

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET SOCIOLOGY, 1956-1976

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INTRODUCTION

On June 19, 1958, a group of prominent Soviet philosophers, economists, and historians met in the Institute of Philosophy, USSR Academy of Sciences, and established the Soviet Sociological Association (SSA). As Soviet sociologists prepare to celebrate the 20th anniversary of their first professional organization, we have an opportunity to review the progress of Soviet sociology as an academic discipline and examine its prospects for future development.

The case of Soviet sociology, despite its apparent idiosyncrasies, is a paradigmatic one. It provided a rare opportunity to observe in vivo the evolution of sociology into an academic discipline. It is partly for this reason that it continues to attract so much interest outside the Soviet Union.

The first reactions in the West following the emergence of Soviet sociology reveal a peculiar mixture of surprise, skepticism, and hope (Labeledz 1956, 1963; Brodersen 1957; Roucek 1958; Kassof 1961, 1965; Merton & Riecken 1962; Ahlberg 1964; Feuer 1964). As sociological research continued to advance in the 1960s, a note of optimism about the future of Soviet sociology could be easily detected (Fischer 1964, 1966, 1967; Weinberg 1964; Allen 1965; Parsons 1965; Kiss 1966; Simirenko 1966, 1969; Vucinich 1968). Among the works of the current decade, probably the most thorough general review of the field available includes a book by Weinberg (1974), an article by Lipset (1973) on Soviet stratification research, and two works by Gouldner (1970) and Simirenko (1973), which present alternative models of the development of academic sociology in the USSR and the USA.

With perhaps two exceptions (Shalin 1976; Simirenko 1976), recent works deal with the past and largely neglect the organizational and theoretical developments of Soviet sociology in the last few years. Yet there is good reason to believe that the events of the current decade have been crucial for

the institutionalization of sociology in the Soviet Union as a science and a profession.

The twenty-year history of Soviet sociology can be broken down into three periods. The first begins in 1956, extends into the early 1960s when the first sociological centers appeared throughout the country, and ends soon after the dismissal of Nikita Khrushchev in 1964. The second stage has as its high points the change of leadership in the SSA in 1966 and the establishment of the Institute of Concrete Social Research in 1968. The third and current stage of Soviet sociology is marked by the complete change of leadership in the upper-level staff of the Institute of Sociology during 1972–1974 and the subsequent reorientation of sociological research in the country.

The constraints of space do not allow a review of the various substantive contributions made by sociologists in post-Stalin Russia. Since the institutional development of Soviet sociology is the major concern of this essay, I concentrate primarily on those findings that shed light on the status of Marxism as a general sociological theory. A distinctive feature of Soviet sociological research is that, explicitly or implicitly, it strives to test hypotheses derived from Marx's theory. This historical union of Marxist theory and Marxist research is likely to remain the major legacy of the first decades of Soviet sociology.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Inherent in Marx's theory is a contention that man's role as scientist is inseparable from his role as ideologist. Awareness of this fact, according to Marx, is impeded, because the scholar himself normally belongs to the ruling class. Because he has a stake in perpetuating the status quo, he tends to adjust his theoretical positions and research practice to the prevailing ideological needs.

The situation changes with the rise of the proletariat. The interests of this class are expressed by a genuinely new type of scholar who openly admits his class connections; though in this situation, Marx maintained, the scientist's role as a student of reality does not contradict his role as a class ideologue. The more thorough the scientist's commitment to the interests of the proletariat, the greater the scientific value of his findings; and conversely, the more consistently the new class binds itself to the theory of scientific communism, the sooner the present social order will be replaced by a classless society.

The first attempt to fully implement the principles of partisan science following the Russian Revolution revealed the difficulties associated with Marx's theory. As it turned out, the need for continuous revision of social

theory went against the scientist's role as an ideologue, inasmuch as this role required constant vigilance against ideological "revisionism." Marxist theory soon emerged as a surrogate of ideology, and as such, lost its potential for development as a scientific theory. Ironically, the class-bound, partisan approach was extended into natural sciences where it provoked the denunciation of "bourgeois genetics" and "imperialist physics" (Joravsky 1961; Graham 1966; Medvedev 1971). More fundamentally, the empirical function of Marxist theory was curtailed. The social research begun in the 1920s by Soviet scholars was quickly suppressed as "vulgar Marxism" (Simirenko 1966; Weinberg 1974).

Until Stalin's death in 1953, social sciences in the Soviet Union continued to be normative and speculative. The very term "sociology" was carefully avoided as a synonym for bourgeois science of society. Historical materialism stood for sociology and was largely understood as a part of Marxist theory dealing with social history and the historical mission of the proletariat. "Scientific communism," which was intended by the founding fathers as a more empirically oriented branch of Marxism, did not differ much from historical materialism. Both disciplines centered on relating the realities of socialist society to the tenets of Marx's theory and detecting signs of the emerging communist society.

