

Alternative in Eastern Europe?

by Leigh Binford

The Alternative in Eastern Europe
by Rudolf Bahro, London:
New Left, 1978.

This is undoubtedly one of the most important Marxist works of the past 20 years. And it comes at a critical world conjuncture characterized by economic and political upheaval. At the moment that our dream of a classless society should be within our reach—by the objective criteria of productive capacity and general civilizational advance—it is shrouded by collective fears which equate Marxism with barbarism (in the West) and with repressive bureaucratism (in Poland, the Soviet Union and other nations of the East). It is only in the Third World, in countries such as Nicaragua and El Salvador, those least able, economically speaking, to create the conditions for the free development of each and all, that the theory stands as the ideological focal point for a positive striving.

From East Germany, where the ideas of Marx and Lenin have been corrupted and petrified into the official dogma and wielded as a tool of subordination, comes Bahro to resurrect the dream of Communism. He does not confine himself, however, to repeating the well-worn phrases of the *Communist Manifesto*, *Critique of the Gotha Program*, and the writings of the Paris Commune, any one of which would leave a bad taste in the mouth of most East Germans, whose reality has little in common with Marxian ideals. Rather, Bahro wishes to flesh out those bones. Not only does he wish to show us what went wrong in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—and what is wrong today—but he wishes to direct our attention to how this wrong might be unwound and righted, how in fact, it is likely to unwind itself and thus how the positive construction of Communism might begin: "We must," he says, "raise to a higher level Marx's own legacy, the most developed theory and method of social science that we have, and transform it into the Communism of the present."¹

This may seem to make Bahro something of a visionary. I would argue, however, that the lyrical quality of his work, which at times seems to rise above itself

(despite its firm material foundation), is more a function of its optimism than of anything else. In these days of mass cynicism, when the labor unions have all but abandoned the workplace and no protest, no matter how big, seems to be able to capture the attention of the 'administration', the claim that we may stand at the point of embarking upon a new stage of human history appears psychotic and delusionary. And yet, is it not just such a claim and the hope which it might engender which can play a positive, if not critical role in bringing about the ideological prerequisites for the transformation itself? Certainly this is the ultimate political justification for Bahro's document. Antonio Gramsci (one of the founders of the Italian Communist Party) once said: "In life no act remains without consequences, and to believe in one theory rather than another has its own particular impact on activity."²

The Alternative in Eastern Europe is divided into three parts. The first, entitled 'The Non-Capitalist Road to Industrial Society' provides a new interpretation of the route by which what Bahro calls 'currently existing socialism' (as opposed to 'socialism' in the Marxist-Leninist sense) came into existence. The second part, 'The Anatomy of Actually Existing Societies', consists of a critical sociological analysis of the Soviet system (that of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites). Rejecting both the Trotskyist (degenerated worker's state) and the Maoist (capitalism restored) interpretations, Bahro designates as the principal contradiction that between the constant necessity to expand the productive forces and the bureaucratic inhibitions built-in to a top-down command economy which relies upon a productive structure (division of labor) inherited from the Tsarist despotism and only partially modified in the post-revolutionary circumstances. In the final part, the third, Bahro discusses 'The Strategy of a Communist Alternative'. He takes up the present conditions and perspectives for a general emancipation of Eastern European society, the potential for a new transformation, and outlines a tentative organization for a new Communist society. He emphasizes the pace and order of changes, especially economic change, but he envisions economic reorganization as a mere prerequisite to a much more profound transformation, that of the collective subjectivity itself, without which Communism is an impossibility.

The book contains many new ideas and provocative interpretations; it stands as a full-fledged challenge to

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much orthodoxy, in particular those of the sectarian varieties. For those who read the book creatively guided by the perspective that a mind of synthetic dimensions is addressing critical questions (critical both presently and for the future) in new ways, there will be ample food for thought. Far beyond merely resurrecting the Communist ideal—perhaps that would have been enough—Bahro is to be applauded for his concretization of what for many of us has been a far too abstract concept. In doing so he is led to draw heavily upon the works of Gramsci and the young Marx. Rather than prejudging this reliance upon the preepistemological break period, it behooves us to study Bahro's effort to articulate the philosophical humanism of the Young Marx with the economics of Marx the Elder. On this point he states quite early on:

We can best understand Marx's scientific communism if we consider how he arrived at it. Rejecting the dogmatists on either side, those who play off the young Marx against the old and vice versa, we may assume here the continuity of Marx's theory and his character, and rest assured that he created his political economy in the service of an ideal of general human emancipation which he arrived at in his youth and which was developed ever more concretely.³

