committed to an involvement with welfare in rhetoric and policy).

Throughout the survey, stress falls on the interconnection between the rhetoric of public figures in their institutional ambit and the contours of welfare concern. Implicit in the selection of this focus is the assumption that the interaction is crucial to the determination of policy and the accumulation of knowledge, providing a better sense of these issues than studies of the scope within which institutions operate and the scholarly world of the researcher functions.

Certainly, I have not considered here the implications for a sense of "welfare" of characterizations of the October Revolution and the Soviet state, avoiding the range of debate (on which much has already been said) concerning whether the USSR was "a degenerate worker state, a form of state capitalism, the contemporary restoration of capitalism by a revisionist clique or a maladjusted phenomenon, forced to overcome its handicaps through economic devolution".¹ I have also left unattended questions posed recently by Russian political scientists Andrannik Migranyan (about the "transitional" quality of democratic politics), Alexander Tsytko (regarding its parallels with the CPSU's earlier hegemony) and V. Sogrin concerning the bankruptcy of Russia's democracy and its future.² What is said here provides some sense of what my response is on these counts, but to deviate further would be, divert attention from a problem that merits examination in its own right.

I The Image of the Autocratic Past

An important element, undoubtedly, in Russian "democracy's" constitution of its own public self-image, and its attempts to distinguish itself from the Soviet

socialism which it challenged, has been its own ordering of Russian history. This has been a complex task, and one more easily approached through changes in place names than systematic endeavour in historical research. For, as scholars outside the Federation have pointed out, exercises in well-documented enquiry have unearthed embarrassing uncertainty totally out of keeping with the version of events which democrats have sponsored. However, in what has emerged in the circumstances, almost all associations with which democrats have expressed sympathy are linked firmly with a general and far-reaching commitment with social welfare rather than any piecemeal regard for the state, economic growth etc.

At a rhetorical and symbolic level, an image of the past has evolved where the CPSU was "an instrument of state power - exclusive and omnipotent, all-generating and implacable", and where, "having destroyed private property and choked civil society, and having destroyed all sense of human rights, the Bolsheviks clothed themselves in the guise of the state, justice and popular authority"³. Russia's history after the October Revolution has been considered indelibly marked by an awful dictatorship, and, implicitly, those elements which lay outside that period, or those who resisted that regime, were considered acceptable to "democracy". In creating its historical associations, "democracy" has chosen either public figures of Autocratic Russia, or dissidents of the Soviet era.

In all cases, however, the prominent groups linked with pluralism and human rights (including property rights), who are the object of democratic concern, have been also connected with the rhetoric as well as the constitution of public welfare legislation, which, in its conception, had a comprehensive quality to it, rather than an exclusive and specific focus. And such a record, for all groups affected, has scarcely been hidden by Soviet historians, despite their hostility to those involved; nor has it failed to receive equal, if not disproportionate stress in American and European (including British) historiography, which is held in esteem in democratic circles.

At one extreme of the spectrum, lies the Autocracy, which, in the period 1864-1914, attempted to come to terms with electoral politics and the sacrosanctity of law and justice, and whose traces have attracted so much attention from Russia's President and his advisor Sergei Filatov in the recent past. The full gamut of the labours of its functionaries has been properly delineated in Soviet as well as non-Soviet historiography of the period, and, in this, there is as much attention to the specific legislation regarding state form as there is to the welfare steps intended in 1864 and more firmly developed in measures of the 1880s, 1890s and 1900s. If, on the one hand, officials were preoccupied with the specific problems of franchise and the behaviour of elected local bodies (In the Commission on Provincial and District Institutions of

1859-64 and statutes of 1864, 1870 and 1890) and functioning and powers of national bodies (in the run up to the October Manifesto of 1905 and the months thereafter), elsewhere they devoted themselves to issues of insurance, public health, education and destitution.