The importance of the de-Stalinization campaign unleashed by Khrushchev in 1956 lies in the tacit but unmistakable endorsement of relative autonomy for scientific enterprise. The shift from the stern principles of communist partisanship is well documented by the numerous publications that appeared in the theoretical organ of Soviet Marxism, *Problems of Philosophy*, following the 20th Congress of the CPSU. It can be seen, for example, in the following statement made ten years after the beginning of the campaign: "Rejecting the cult of personality, overcoming its evil consequences, the Party first of all opposes every effort to impose any one standpoint as the only correct one and denounces rule by decree and incompetent interference into theoretical debates" (Editorial 1965:6).

Even more striking is the lifting of the 30-year ban on the exchange of ideas between Western and Soviet scholars. This is stressed particularly in the editorial entitled "For the development and strengthening of ties between philosophers of different countries," which insisted that "personal contacts and correspondence are essential to strengthening ties and exchanging ideas and information. The experience of such contacts suggests that they enable philosophers of different countries better to understand each other, make for an atmosphere of trust and friendship between scientists. . . ." (Editorial 1958:8).

The revival of Soviet sociology is among the most conspicuous outgrowths of redefinition of the relationship between science and ideology in post-Stalin Russia.

THE MEANING OF “CONCRETE SOCIAL RESEARCH”

The initial stage of Soviet sociology is often portrayed as a period of legitimation and struggle for survival (Fischer 1964; Simirenko 1966). As sound an explanation as it seems, it tends to overlook the fact that at that time there was neither sociology to legitimate nor sociologists to defend their vested interests in the survival of a new discipline. The incipient sociological movement was headed by well-established Soviet philosophers who were forced—much against their will—to discard the old habits of wishful thinking and to step onto untested ground: empirical research. Moreover, it was professional ideologists who tried to convince the social scientists that “it is absurd to believe that philosophers can draw their conclusions by merely deducing some speculations from others by an abstract analysis of uncontested truths. Particularly, one has to put an end to the assumption that the specifics of philosophy consist of compiling one’s works without ever leaving one’s desk” (Editorial 1956:16).

The establishment of the Soviet Sociological Association in 1958 underscored the seriousness of the new commitment to the empirical study of society. The term “concrete social research” was coined to designate the new spirit in Marxist social science. During the late 1950s it gained wide currency, which did not immediately correspond to its popularity. Some old-school theoreticians treated the innovation with apprehension, warning against the danger of empiricism (Fedorova 1957; Kammari 1958). The reaction of the younger generation of scholars was generally more enthusiastic (Arbatov 1956; Molodtsov & Semenov 1959, Dolgodilin et al 1962, Osipov & Yovchuk 1963). Yet neither group had any clear view of what concrete research should entail.

The theoretical rationale of concrete research rested on the idea that Marxist theory, though proven in general by the course of the Russian Revolution, should be adjusted to the realities of the modern world. It was stressed that Marx could not provide for the developments prompted by the split of the world into socialist and capitalist camps. Some authors reminded us that Lenin himself gave an example of how to creatively develop Marxist theory. The foremost ideologist of this time instructed Soviet scholars at the General Meeting of the USSR Academy of Sciences:

The development of the sciences which study the laws of society is incompatible with the blind worship of abstract formulae, is unthinkable without fresh, new formulation of problems, without scientific courage, theoretical daring, and intensive work. The inspiring model of scientific courage for us always was and will be the scientific heroism of the founding fathers of Marxism-Leninism. . . . (Ilichev 1963:115).

The proponents of concrete social research pointed out that the works of the founding fathers contained meticulous analysis of empirical facts, and that Lenin repeatedly used the term "sociology," meaning concrete research of society without the necessary negative connotations. It was during this time that the term "Marxist sociology" became firmly established in the vocabulary of Soviet social scientists. The function accorded to concrete research within the framework of Marxist sociology was to supply historical materialism and other social sciences with the empirical data necessary to update the general formulae of Marxist teaching.

It should be clear that concrete social research was not originally intended as an endorsement of a new discipline in addition to classical Marxism. Rather, it implied the restitution of the lost empirical function of Marxist theory. In the words of the leading Soviet philosopher, "Concrete research, for us, is a way to entirely overcome the remnants of dogmatism, to strengthen ties with practice, with everyday life" (Fedoseev 1965:14).

It is hard to take seriously research conducted by Soviet sociologists during this period. Its quality makes understandable the general tendency on the part of Western observers to ridicule early Soviet studies. Nevertheless, the historical significance of the new trend need not be obscured by admittedly awkward efforts of Soviet sociologists to make unwarranted generalizations based on deficient statistics and unrepresentative surveys. Of long-term importance was the recognition that Marxist teaching is, in addition to its function as a guide to action, also a scientific theory that can maintain the standards of scholarship only when coupled with systematic empirical research.