In order to lay out some of the principal historical theses and interpretations of *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* we can look first at a few of Bahro's underlying premises. Bahro maintains that there are two preconditions for the initiation of the construction of socialism. One is the revolution in the relations of production, which refers principally to capitalist private property, and the other is revolution in the division of labor between mental and manual labor. Although the division of labor (mental/manual) is continued through the capitalist epoch, it has a long precapitalist history, being particularly well-developed in social formations dominated by the Asiatic mode of production. In his view, a revolution which limits itself to overturning capitalist property relations and relations of distribution only puts an end to the law of value and the economic laws of motion which this implies, but retains the basis in the division between mental and manual labor for a new domination. For the vast majority of manual and lower-level technical personnel, the division of labor is an impediment for the fulfillment of a real human species need for the exercise and enhancement of creative intelligence, without which socialism in the Marxian sense is a hopeless dream:

Self-conscious, fully developed, universal individuality and personal authority are only possible, according to all psychological knowledge, as a function of active access to the totality of the community. . . . Universality and totality are of course concepts of quality and not quantity. The point is that the real possibility of participating in the *synthesis* of the historical process is the only way to escape from a subaltern experience.⁴

The dual Soviet bureaucracy of State and Party is both the concrete social form assumed by the division of labor and is invested with its reproduction. Information conforming to the needs of local units of production is

distorted in the course of its upward flow by low-level bureaucrats looking out for their own interests; decisions taken by the Party hierarchy, which claims direct knowledge of the needs of the polity by theoretical mandate (since it is ideally the party 'of' the masses) flow downward, thus reproducing the subalternity below. Bahro shows how the bureaucratic form produces individual jockeying for position, particular forms of unquestioning obedience, and the fear of innovation and initiative which lead, in the long run, to misallocation and mismanagement of economic resources. Quoting Marx he notes that

. . . the universal spirit of bureaucracy is *secrecy*, it is mystery preserved within itself by means of the hierarchical structure and appearing to the outside world as a self-contained corporation. Openly avowed political spirit, even patriotic spirit, appears to the bureaucracy as a *betrayal* of its mystery. The principal of its knowledge is therefore *authority*, and its *patriotism* is the adulation of authority 'The bureaucrats are the Jesuits and the theologians of the state', wrote Marx. In our case they have been redivided between practical and theoretical bureaucrats. The bureaucracy is a republic of priests.⁵

Bureaucracy is not, of course, specific to the Soviet Union; but Bahro argues that there it has taken on a different role from that in monopoly capitalism. In 'actually existing socialism' (his tongue-in-cheek appropriation of Soviet self-description) the bureaucracy "has full charge of the entire reproduction process." Moreover, the Soviet command system consists of *one single* bureaucracy and thus lacks the flexibility of response awarded by a series of relatively autonomous horizontal units.⁶ Thus he can claim that "the laws of bureaucratic behavior time and again take precedence over economic rationality" and that while the capitalist entrepreneur "is quite unambiguously primarily an economic person," the socialist manager "is necessarily first and foremost a bureaucratic person."⁷

What of the workers under this system? Bahro says that their position has changed little from that under capitalism, that more than anything else the State has come to substitute for and perform many of the controlling functions of capital, although he *denies* emphatically that surplus value is a product of the labor process. He thus distances himself from Bettelheim and others who claim that capitalism has been restored in the Soviet Union. For Bahro traditional Marxian class categories are simply not relevant where 'horizontal' class division has been replaced by 'vertical' stratification "even if it is one which still has sharp transition points":⁸

The basic relationship is not that between a working class and all other elements of the social structure, but rather in their common equality vis-a-vis a third factor. Between an industrial worker and a manual cooperative peasant there is scarcely more than a distinction in form as far as their position in the production and reproduction process is concerned.

The most that the categories of class structure can do for our non-capitalist order is to interpret it *in terms of its past*.⁹

The labor process offers little attraction for most Soviet workers since it consumes their mental and

physical energies in standardized routines which offer little opportunity for innovation or all around human development. They respond by withholding maximum effort; the state can do little to enforce work discipline and intensify output without further undermining the very ideology of reward according to effort which is a main factor in its successful reproduction.