Ministers of the Interior from S.S. Lanskoï to D.A. Tolstoi and P.A. Stolypin displayed such complex concerns, while the writing and activity of Ministers of Finance, such as M.Kh. Reutern, N.Kh. Bunge and S.Yu. Witte show a serious attention to social problems on a broad scale, together with the issues immediate to their portfolio (investment, the budget and the currency). Witte himself was responsible for as "conservative" a statement as can be made on this count in 1897: "... the desire to extend the activity of government for the good of the population deserves every sympathy of course. It is excusable to some extent under the conditions in our country - a country comparatively young in culture and developing rapidly. But, if the needs are innumerable, the means of satisfying them are limited..."⁴ Nevertheless, it was the same Witte who was responsible for a solid interest in Factory legislation and special funds for the wellbeing of agriculture, posing no objection to contemporary proposals for dealing with destitution. And later, Minister of the Interior P.A. Stolypin's interest in local government reform, Church affairs, electoral reform, changes in land tenure as well as workers' insurance is again a case point, in a similar vein.

At another level, those who might more justifiably be considered the antecedents of modern "democracy", i.e. Russia's liberals, also followed a similar course, demonstrating a keen interest, as in the case of the veteran Constitutional Democrat leaders I.I. Petrunkevich and F. Rodichev, in "schools for popular government" (i.e. elected local self government bodies in an Autocratic framework), on the one hand, while addressing themselves also to the various public services which would enable individuals to participate in democratic politics (i.e. primary schools, local health centres, and means to ensure a minimum standard of living).

Hence, not only did liberal leaders take an interest in the way representatives related to their constituency, and the means that might be employed to involve constituents in local and national government, they also were concerned with local sanitation, the organization of doctors' conferences, the supply of subsidized pharmaceuticals, effective insurance against fire for farmers and traders etc. At one point in his local government career, Petrunkevich clearly argued that "... issues of public health, education, insurance etc. are not private interests but important state interests, without whose correct organization changes in the conditions of economic life of the population ... are unimaginable...". Russian liberals did not follow the precepts of liberals in France, whose laissez-faire Francois Ewald has so effectively studied, and who

compartmentalized and professionalized their concerns.⁵ If the latter enjoined individuals to concern themselves with public welfare but were unwilling to press their involvement through legislation, in Russia, liberals stressed the directive role of community (expressed through the state) in such matters, and individuals associated with fin-de-siecle liberalism such as I.Kh. Ozerov adopted "solidarist" principles in their stance on crucial issues.

Ultimately, in circumstances of the complexity of the services involved, while officials were reluctant to interest themselves in the conservative social insights of L.N. Tikhomirov, let alone the theories of A.I. Chuprov, B.A. Kistlakovskii and M.M. Kovalevskii, and they balked at the involvement of these sociologists in legislative consultation, they undoubtedly gave them room for expression in Ministerial journals and included the likes of P.A. Lyashchenko, the political economist, in their list of contributors, despite their clear lack of political reliability. University staff and statisticians were regularly consulted, meanwhile, in a number of government commissions.

The close connection between liberal public men, who controlled a large domain in local self government, and researchers and theorists, meanwhile, was even closer. Not only were I.Kh. Ozerov, P.I. Novgorodstsev (the philosopher) and M. Ostrogorskii (the political scientist) closely associated with liberal circles in local government, but a large cohort of statisticians, doctors and educators were employed by them in statistical bureaux and sanitary agencies. Among these, F.F. Erisman, D.A. Zhibankov and S.N. Igumnov are those best known, but liberal sponsorship extended to many others of the Pirogov Medical Society and to the pioneers of statistics in the country. And, among the latter, A.A. Rusov, A.V. Peshekhonov, V.N. Grigor'ev and A.V. Chayanov established connections between their limited professional domain and a broader arena of welfare policy, providing, as they did, figures of value to broad surveys of harvests and prices such as the leading volume edited by A.I. Chuprov and V.S. Posnikov in 1897, and participating in the Congresses of Naturalists and Physicians which were crucial to the medical profession. Close interaction also took place between statisticians and the growing insurance establishment which was constituted at the time around elected local government and the Insurance Syndicate of Companies.⁶

Regrettably, however, whatever the "democratic" image of this epoch today, the ramshackle nature of Autocratic administration (often enmeshed in systems of personal patronage and institutions such as the Table of Ranks), the extensive surveillance it introduced over professional and public life, together with the often obsessive nature of professions with their own ordering, status needs and immediate requirements for members, provided serious obstacles to a rapid evolution of activity in the realm of welfare. Moreover, the complicated nature of representation in elected institutions before 1914 limited

the appeal and range of electoral politics. And the curbs imposed on public associations limited their social value, depriving the sphere of welfare activity of a flexible instrument.