At last, Soviet scholars moved from the general statements about the historical mission of the proletariat to the investigation of workers' conditions in Sverdlovsk and Moscow (Molodtsov & Semenov 1959; Iovchuk 1961; Andreeva 1961); from discussions of the potentials for the rise of a new man to pioneering research of the time-budget and material resources for leisure activity in Novosibirsk (Strumilin 1957; Prudenskii 1961); from the theory of alienation to investigating worker's attitudes toward their jobs in Leningrad (Iadov 1963; Zdravomyslov & Iadov 1964); from the assumed unanimity of the Soviet people and government to a public opinion survey of different segments in Soviet society (Grushin & Chikin 1962; Grushin 1963); from assertion of full equality under socialism to studying social stratification and mobility in the USSR (Osipov 1965; Shubkin 1965; Arutiunian 1966).

The first sociological centers were organized in the Soviet Union in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In Novosibirsk, social research centered in the Institute of Economics and Organization of Industrial Enterprise. Novosibirsk sociologists had a strong background in economics and mathematics,

which is reflected in the highly quantitative character of their studies. The specialty of Novosibirsk sociologists became population movements, time-budget research, and the problems of youth.

The sociological laboratory in Leningrad was set up in 1960 on the basis of the Philosophy Faculty of Leningrad University. During the next few years, similar laboratories appeared in the faculties of economics, psychology, and law, which in 1965 merged into the Institute of Complex Social Research. Leningrad sociologists became famous for their studies in sociology of work, occupations, and urban planning.

Moscow sociologists were predominantly philosophers by training. The Institute of Philosophy of the USSR Academy of Sciences remained a center of sociological activity until 1968 when its sociology department, originally established in 1961 as a Sector of Labor and Daily Life, was transformed into the Institute of Concrete Social Research. During the 1960s, Moscow sociologists conducted a number of studies on social stratification, mobility, sociology of labor, and rural sociology.

Along with the sociological groups in Kiev and Sverdlovsk that were created in the mid-1960s, these centers were brought under the direction of the SSA and given the status of regional branches in the late 1960s.

Such was the beginning of what later became known in the West as the "new sociology in the Soviet Union" (Fischer 1964). Its significance, at first, eluded many commentators in the West. Neither was it fully understood by those who stood at the cradle of Soviet sociology. But once started, the new mode of scientific activity began slowly to evolve into a social institution with all the accompanying unanticipated consequences inherent in rational human enterprise.

THE SECULARIZATION OF SOVIET SOCIOLOGY IN THE 1960s

Sociological research continued to expand in the early 1960s, both geographically and thematically, when in 1964 Nikita Khrushchev, the First Secretary of the CPSU, was suddenly dismissed. This totally unexpected occurrence caused a short pause. However, the new leadership not only reinforced the accommodation reached earlier between science and ideology but moved to what appeared to be a further enhancement of scientific freedom and standards of scholarship. This was highlighted by a series of strongly worded publications denouncing "incompetent interference" into theoretical debates (Editorial 1965; Dubinin 1966; Efromson & Iuditskaia 1966; Shishkin 1966).

The new changes should not be misunderstood. The principles of class partisanship were still in effect, while scientists continued to pledge their

commitment to the goals set forth by the Communist Party. However, the stress on "putting an end to dogmatism" and "rigorous verification" of the theoretical positions was strong enough to encourage the new generation of Soviet sociologists to ask that sociological research be granted some degree of autonomy from more speculative branches of Marxism—primarily from historical materialism.

The revival of concrete social research did not directly challenge the structure of authority in social sciences as it emerged under Stalin's rule. The philosophers who gained dominance in the 1940s, filled the leading posts in the SSA. As long as research practice was confined to compiling statistical data from published sources and showing progress of literacy in the Soviet Union since 1913, no question of competence was raised. Nevertheless, the growing sophistication of sociological research made it progressively more difficult to keep pace with the new mode of scientific inquiry. In addition to this, because of the progress of research, it was necessary to make some of the more abstract notions of Marxist sociology operational in order to render them amenable to empirical investigation.

During the first stage, the dominant view of the relationship between social research and historical materialism asserted that the latter was the only conceivable Marxist sociological theory, while the former was considered an "empirical arm," a set of technical tools and procedural devices designed to supply theoreticians with facts for further generalizations (Fedorova 1957; Molodtsov & Semenov 1959; Rutkevich & Kogan 1961). This view virtually equated historical materialism and sociology.

Since the early 1960s, this position had been effectively challenged by a number of theoreticians who maintained that Marxist sociology had its own area of theoretical competence, which did not coincide with that of historical materialism. The term "sociological research" was introduced to differentiate theoretically oriented studies from the more instrumental fact-gathering function of social research. The new approach had two major modifications.