From the standpoint of political economy, under actually existing socialism the workers have a far greater opportunity to blackmail the 'entire society' than do the trade unions under capitalism, since they do actually use this, against all surface appearance, even if they can do so only in an unfruitful way, i.e. by holding back on their output.¹⁰

Although the economic 'Plan' sets its goals to correspond to or exceed those of the West, the absence of a 'law of value' and a reserve army of labor to enforce labor discipline combined with the inefficiencies of a monstrous multi-layered bureaucracy is enough to guarantee that it shall usually fall short. The Soviet Union *must*, however, continue to augment production in order to compete successfully with the capitalist West (which sets the pace in the arms race) and to purchase internal peace by providing new supplies of consumer goods. According to Bahro, the impossibility of increasing production at the necessary rate will, over the long haul, necessitate the introduction of new more democratic forms of worker participation which will ultimately threaten the old division of labor at all levels. The Solidarity union is representative of this new phase, although events in Poland have not followed the road foreseen by Bahro.

The Alternative in Eastern Europe has a dual political significance. First, it is an analysis which depicts the Soviet Union as a distinct social formation of a noncapitalist type, and it makes a first effort to delineate what might be some of the internal tendencies or laws of motion of this formation. Bahro thus takes us beyond those works which analyze Soviet society in mixed socialist/capitalist terms without being able to say how two such antagonistic modes of production could have coexisted for over fifty years—except by means of a mechanical aggregation of shifting 'elements' attributed to one or the other. Second, in denying that the Soviet Union is socialist, Bahro 'rescues' socialism as a viable alternative to the Soviet's noncapitalist road. The fact that an Eastern European has publically proclaimed that socialism is on the agenda is, as noted in a recent review by Hillel Tjichtin, "a clarion call to the left in Eastern Europe."¹¹ In the United States also, Bahro's book may prove an important weapon in the battle against the anti-communism of otherwise progressive elements. Here for a change is an Eastern European emigre who is *not* vehemently anti-communist, but is, on the contrary, a dedicated adherent, a champion of the theory against its misrepresentation in idea and deed. Daniel Singer's analysis of the Soviet Union, though differing somewhat from Bahro's, and his recent editorial in *The Nation* are examples of interventions which owe something to Bahro's work.¹²

Thus far we have been concerned mainly with Part Two of Bahro's book which deals with the contemporary

phase of 'actually existing socialism'. In shifting our focus to the historical genesis of this system (Part One) and the probable route of its undoing and transition to communism (Part Three) we discover some very controversial ideas.

In 'The Non-Capitalist Road to Industrial Society' Bahro claims that the contemporary system of Party-State bureaucratic domination was *not* the consequence of a post-revolutionary deviation from the path of socialist democracy but was inscribed in the very objective and subjective conditions which provided the context for the revolution of 1917. It was, in other words, a historical inevitability. As posed by Bahro, the historic task of the Bolshevik revolution was not socialism, but was industrialization along the non-capitalist road. Demonstrating this thesis, which places him in opposition to theorists of different ilk (although especially the Trotskyists), takes him on a long and tortured description of the Asiatic mode of production and its relevance to the Soviet situation. Within the Asiatic state formation, Bahro discovers the same fundamental characteristics (absence of private property in the means of production, division of mental and manual labor as the profound source of alienation, ruling bureaucracy headed by an intellectual elite) which make their appearance in post-revolutionary Russia. Bahro does not ignore the presence and dynamic intervention of the proletariat in 1917, but its relatively small size (and weakness following the civil war) vis-a-vis a huge semi-civilized peasantry only slightly integrated into the national state forced the revolutionaries to monopolize the intellectual and political leadership. In short, they were the only really active agents:

In Russia the restructuring of the predominantly patriarchal and petty-bourgeois economy and culture, and first of all its 'external' subjection to proletarian hegemony, was the condition of survival for the workers' state, and had therefore to become the decisive function of the dictatorship.¹³

The dictatorship received its ideological benediction in the theory of organization which simultaneously differentiated the vanguard party from the masses and yet posited their organic union. In fact, this union was never more than mechanical because the low cultural level of the semifeudal, semiasiatic masses impeded their democratic integration. The result was a reproduction of the mental/manual division of labor between the party/state and the rest of society:

Lenin's depiction of socialism as a state monopoly at the service of the whole people is certainly a reaction to Russian society, but *even without* the specific Russian backwardness it could only lead to a socialism characterized by obedient subordination of the producers to a political managerial pyramid erected to manage social labour. In place of a control from below by the masses, there appeared early on the study of mass *opinion* from above. The apparatus had to have its ears tuned to the masses, or else it could be corrected only by their insurrection, as most recently in Poland in 1970.¹⁴