Elected bodies were based on separate electorates for different social strata: and both they and public associations were affected adversely by the prohibitions that prevailed regarding organized public meetings both before and after the 1905 Revolution. While, despite government controls, significant independent initiatives were taken by local government activists, the Imperial Free Economic Society, the St. Petersburg Committee for Literacy etc., before any conference or venture, the subject of discussions had to be communicated to Imperial functionaries, and police were often present to vet proceedings. Serious co-ordination of local government welfare projects was forbidden outright when the question rose, constituting a serious limitation on quick and rapid follow-up of welfare problems at a time when rapid industrialization was moving apace.

II Soviet foundations

It was in such circumstances that the social policies of the early Soviet regime evolved - often guided by those who were associated with the cause of welfare before the Revolution. Established professional institutions which survived the Revolution - such as the Pirogov Society of Physicians - prompted early Bolshevik activists to create the Kommissariat of Health of the early Soviet regime.⁷ And it was based on the early work of local government agronomists that assistance for improvements in agriculture was contrived in the 20s. Those who laid the guidelines for issues of housing, sanitation and regional development emerged from the local government and official bodies of the old order, and it was with an eye to such issues that matters of doctrine and economic reconstruction were judged. While little attention focused on discussions concerning effective involvement of the public in areas of policy implementation, and while matters relating to franchise, representation and effective structures for the expression of a plurality of opinions received a back seat, broad ranging concern was expressed in welfare services, which went far beyond issues of private trade, investment and the raw statistics of growth (the stock in trade of economists such as Larin and Preobrazhensky) - services such as public health and elementary education now being constituted on a national scale for the first time.

The major obstacles to a properly integrated conception of public welfare and social protection (which did not focus solely on land redistribution or the nationalization of industry), however, came at two levels in a political and administrative system which provided little avenue for the expression of diverse and opposing opinions (except in the form of lobbies in Party bodies). On the

one hand, a factor was the activity of members of specific institutional interests, such as the social insurance administration or trade unions who, in the realm of public health, are known to have "defended their closed facilities and the privileged treatment of industrial workers". Equally crucial was the concentration of authority in the hands of a few major party officials in the course of the mid 30s. Such concentration frequently led to lop-sided welfare planning - as was undoubtedly the case in the rural areas, where until the 1950s many of the major facilities of insurance and pensions were not extended to collective farm workers, and skewed prices also prevented them from attracting services through other means. The period did not exclude integrated concepts of welfare: for everything from industrial and agricultural growth, housing, education health and culture were part of the Planning concerns of the time. But the way this welfare was socially arranged was undoubtedly distorted, as issues of identification of socially hostile groups (involving methods which were far from well-founded), came to play a major role in policy implementation.

The consequences of such a situation in the area of research and speculation are now well known and became well established by the 1950s. So great was the dread of the Secret Police and denunciation in the period of the Great Purges (1936-1938), and so far-reaching was the censorship that accompanied it that relationships between individuals and institutions without the mediation of the Party became severely fraught. Thereafter, excessive professionalization within each "field" of activity (related to knowledge or social action), with little cross communication except through the apparatus of the CPSU, rendered all reflection on welfare the creature of past injunctions with little attention to problems overall. And major crises began to take shape in civil life - such as the collapse (owing to distorted professionalization and lack of inter-departmental interaction) of security measures to deal with possible accidents in the country's nuclear plants.⁸

Khrushchev's 20th Party Congress speech, and the reforms which followed, merely excluded from the CPSU excessive personalization of the Party bureaucracy after 1956, without any serious solution to the system that had been set in place: official measures devised no added flexibility to the CPSU's functioning and its increasing complexity in the decade that followed (irrespective of the change in General Secretary in 1964) rendered the Party the more ineffective as a mechanism of integration and co-ordination at a time when tribunes of public opinion and interest (the Soviets) were rubber-stamping bodies.