The moderate position held that historical materialism was a general sociological theory of Marxism that studied the laws of societal development, but in addition to it there were special theories and areas of inquiry that constituted the proper field of concrete sociology (Rozhin 1962; Verbin & Furman 1965; Iadov 1966; Chesnokov 1966). Another group of sociologists went further, suggesting that historical materialism was a philosophical theory, and as such, it served as a methodological foundation for sociology. The latter has concepts, methods, and, by implication, organizational autonomy as does every independent science (Gvishiani 1965; Aganbegian & Iudin 1966; Osipov 1966; Levada 1969).

Both groups of scientists agreed that the progress of sociological research required the development of middle-range sociological theories. This view

was endorsed in the General Meeting of the Soviet Sociological Association held in 1966. The historical significance of this meeting was that it brought to power the young generation of Soviet scholars, sociologists practically engaged in conducting research. On the suggestion of the foremost Soviet sociologist, Doctor Iadov, personal membership was introduced in addition to the previous arrangement that permitted the membership of organizations only (Kapeliush & Prigozhin 1966).

On the eve of the SSA General Meeting, the second edition of the two-volume compendium, *Sociology in the USSR*, appeared in print. It was pointedly stressed in the preface to the first volume that a number of social sciences had already separated from philosophy and now "with some delay sociology is becoming recognized as an independent science" (Osipov 1966:9).

The next step in the secularization process came with the establishment of the Institute of Concrete Social Research in the system of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. The Institute was established as the All Union Center called upon to lead sociological research in the country. Of no small importance was the fact that the first director of the Institute, A. M. Rumiantsev, was a member of the CPSU Central Committee and Vice President of the USSR Academy of Sciences. As a practical matter, it implied that the members of the philosophical community would be unlikely critics of the Institute's activity.

Another and by far the most conspicuous event that enhanced the status of sociological research in the traditional hierarchy of Soviet social sciences was the conference held in the stronghold of Marxist orthodoxy—the Academy of Social Sciences of the CPSU Central Committee in 1967 (*Sotsiologiia i ideologicheskaiia deiatelnost* 1967). One important outcome of the conference was official recognition of the fact that in a socialist society there are social problems that must be openly admitted and dealt with seriously. The participants reported the findings of numerous studies documenting the existence of latent unemployment (Kolpakov 1967), the growing diversity in the attitudes of the readers toward the central newspapers (Kogan 1967), the lack of discipline among young people (Kharchev & Perfilev 1967), the rise of alcoholism in the Soviet Union (Zaigraev 1967). (Some of these findings are discussed below.) In uncharacteristic form, the head of the sociological group attached to the Academy praised the achievements of Gallup polls and called for the establishment of a similar institution in the USSR. In his words, "It is startling indeed when in the USA, they can better evaluate our mass ideological information, and, along with this, our social relations, than we can do in our own country" (Petrov 1967:119).

The carte blanche given to sociological research coincided with the simultaneous campaign for the promotion of a scientific approach toward na-

tional economics problems. As the Party turned to scientists for recommendations regarding its policies, the theoretical premises of the grand theory in which these policies were presumably grounded, also came into the focus of scientific inquiry.

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Much of the methodological discussion in Soviet literature revolved around the question of how middle-range theories were related to the general sociological theory of Marxism. The whole issue was complicated by the fact that Soviet sociologists had to elaborate their position with regard to the ongoing debates in the West. The general attitude of Soviet sociologists toward their Western colleagues had changed since they began to participate in the World Congresses of Sociology. (The first Soviet delegation went to the Amsterdam Congress in 1956.) Although they continued their attacks on bourgeois sociology, the criticism lost much of its sting in the 1960s, as demonstrated by the following assertion: "We are accused of not wanting to study Western sociology and particularly American sociology, but in truth, we are carefully following its course of development, and today we know more about it than yesterday, and tomorrow our knowledge will be even fuller" (Fedoseev 1962:395).

The common consent was that the techniques and quantitative methods of research developed by Western sociologists could be incorporated into the framework of Marxist sociology. At the same time, Soviet scholars never ceased to stress the need for vigilance with regard to the theoretical premises of Western sociology.