The concentration of political power was a prerequisite for the brutal task of industrialization which incipient

poverty would lay upon the shoulders of the masses (especially the peasantry) and who could not therefore be allowed to participate in decisions affecting their immediate fate. Bahro thus maintains that Lenin merely prepared the ground for Stalin without whom history would have recruited another dictatorial (if slightly less brutal) personage to carry out the task of primitive accumulation:

It was not only on account of the constant threats to it, but rather because of the positive task of driving the masses into an industrialization which they could not immediately desire, that the Soviet Union had to have a single, iron 'Petraine' leadership. If a more gifted man than Stalin had managed to adapt himself to this aim, then the ideological resources that the old party tradition already possessed would have stretched somewhat further, and the most extreme expressions of terror would have been avoided. Russia would have been spared the Caesarian madness, but hardly more.¹⁵

With industrialization now an accomplished fact, the centralized state apparatus has become expendable; worse, it has become an iron yoke restraining the advance of the masses to the next stage of history, for which they have now been prepared. The next transition, Bahro thinks, will be much more easily accomplished in the Soviet Union than in the industrialized capitalist countries because of the absence of private property. In the long run industrialization along the noncapitalist road, despite its high costs, becomes the shortest path to socialism since the alternative would probably have been capitalist underdevelopment like that which affects most of the neocolonial world.

Before we summarize Bahro's argument referring to the most likely or probable route to a socialist transition (Third Part), let us posit a few criticisms of his above position (I hope to develop these more fully at another time). A prominent underlying feature of Bahro's argument, which will be registered by most readers, is his teleological view of history. Bahro treats the sequence of events as though it was predetermined in advance; he evaluates and explains the past (from the point of view of a privileged present) as if those objective conditions *had* to bring about specific ends regardless of the voluntary actions of human subjects—individuals and classes. The result is to transform historical materialism into historical determinism.¹⁶ The subjective factor is harnessed to objectivity; it is made into a *simple expression of necessity*, as illustrated by his discussion of the Leninist theory of party organization, which supplied an ideological buttress for the 'strong state'. The critical importance of political struggle in determining outcomes is put aside, as observed by Ernest Mandel in a polemical rejoinder entitled 'Fatalism as an Alternative?'

The *real* problem of the Soviet bureaucracy . . . cannot be *reduced* to the problem of uncovering the 'fundamental objective roots of this victory' . . . The problem rather is whether, on account of these 'objective roots', the victory of the bureaucracy was necessary and unavoidable. That can be affirmed only if it is maintained that the decline in the self-activity of the Russian working class from 1923 (or 1921) to 1928 was necessary and unavoidable, and that the

defeat of the world revolution 1918-1927 was in the same way necessary and unavoidable.¹⁷

The fatalism of teleology has its counterpart in apologies for those dark episodes, such as the forced collectivization and the purges of the 1930s, which particularly challenge our powers of explanation. In Bahro's view they were *necessary*, though lamentable, means to a larger end—the industrialization of Russia. No responsibility is or can be assigned, no lessons learned which might guide us in the future.

Finally, we can take note of a peculiar tension between internal and external factors in Bahro's explanation of Bolshevik bureaucratization. The Asiatic heritage of Russia as an objective structural feature dominating the rural areas at the outbreak of revolution receives much more attention than do external factors—the "pressure of the technological superiority of the imperialist countries, enforced by their policy of military intervention and encirclement"¹⁸ or the failure of the workers' movements of Western Europe to seize power—which are also mentioned. Although the latter are assigned the status of 'deforming elements', I suspect that Bahro has slighted the degree of interrelationship and interpenetration.

In summary we can conclude that the first section (Part One) of *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*, although containing some interesting and even brilliant observations, is by far the weakest.

In the last 200 pages Bahro addresses the strategy of a Communist alternative. Such an alternative would have to involve a project of general emancipation of individuals, defined by Bahro to mean "the liberation of individuals from all socially determined limitations on their development." General emancipation is achieved through a process of universalized appropriation of the objective *and* subjective products of society; the management of the production and redistribution of goods and labor (a new division of labor) is merely the starting point, the material prerequisites as it were, for the development of a new social consciousness achieved through radical alterations in the family, education, community structure and political institutions. He is, in the broadest sense of the word, calling for a new *cultural revolution*.