III Perestroika

The forerunners of Russia's "democracy" - i.e. the "reformers" associated with M.S. Gorbachev's "perestroika" - were deeply marked by such a background of

contradictions. And, between 1988 and 1991, as they set to tackle the onset of a major economic crisis (generated by the impending fall in real incomes, the inadequacies of social welfare arrangements, high military expenditure and declining national income), they were to be deeply frustrated by these institutional legacies.

At the outset of Gorbachev's sponsorship of "new political thinking" almost all the prominent members of the former President's "reform team" expressed deep discontent with the existing state of affairs in the country in areas as far removed from each other as the organization of military personnel and the writing of the history of the 30s; they confessed sympathy with the changes N. Khrushchev had attempted to establish in the USSR's political and administrative institutions, and, in interviews, spoke of the deep impression that the reforms of the 1950s and early 1960s had made upon them. But, throughout, they were uncertain in their approach to the past, and, clearly wished to retain certain structures which had nurtured them and conventions to which they were accustomed.⁹ The consequence was a failure to deal with crucial problems associated with aspects of Soviet society slated for "restructuring"; and, in the case of approaches to public welfare, a lack of serious co-ordination.

Alexander Yakovlev, M.S. Gorbachev's right-hand man throughout these years, was an important instance of such confusion, as is clear from the opinions and views he expressed at this time. CPSU Central Committee member during 1953-73 and Ambassador to Canada in 1973-83, Yakovlev was brought to head the Central Committee's Department of Propaganda in 1985 and rose quickly to be a member of the Politburo by 1987, and his name (together with that of Gorbachev) became synonymous with "perestroika" thereafter. His attitudes towards the Soviet Union's past, however, together with his sense of the precise import of "perestroika" was almost always unclear.

In 1989, in an interview, Yakovlev pointed out that in the 50s, Khrushchev's "changes and reforms ...were absolutely necessary" and that they "brought the country enormous benefits". He also drew attention to "the Stalin cult as a phenomenon" and asserted that he was sure that it was better understood because of Khrushchev's actions. Yet Yakovlev was exceptionally sensitive that falsehoods about Stalin should not be spread and even argued for the censorship and suppression of Rybakov's book "Children of the Arbat" in view of apparent misrepresentations concerning Stalin that appeared in the book and the attribution to the late Soviet leader of a major role in the conspiracy to murder S.M. Kirov in 1934. He glossed over the uncertain nature of evidence in this case which undoubtedly permitted the artist to exercise his imagination (especially when his conclusions were well in keeping with what was known of Stalin's character). Again, referring to collectivization, Yakovlev correctly

pointed to the "very complex and very contradictory times" and, again correctly, referred to the often "willing" move to collectivization in certain parts of the country (as, for instance, in his own native Yaroslavl). But he failed to put these views in perspective with references to the false premises on which dekulakization had been generated in those years, and the ultimate effect of vulgar class analysis of the time which scarred the countryside irredeemably.

Such reservations, qualifications and outright refusal to undertake a far reaching criticism of the Party-society conglomerate and its crippling impact on public welfare and public decision-making came from the straightjacket of ideology and a subservience to the Party idea which was responsible as much for the inflexibility of Soviet government as its cohesion. As other interviews of the "perestroika" period revealed it was a mood typical of the early reform. Even that "official dissident", Yevgenii Yevtushenko did not criticize the country's rigorous censorship conventions in essence: and he was equivocal about the necessity for party pluralism. Such views blended well with the form of "public participation" in political and administrative affairs which became typical of the Soviet political system under the reformed electoral procedures of 1988, which were the basis of the elections of 1989 and 1990. As public figures of the time testified later, a relentless use of Party muscle was self-evident in the indirect elections to the USSR Congress of Deputies, and in the street campaigns which introduced standard electioneering practice into the country. And there is little doubt that the CPSU and M.S. Gorbachev did not intend to surrender the Party's monopoly of authority, but, rather, wished to dress it in more seemly garb.