The need for middle-range theories was first elaborated by Andreeva (1965) and Konstantinov & Kelle (1965). A year later Iadov (1966) offered the theoretical substantiation for special sociological theories, which he contrasted to middle-range theories advocated by Western sociologists. According to Iadov, special sociological theory is a subsystem of the general sociological theory—historical materialism. The latter is the general methodology that provides the strategy for formulating special theories. He indicated that the idea of a middle-range theory belongs to Merton, though he insisted that Marxist sociologists give it a different meaning. The suggested difference was fourfold: (1) The need of Western sociologists for middle-range theories was said to be prompted by the crises of general sociological theory, whereas in the case of Soviet sociology it originates from the need to specify the general theory of Marxism. (2) The task of special sociological theory is to find out the essential, causal connection between social phenomena, whereas middle-range theories provide the con-

ceptual scheme for “mere” description of regular behavioral acts. (3) Western sociologists do not look for the inner ties between middle-range theories, while Marxist sociologists organize them into a whole scientific system. (4) Finally, special sociological theories are derived from general sociological theory, whereas Western sociologists seek to arrive at general formulations via middle-range theories (Iadov 1966:30–31).

The subsequent discussion confirmed the status of special sociological theories as a legitimate element of Marxist sociology (Iadov 1968; Rumiantsev & Osipov 1968; Zdravomyslov 1969; Ugrinovich 1970; Andreeva 1972). Those who took part in the discussion stressed in particular the role of scientific hypotheses without which, it was argued, sociological research was doomed to be anecdotal and theoretically irrelevant.

The latter point was especially salient, for most of the sociological works still followed the tradition of “concrete” research. The sociologists typically began by isolating the practical problem, such as labor turnover, dissatisfaction with the job, alcoholism, the apolitical mood of youths, etc. and then proceeded to design a questionnaire that was distributed among as many respondents as possible. The formulation of the hypotheses was sometimes completely omitted, while theoretical generalizations were made on an ad hoc basis.

Part of the reason for the poor quality of research was the lack of sociological education. None of the main figures in today’s Soviet sociology have received formal sociological training. A few of them were allowed to study Western sociology during visits of three to six months in the West. Some benefited from their knowledge of foreign language. Still others were acquiring their skills through practice or in occasional seminars that began in the 1960s. The survey of the participants attending the meeting of Soviet sociologists in Leningrad in 1966 revealed that 30.5% had degrees in the humanities, 25% in philosophy, 27% in history, 10% in economy, 4.5% in the natural sciences, and 3% in psychology (Beliaev et al 1966).

The first undergraduate course in methodology and techniques of sociological research was given in Leningrad State University in 1965. To the end of the decade, similar courses were introduced in other major universities. In 1969 the Institute of Concrete Social Research opened the first graduate program in sociology, although the Scientific Council of the Institute continued to grant degrees in philosophy, rather than in sociology.

The turning point in Soviet sociology came with the publication of the research by Leningrad scholars who investigated workers’ attitudes toward their jobs (Zdravomyslov & Iadov 1964). In the same year, Kharchev published his study on the family in the USSR (1964). These works were followed by pioneering studies on social mobility (Shubkin 1965; Rutkevich

1967), social stratification (Osipov 1965; Arutiunian 1966; Shkaratan 1967), public opinion (Grushin 1967; Kogan 1967; Shliapentokh 1969), the sociology of youth (Rubin & Kolesnikov 1968; Ikonnikova & Lisovskii 1969; Kogan 1969), and the sociology of science (Leiman 1971).

The history of Soviet sociology can provide a valuable insight into what Merton (1968) has called the "serendipity effect." While the theoretical concern of Soviet sociology continued to grow, the gap between the general sociological theory of Marxism and the realities of Soviet society became increasingly more visible. This is not to suggest that Soviet sociologists were systematically testing theoretical propositions derived from Marx's theory, or that they sought to cast doubt on Communist Party ideology. What they intended to do was to unearth new evidence that Marx's forecast about the course of historical development had come true, and to provide the Party with the recommendations for accelerating this development. Nevertheless, the optimistic conclusions presented in the end of the reports were often at variance with the findings summarized in statistical tables.

Soviet society is admittedly a class society. Thus in 1966 the average income of workers was twice that of the peasants on collective farms (Magdiev 1970). Despite this fact, however, Soviet Marxists kept insisting that members of different classes had full opportunity to change their class position. The study by sociologists from Novosibirsk refuted this claim. The researchers found that the children from different family backgrounds put more or less the same stress on obtaining higher education, but the chances that they would be able to realize their plans were greatly affected by their class positions. The Soviet sociologist, Shubkin, summarized the results of his study as follows:

While we are categorically opposed to an overly broad interpretation of these selective data, we nonetheless have a basis to assert that the paths of life of young people in different social groups at present differ substantially. Of 100 graduates from families of agricultural workers, only 10 continued their studies, while 90 went to work; of 100 graduates from families of the urban intelligentsia, 82 continued their studies and only 15 went to work (1965:66).

Shubkin's findings were confirmed by a survey (Mishin, Rubtsov & Terentev 1970) conducted in Gorki. This study demonstrated that the number of students in higher educational institutions coming from rural areas had steadily declined during the period of 1959–1968 from 16 to 5%, whereas the number of children from the intelligentsia rose for the same period from 60 to 65%. The authors attributed the gap to the difference in the quality of education in metropolitan and rural areas. The gap was particularly striking since the intelligentsia made up about 20% of the Soviet population.