The cultural revolution is required in order to prepare individuals for the exploitation of the new material situation. Bahro acknowledges that any socialist transformation will be powered by persons who are alienated in various ways and to various degrees; they require ever increasing quantities of material goods as alienated compensations for the rich development of subjectivity which has been denied them. In order to avoid the run-away industrialization and attendant environmental degradation which would accompany the liberation of those needs under socialism, Bahro proposes policies which would raise human needs to a higher, social level:

What stubbornly proves to be the real problem of general emancipation is the *alienation* of individuals from the sources of social power that they have themselves produced, their impotence and lack of influence on their overall destiny that is still actually increasing, and the poverty of their relations of real

communication, no matter how much this is vainly juggled away by the self-interested agencies of officialdom *The overcoming of subalternity on a mass scale is the only possible alternative to the limitless expansion of material needs.*¹⁹

Communist association, then, would be limited to a process of quantitatively simple reproduction in which advances in productivity would be used to diminish necessary labor time rather than to increase production. A new economy of time provides the basis for new social-cooperative and educational experiences which, when reproduced over several generations, gives rise to a completely new kind of individuality pursuing a more differentiated set of mostly nonmaterial needs.

Space limitations prohibit the summarization of every aspect of the cultural revolution envisioned by Bahro. I will limit my comments to two areas which might be of particular interest to readers of *Theoretical Review*: (1) the changing position of women and (2) the new political structure. Early on in *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* Bahro targeted the exploitation and oppression of women in the patriarchal structure of actually existing socialism as one of the three principal bases of social inequality (the others being the dominance of the town over the country and the exploitation of the manual worker by the mental worker). In Bahro's view the woman's role as "the natural center of the small family" receives inadequate compensation from the truncated system of social and welfare services under actually existing socialism. He suggests that household management and primary socialization responsibilities of the family (generally borne by the woman alone) be socialized so as to create better possibilities for women's organization as "a direct and united representation of interests against the patriarchal tradition."²⁰ Bahro is no moralistic prude like the leftists criticized by Jeff Goldthorpe in the May-June, 1982 issue of *Theoretical Review*;²¹ he criticizes the 'small family' as locus of the reproduction of relations of domination and opts for larger aggregates, although he declines to go into the point in any detail "since it seems to me that the pertinent advantage of large families in whatever particular form are sufficiently demonstrated by ethnographic and historical material."²²

Bahro's political alternative is informed by a close reading of Marx's writings on the Paris Commune. Bahro sees no reason why the voluntary organization of semi-autonomous communal (working-living) systems cannot succeed, even at the current high level of industrial productivity and developed technical division of labor. The principal remaining function for centralized authority (democratically elected and subject to recall) would be the formulation and administration of the economic plan, necessary in any complex system as a guarantee against autarky. This is not the sort of plan which is currently imposed by the leadership of the German Democratic Republic state, in which irrationally high expectations and sectoral imbalances tax the response capability of the factory system in a quest for ever greater growth rates. Rather, the communes themselves would specify the labor time which they would be willing to expend in contract with those whom they would supply. The level of production would be

circumscribed so as to leave time for the development of a rich individuality, the ultimate goal of the Communist system. The internal organization of the commune would be characterized by the generalized circulation of persons among administrative, managerial and productive tasks, a consequence of the generalized competence promoted by free and universal access to the highest levels of education. Consequently, leadership roles would be periodically alternated among individuals with the requisite interests and abilities, yet no one would be excused from performing their share of the boring drudge work; all would have a claim to an equal portion of the abstract labor of society. This in general is the sort of system envisioned by Bahro.

Bahro's conception of the probable road from the actually existing socialism of Eastern Europe to the Communism of his imagination assigns to intellectuals the role as the leading force. They are the reservoirs of an abundance of surplus consciousness which finds no satisfactory object under the present circumstances.

Today . . . society produces such a mass of general ability . . . that this cannot be directly employed by the apparatus. Under present conditions society simply does not have sufficient use for its subjective productive forces. Hence the incessant effort of the politbureaucracy to annex the unspent surplus consciousness to compensatory interests.²³

The mass of the workers have not developed the same emancipatory needs because of limited education and absorption in their specialized functions. For Bahro they are critical but not leading elements in the development of the socialist alternative.