A Central Committee document of August 1990 showed the conspiratorial determination with which the CPSU expected to emerge pre-eminent from the electoral reform. Noting the necessity to avoid the serious consequences which transition to a market economy had had for Communist parties in Eastern Europe, the document ran on that the final aim of its current schemes was "via the commercialisation of the existing party property, to systematically found structures of an invisible party economy." Here, for the working of the mechanism, "only a narrow circle" were to be admitted by the General Secretary of the Party and his Deputy.¹⁰

In the realm of social policy formulation, this resilience of the Party, despite its steady fall in membership and continuous internal squabbling, led to a play of almost contradictory forces in the decision making; negotiations, counter negotiations and half-hearted compromises became the order of the day. The most glaring instance was the popularity in Presidential circles of two "advisors" of totally divergent views - N. Shmelyov and Tatyana Zaslavskaya - whose opinions were totally irreconcilable, as was made clear on one occasion, when the latter made her opposition clear to the former's views that "whatever is economically efficient is moral; whatever is inefficient is immoral".

Zaslavskaya firmly argued that this position was "too extreme", that "principles of economic efficiency, morality and socialism are distinguishable, and they may come into conflict with each other", and that "the task is to find ways to reconcile them". This was the kind of stand with which Shmelyov would have no truck, yet most of policy under President Gorbachev was directed to finding some via media between the demand for social justice which came from Zaslavskaya and the call for growth oriented policy which came from Shmelyov and, to a lesser degree, Stanislav Shatalin. Such a situation led to eternal wrangling and half-policies, the great instance of which was the refusal to accept either the Shatalin Plan for economic growth or the Ryzhkov plan for development in 1990, when the constitution of a compromise of great complexity found little sympathy from most of those involved. The resort to public opinion, to resolve the deadlock, was impossible for M.S. Gorbachev: he would only refer to it in the form of opinion surveys without serious use of it as a means of governance.

The inevitable result of the "concerns" of this time with welfare, consequently, was rapid attention to issues of social policy - especially medical insurance, pensions and housing - even as a debate was joined concerning the definition of socialism in the economic sphere and the necessity for multiple forms of property, renewed attention to production methods, and reforms in banking and investment. A large number of economists (Shmelyov, L.A. Abalkin, Oleg Bogomolov etc.) and welfare professionals were assembled to provide their expertise on these issues and new legislation was framed.¹¹ But pressures and counter-pressures led to failures of implementation, introduction of qualifications etc. as different groups of professionals wrangled concerning what was best and the CPSU was sorely divided on major matters; and this generated despair among almost all those involved, which in turn combined with horror at instances of local national conflicts. A total lack of faith in the operations of the CPSU and the ministrations of the "centre" in the USSR was a characteristic of the fateful year 1991.

IV Russia's democracy

Those public figures who decided to break with this rambling system are the "democrats" who now settle the fate of social policy in the Russian Federation, whether through the agency of Presidential institutions, through influence via the various Parties and individuals that represent them in the Federation Council and the Duma, or through elected local government, provincial commissioners, public organizations and private companies. The various coteries surrounding Boris Yeltsin, the offshoots of the Demokraticheskaya Rossiya movement and the Dvizhenie Demokraticheskikh Reform, and individuals such as Gavrill Popov (former Mayor of Moscow), are undoubtedly absolutist in their own right, but they are forced to submit themselves to the

ballot among an electorate which has shown itself interested and which is less professionally divided than it has been in the past (owing to electoral politics and a vocal press). It is this phenomenon which ensures a consistent preoccupation among politicians and businessmen with social welfare (i.e. issues of pensions, public health and destitution) in the Federation's troubled circumstances.