Interesting results were obtained in a study of workers' attitudes toward their jobs; the study demonstrated that the establishment of the public ownership of the means of production is not in itself sufficient for reduction of workers' alienation. The authors contrasted the notion of alienation to the "communist attitude toward work." The latter was made operational through a series of indicators, which included satisfaction with the job, worker initiative, participation in the public life of the organization, discipline. Leningrad sociologists found that a negative attitude toward work—absenteeism, alcoholism, dissatisfaction with the job—was positively correlated with the level of routinization of the performed function. The author's forecast for the development of the communist attitude toward work was rather dim: They admitted that in the coming decades "*the situation may even worsen in view of the growing disproportion between rising expectations of the young men finishing their 8–10 years in school with regard to the content of work and the backward rate with which this content is enriched in working professions*" (Zdravomyslov, Rozhin & Iadov 1967:305).

The studies of public opinion were originally intended to demonstrate the undivided unanimity of the people and their government. The sociological data made it clear that the considerable part of the audience of the central newspapers disagreed with editorial opinions about Soviet foreign policy and economics. The disagreement was particularly strong (about 33%) among the respondents with a higher education (Shliapentokh 1969). Equally surprising were the data on workers' attitude toward the level of democracy in their industrial enterprises. Approximately 89% of the workers expressed discontent with the existent practice of appointments whereby workers were practically excluded from the decision-making process (Kapeliush 1969).

The dichotomy between communist theory and practice is not a new issue in Soviet social science. According to the more traditional explanation, negative phenomena in socialist society are viewed as the inheritance from previously capitalistic and even more obsolete systems of production. This explanation, which can be traced back to Marx's *The Critique of the Gotha Program*, apparently lost its appeal after 1961 when the Soviet Communist Party announced in its currently operating program: "The Party solemnly proclaims: the present generation of Soviet people shall live under communism" (Mendel 1961:486). This interpretation was superseded by a theory known as "insufficient utilization of the advantages of the socialist system". The latter explanation related the existing discrepancy between theory and practice to the "unsound," "unscientific" methods in governing social processes in the Soviet Union.

Both these explanations are apparently apologetic in that they deny any connection between the social problems in the USSR and the nature of the

social order. Besides these, there are theoretically at least three other explanations: (1) Soviet society is a pseudo-Marxist society, and therefore facts about its dynamics have little value for the development of Marx's theory. (2) Marxist theory requires revision in the light of the data furnished by Marxist research. (3) The empirical findings obtained by Soviet sociologists have dubious scientific value.

Setting aside the first interpretation (it deserves more attention and space than can be given here), one could stress the second as all the more possible in view of the growing divergence between Marxism as an ideology and as a scientific theory in post-Stalin Russia. As the further development of Soviet sociology proved, it was the third interpretation that was called upon to explain away the gap between communist theory and practice.

SOVIET SOCIOLOGY IN THE 1970s

The 1970s have been a period of academization for Soviet sociology. It is during this decade, at least for the seven years we are able to observe, that many obstacles on the road to the full recognition of sociology in the Soviet Union have been removed.

In the 1960s, Soviet sociologists did not have their own national journal. The works in sociology were published in journals attached to more established disciplines, such as *Problems of Philosophy*, *Philosophical Sciences*, *Problems of Economics*, etc. Two other serials published irregularly specialized in sociology: *Social Research* and *Man and Society*. Since 1969, the Institute of Concrete Social Research has published the *Information Bulletin*, which chiefly covers studies done by members of the Institute.¹ It was the establishment of the quarterly journal *Sociological Research* in 1974 that provided sociologists throughout the country with a publication facility and opened the way to the further professionalization of sociology in the Soviet Union.

In 1972, the All Union Attestation Committee ruled that all dissertations dealing with sociological research were thereafter to be classified as dissertations in applied sociology. In 1975, the Ural and Leningrad universities opened an undergraduate specialization in sociology (O podgotovke sotsiologov na filosofskom fakultete Uralskogo Universiteta 1976; Iadov 1976).

The membership of the SSA rose in the 1970s from 231 collective and 1397 individual members in 1970 to 400 collective and 1500 individual members in 1976 (Bovkun 1976). Two new regional branches were formed,

¹The *Information Bulletin* remains the most important single source of findings obtained by Soviet sociologists during the last decade. Most of the total 39 issues of the Bulletin published from 1969 to 1972 were available for general use until the early 1970s when part of them were classified or destroyed.

one in the Baltic Republics and one in the Far East. Two more—in Moscow and Transcaucasus—will open soon.