The major contribution of "democracy" to public welfare has been the elimination as of September 1991 of the vast apparatus of the CPSU and the Russian Communist Party in its earlier form, and the liquidation of the chain of interconnection between economy, state and Party through the nomenklatura (i.e. the Party's unofficial hierarchy of individuals for promotion in all these spheres) at a time when these were the most significant impediments to the reform of public services. "Democrats" themselves established their social and political ascendancy in the RSFSR as a consequence of the electoral reforms of 1988 and M.S. Gorbachev's relaxation of censorship. But, among them, mavericks such as Boris Yeltsin and consistent opponents of the CPSU such as Andrei Sakharov, Gleb Yakunin and Lev Ponomarev combined with supporters of "perestroika", such as Yuri Afanasev, Anatolii Sobchak and others on a consensus that the CPSU's primacy in the USSR made effective solution to crucial economic and social problems impossible. In August 1991, consequently, following the Yanaev putsch, democrats enforced a ban on the Party and liquidated the last vestiges of its authority with the formation of the CIS in December 1991, following this measure with sweeping personnel changes in official bodies.

If "democratic" policy priorities have varied widely thereafter, ranging from the broad concerns of late "perestroika", which find a place in the programs of public figures such as Grigorii Yavlinsky and Alexander Lukin, to the monetarism and austerity of Boris Fedorov (who echoes some of the principles of N. Shmelyov, albeit in a harsher form), the compulsions of the Congress of Deputies and, since 1993 December, the Duma, have forced them to adopt a tolerant approach to public institutions for elementary and higher education, and public health. Reduction in state funds with privatization of trade outlets and wholesale units (in 1992), and the formation of corporations among the most lucrative state enterprises (in oil and natural gas) reduced the capacity of officials to persist in this support. But, with the collapse of the Party, a measure of independent will was asserted by municipalities and local councils in raising their own funds and support systems. In major centres of population, private health schemes have also removed the stress on the state system which had been unable to cope with the strain of co-ordination and treatment long before 1991.

The language and self-perception of "democrats" moreover, far from rendered them exclusively centred on growth at any cost, as critics argued. While Boris

Yeltsin himself has been at pains to make major "populist" gestures to local trade union pressures in the Kuzbass and the Tiumen, elsewhere, Ponamarev and Yakunin have stressed that their quarrel with the old Soviet system is that it worked exclusively in the interest of the nomenklatura, failing to allow the public access to the best in the country: private property and its restoration was considered the best instrument to end this oligarchic control of national wealth. Following this strain, Yuri Afanasev pointed out that even the current system allowed for the manipulation of institutions by "brass hats and civilian bosses of the Military Industrial Complex" as well as members of nomenklatura who, in altered circumstances "want only one thing - to stay in power..". Afanasev called for his own organization, the Demokraticeskaya Rossiya movement to perform the role of "a vehicle of public interests" and argued that it should "play a decisive part in radical economic reform and ensure social protection". Despite Afanasev's eclipse as a "democratic" leader in the recent past, it is impressive that his opponents have not questioned his priorities and have merely contended that they are innocent of infringement of the principles he has supported.

Given the influence of such opinion at the highest levels of state in the Russian Federation, there can be no question of the goals and aims of "democracy" as a welfare-oriented force in recent times, and it is only the capacity of the system for which it is responsible to achieve "democratic" aims that can be queried. The stress on property and the relaxation of systems for "social protection" have brought that capacity under hostile scrutiny, and a series of charges have been levelled against "democrats" for individualism, aggrandizement and the encouragement of "kleptocracy". And there is a measure of truth in the charges. For the constraints exercised on the federal budget by the demands of international agencies and the lack of control by official bodies of schemes for social protection have led to a systematic degeneration of educational and health services especially. In the administrative chaos generated by the absence of a civil service to all intents and purposes, the focus of "democrats" has often gone to the fashioning of a state system rather than committed attention to essential services. And this, combined with the inflation engendered under the economic reforms recently (whose impact on incomes, admittedly, is limited by indexation) has jeopardized the proper functioning of welfare services. This has been evidenced most recently in the fate of the country's Compulsory Health Scheme, which centred on Federal and Territorial Funds for the compulsory insurance constituted following passage of the Law on Medical Insurance in 1993. The revenue collected for insurance (which stood at about 1.8 trillion roubles in early 1994) was designed for equipment, medicines, transport and helping those unable to pay for services: but it went substantially unused whether because it lay in deposits (30%) or was frozen in order not to fuel inflation (31%). Meanwhile, public surveys showed general dissatisfaction with the medical institutions that do exist (76%

answering "no" to the question "are you satisfied with the present day state of public health in Russia?").