The growing theoretical concern of Soviet sociology was underscored by the change in the title of the Institute, which was renamed the Institute of Sociological Research in 1972. The first textbook in sociology appeared in 1976. It reinforced the role of special sociological theories and delineated new problem areas on which Soviet sociologists were called to concentrate their efforts (Osipov 1976). Among the new areas that came into the focus of scientific inquiry were regional sociology (Borshchevskii 1974; Freidman 1975; Kogan 1975), the investigation of the socialist way of life, which is understood as a system of behavioral and spiritual patterns characteristic of humans living under socialism (Bestuzhev-Lada 1974; Mansurov 1974; Zdravomyslov 1974; Glezerman 1976), and mass communication and the effectiveness of ideological propaganda (Firsov 1971; Vooglaid 1972; Firsov & Muzdybaev 1975; Sokolov 1975).

The organizational advances of Soviet sociology in the current decade leave no doubt that sociology in the USSR is institutionalized as an academic discipline and a profession. The price it had to pay for this development was the denunciation of the “ideological errors” committed by Soviet sociologists in the 1960s and the subordination of Marxist theory to Marxist ideology.

The general background against which Soviet sociology became academically established should be understood as the campaign for the promotion of the partisan approach in social sciences. The campaign started on the eve of 1970 when the two-volume course in sociology by Levada (1969) came under attack for what critics called an attempt to separate sociology from historical materialism (Kozlovskii & Sychev 1970). The criticism was continued in the theoretical organ of the CPSU, *Kommunist*, which accused Levada of “drifting away from the position of class analysis” (Glezerman 1970:84). A group of philosophers warned against the growing gap between historical materialism and special sociological theories. As the result of this secularization, the authors pointed out, “the ensuing vacuum had sometimes been filled with theories uncritically borrowed from bourgeois sociology” (Glezerman, Kelle & Pilipenko 1971:68).

In the early 1970s, the Central Committee of the CPSU empowered a special commission to investigate scientific and ideological progress of the Institute (IKSI AN SSSR 1972). The commission established that some members of the Institute discarded ideological vigilance and adopted concepts from Western sociology. The leading scholars received reprimands from the Party. In the course of the ideological inquiry, publication of the *Information Bulletin* was suspended. Some previously published Bulletins were confiscated and destroyed. The announced publication of Durkheim’s

Elementary Forms, selected works of Max Weber, and George Homans' *The Human Group* (Sotsiologicheskoe obozrenie 1969) was cancelled.

In 1971 academician Rumiantsev resigned his post as a director of the Institute and lost his position as a vice president of the USSR Academy of Sciences. A year later, M. N. Rutkevich was appointed a director of the Institute. His extraordinary authority was made clear when he cancelled the already assembled General Meeting of the SSA, arbitrarily dismissed certain delegates and appointed others, some of whom were not members of the SSA. The newly convened Meeting elected Rutkevich the President of the Soviet Sociological Association.

The change of leadership was accompanied by a call for purity in the conceptual schemes of Marxist sociology. The critics called for an end to "the practice of reasoning about 'systems,' 'subsystems,' 'systems' qualities,' 'overlapping structures,' etc, which are so far from the generalization and theoretical analysis of modern society, from the needs of ideological struggle, from the practical experience and organizational activity of the Party" (Iagodkin 1975:11). Communist partisanship was declared obligatory for scientists engaged in sociological research. In order to fully eradicate the "errors" committed by sociologists in the 1960s, nine leaders of the top research divisions [of the total of twelve listed in the official report for 1971 (IKSI AN SSSR 1972)] were persuaded to leave the Institute of Sociology. Similar changes occurred in the SSA.

An interesting aspect of today's Soviet sociology is a return to the theory that relates social problems in the Soviet Union to the "remnants of capitalism." Thus the participants in the conference on alcoholism contended that "in the Soviet Union . . . there are no social causes for the widespread alcoholism and drunkenness among workers. These negative phenomena, inconsistent with the morale of our society, witness how vital 'the birth marks' of capitalism can be. . . ." (Fedotov 1976:196). The same theme was stressed by Kudriavtsev (1974) who insisted on "class-nature" of criminal behavior and tied crime in socialist society to the survival of "bourgeois individualism." Similar reasons are given for the persistence of religious feelings among the Soviet people (Onishchenko 1974).

The return to the "vestiges of the past" concept as an explanation for the gap between communist theory and practice is in accordance with the general tendency to downplay the importance of the current program of the CPSU, which promised in 1961 that the material basis of communism would be built by 1980. The Party quietly shifted the emphasis from building a communist society to the furtherance of the "mature socialist state," which made the remnants-of-the-past theory sound more credible.

The recent findings by Soviet sociologists stand in sharp contrast to those obtained in the 1960s both in increased sophistication of the researchers'

statistical techniques and research designs, and in the substance of the findings. The recent surveys suggest that the composition of the first-year students in the higher educational institutions now more or less corresponds to the class structure of Soviet society. According to the recent study conducted in the Sverdlovsk region, children from industrial workers' families constitute 34.1% of the first-year students, from collective and state-farm peasants, 6.8%, from employees (white-collar workers without professional degrees), 12.5%, from specialists, 31.4%, and others, including children of the military servicemen, 15.2% (Filippov 1976). Studies on the division of labor and workers' attitude toward their jobs present evidence that the routinized functions are being gradually eliminated, though the general accent is shifting from the earlier view of work as the "primary need" to that of the work as "first duty" (Afanasev 1974).

The data on social stratification suggest that such problems as the "isolation of intelligentsia as a distinct social group" (Aitov 1968:197) are alleviated. In 1976, the same author denied any trend to self-perpetuation of social classes in the USSR; he indicated that only 20–40% of the members of any social group have inherited their positions from their parents (Aitov 1976).

It is impossible to draw any conclusion about the trends in Soviet public opinion, since apparently no information on major opinion surveys was published after 1970.

Empirical findings furnished by Soviet research in the 1970s are in conspicuous conformity with the Party's ideological slogans. One wonders whether things could be any different in view of the following principle advanced in the new textbook as a guide for the pursuit of sociological activity in the country: "The interests of the proletariat correspond to the objective laws, tendencies of societal development. That is why partisanship in Marxist-Leninist sociology is, at the same time, a guarantee of its scientific value" (Osipov 1976:12).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Gouldner formulated the thesis that sociology is allowed to establish itself as an academic discipline only "when the elites of society are confident that its social scientists are, in fact, not neutral" (1970:470). Whether this is true of current American sociology is debatable. [Simirenko (1973) presents a sound alternative to Gouldner's universal model of the academic legitimation of sociology]. But it certainly can be said to be true of sociology in the USSR.

Soviet sociology emerged in the late fifties in the course of the de-Stalinization process started by the Communist Party in 1956. In the subsequent

years, ideological interference into scientific activity came under criticism, scientists received greater autonomy, and Marxist theory was reunited with Marxist research. In the 1960s, Soviet sociologists formulated middle-range theories, while sociology moved toward greater autonomy from the more speculative branches of Marxism. The growing differentiation of Marxism as a science and an ideology reached a critical point in the late 1960s when sociological findings began to contradict the positions of Marxist ideology. In the early 1970s, the scientific value of previous research was questioned, and scientists were accused of betraying principles of class analysis. The campaign for the partisan approach that followed hastened the conversion of Soviet sociology into an academic endeavor, and now sociology is finally recognized in the Soviet Union as an academic discipline and a profession.

It would be unproductive if not misleading to try to extract from the case in point a simplistic moral that sociology and ideology should be kept separate. The relations between the two are intricate, often warlike, but far from mutually exclusive. The point is rather that the science of society can not become a substitute for ideology without thereby losing its function as a scientific theory and becoming a servant of power. The case of Soviet sociology is a vivid testimony to what may happen if Marx's thesis about the partisan approach in social sciences is carried to its logical extreme. Proletarian ideology in this regard proved to differ little from any other.

The failure of Marxist sociology to maintain its scientific integrity was partly predetermined by the formulation of the relationship between middle-range theories and general sociological theory. The relations between the two were defined as a one-way street, whereby no provision was made for modifying general sociological theory on the basis of empirically grounded middle-range generalizations.

By its nature and origin, general sociological theory is most closely interwoven with values to which, consciously or unconsciously, the scientist finds himself committed. It is a point where science and ideology not only intersect but also enrich each other. It is also a point where Western sociology differs from sociology in communist societies. General sociological theory, which is seen as infallible by the Soviet social scientist, is supposed to be chronically problematic for his Western counterpart. The problematic nature of general sociological theory is inseparable from conceptual diversity at the level of middle-range generalizations. This conceptual pluralism is the other side of ideological diversity and can be maintained as long as the creative conflict between human values is tolerated and institutionally guaranteed. It is for this reason that the scientific value of Soviet sociology will be in constant jeopardy as long as the Party's monopoly of the production and distribution of ideology remains unchallenged.

Hollander once rightly noted that "to speculate on the future prospects of Soviet sociology requires no less courage than to try to predict the future of Soviet society as a whole" (1965:46). Whatever this future may be, Soviet sociology has emerged as a social institution and an academic discipline. The process of the differentiation of Marxist theory and Marxist ideology has begun, and we should not expect it to be completed soon. But what the experience of Soviet sociology seems to demonstrate above all is that Marxism can once again take its place in the modern community of scientific theories. This is not only a possibility, it is an urgent task to which scholars in both East and West can bring their equal share.

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