According to the sound principle of most "democratic" associations, experts have been duly consulted on such matters and have been free with their advice, with Andrei Akopyan of the Centre for the Reproduction of Man recently arguing (on the basis of medical insurance experience elsewhere) that "the model of medical insurance being implanted today does not seem to be necessary either for patients or still less so for medical institutions themselves. The former have no right of choice whereas money simply does not reach the latter".¹² This is sound insight from a prominent surgeon-urologist, but the value of such advice (or "knowledge") is often of limited value in the confused circumstances of the Russian Federation today.

V. Conclusion

In the charges levied against the "democratic" record, however, there is little thought to the crisis of the Soviet Union in the last year of "perestroika" and the essential failure of "social protection" long before the "democrats" assumed control of Russian government. In fact, it is as much for the observer of the new world order in which the Russian Federation is a major participant as it is for the historian of Russia to answer whether mere commitment devoid of the institutional fabric for achievement (a hallmark of Soviet socialism in the 20s and in the 80s) is capable of furthering public welfare in any meaningful sense. And once this is answered in the negative, as it must be, the task that Russia's democrats have assumed must be taken with greater sympathy than is customary, and their affiliation to the the cause of public welfare through past associations and through present choices must be given greater credence.

Not only, as I have shown here, is the "democratic" course set by the models from the Autocratic past to which they have bound themselves: i.e. by the views and actions of local government workers and welfare professionals on the one hand, and by the efforts of Imperial officials on the other hand, as these functionaries and "intelligentsia" strove to cope with problems of public wellbeing at the time of Russia's early industrialization. Russia's "democracy" is equally committed to "social protection" by the institutionalization of such "protection" under the Soviet state, whatever the limitations of the services concerned and the institutionalization that took place. Working under such constraints, democrats must remain true to the precepts of their own revolution against Soviet power. And in doing so, they must present a powerful support for "the party of man" in the uncertain vicissitudes of the New World Order, albeit under circumstances which are indefinite and fraught.

Notes

1. A statement of the major assessments of the USSR of this type is to be found in Francois Chatelet, Evelyne Plier-Kouchner, Les Conceptions politiques du XX siecle (PUF, 1982), pp.762-3 and in the section L'Etat Partl.
2. For Migranyan's and Tsypko's views, see my own discussions in Yeltsin's Parliament and Russia's politics Seminar 1992, Russia's Presidency, Economic and Political Weekly 1994 and Parties in the Russian Political System in M.K. Palat and Geeti Sen, Rethinking Russia (New Delhi 1994), which also contains an interview with Tsypko. Sogrin's views are stated in Novaya Ideologiya dlya Rossii, Mezhdunarodnaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunardonye Otnosheniya 1993.
3. Vystuplenie v konstitutsionnom sude predstavatelya Prezidenta RF Sergela Shakhraia, Nezavisimaya Gazeta (NG) 9/7/92.
4. Ezhegodnik Finansov (St. Petersburg, 1898).
5. Francois Ewald, L'Etat Providence, (Grasset, Paris, 1986/1994)
6. R.E. Johnson, The zemstvo statisticians in W.S. Vucinich and T.Emmons (ed.) The Zemstvo in Russia (Cambridge University Press, 1982).
7. S.G. Solomon and John F. Hutchinson (ed.), Health and Society in Revolutionary Russia (Indiana University Press 1990).
8. The Chernobyl accident of 1986 was a consequence of this degeneration, as pointed out by Academician Valeril Legasov in his Moy dolg rasskazat' ob etom...., Pravda, 20th May 1988. Legasov was a member of the Commission appointed to deal with the accident.
9. Stephen Cohen and Katerina van den Heuvel (ed.), Voices of Glasnost' (Norton, 1989) has most of the interview material I have used.
10. NG, 31/10/91
11. Voprosy Ekonomiki 1990, Nos 3 and 11 for the "welfare" oriented discussions of this time.
12. Moscow News, September 16-22, 1994