Less than ever shall the last be first. That entire way of thinking is no longer viable. The perspective must be a different one: changes will still proceed from the objective contradictions, from the burdens that are placed on society as a whole and its process of reproduction by the existence of strata with a subaltern position. But the initiative for these changes can only proceed from those elements who are most bound up with the developmental functions and tendencies of the forces and relations of production. This is not a demand but a reality. What one can and must demand is that these elements do not merely act in their own special interest, but gather and organize around them all forces with the desire for change.²⁴

Writing between 1973 and 1976 Bahro was thus able to point out that "up till now there have been no signs, not even in Poland, that 'the workers' under our conditions could be a 'class for itself, and that their 'objective interests' could effect the first step towards general emancipation."²⁵ Times have changed, as indicated by the organization of the Polish workers into the Solidarity Union and their struggle with the Polish state. Perhaps it is that Bahro overestimated the debilitating effects of the workers' early socialization in its interaction with the degradation of piecemeal manual labor; alternatively, he may have miscalculated the emancipatory needs of intellectuals in general out of first-hand knowledge of their collective situation. Recent events indicate that the restructuring of Eastern European society will require the creative contributions of mental and manual workers and that a rigid division into leaders and followers would

only serve to produce anew the old relations of domination.

This review would not be complete without mention of Bahro's conception of the new Communist organization, which he refers to as a 'League of Communists'. As a pluralistic association formed in opposition to the state, the new party presents in embryo the ideal and structure of an alternative organization offering a superior model capable of meeting the pressing individual needs frustrated under the current regimes. On this basis it recruits and organizes all progressive forces. Assuming nonintervention on the part of the Soviet Union (too wracked by its own internal contradictions to undertake adventurous expeditions against its rebellious satellites) the League of Communists undertakes a gradual replacement of the bureaucracy and state machine until such time as sufficient power has been acquired to promote the cultural revolution directly. Following a line of thought pioneered by Antonio Gramsci, Bahro claims that the party must achieve ideological hegemony on its way to state power. Theory plays a critical role in the process:

The party's ideological authority is directly dependent on the quality of its intellectual production, on the power of the model in which it reflects social reality so as to grasp social relations and indicates the direction of change to mobilize the people.²⁶

A good model is not, however, enough. The practice of the movement too must transcend alienated social relations through openness and self-criticism and by providing an opportunity for all persons to participate creatively. Thus Bahro says:

The communist movement only exists when and where it transcends something of the existing state of affairs in its everyday practice, and brings general emancipation and real equality and freedom perceptibly nearer. Those who simply reproduce the existing conditions and defend themselves terroristically against all progressive criticism, are communists neither objectively nor subjectively, whatever doctrine they might profess to express.²⁷

One need not agree with Bahro on every point in order to appreciate the importance of the task which he has assumed. Not only those living in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union under actually existing socialism (among whom Bahro's ideas must be circulated clandestinely), but we too can benefit from his effort to reinvigorate and concretize the idea of communism and the communist party. Have not sectarianism and the dogmatic programming of reality into preconceived categories stood in the way of the development of strategic and tactical responses to a rapidly changing order for us as well? Is our recent past not littered with followers alienated or cast aside because their efforts at making legitimate criticism or promoting participatory democracy were categorically read as barometers of bourgeois opportunism? Here in the West, as well as there in Eastern Europe, we must be able to present an alternative social vision which has some hope of succeeding, one which goes beyond the promise of 'bread and circuses' or the fantasized resurrection of free market capitalism. To refuse to rescue 'communism' from its

association with the Soviet social system is to abandon it to continued corruption by our bourgeois class enemies and their representatives. In rebuttal of the Solzhenitsyns and the Timmermans, Daniel Singer stated the point quite succinctly:

Personally, I see no reason why one should hand over once-precious names to the adversary, why a movement conceived to abolish all forms of exploitation should be equated with the regime prevailing in a land of repression, why barbed wire should be confused with Marx, or Jaruzelski with the defense of socialism. Does "communist" become an insult because Brezhnev pretends to bear the name? We did not cease to be socialists because Hitler called himself a National Socialist.²⁸

Thus our task is dual: (1) to disengage 'communism' from its ideological co-optation and (2) to reinvigorate it by translating its abstract prescriptions into a series of concrete alternatives with the potential of appealing to the unalienated desires of a majority of our progressive citizens. *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* can aid us in the task. It should be rigorously read and rigorously analyzed for the ideas which it conveys and the inspiration which it radiates.

¹ Rudolf Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*. London: New Left Review, 1978, p. 31.

² Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Political Writings 1910-1920*. New York: International, 1977, p. 49.

³ Bahro, p. 23.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 218-19.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

¹¹ Hillel Ticktin, "Rudolf Bahro: A Socialist Without a Working Class," *Critique*, No. 10/11, 1978-79, p. 133.

¹² Daniel Singer, *The Road to Gdansk*. New York: Monthly Review, 1981; and "Solidarity—Lest We Forget," *The Nation*, July 3, 1982.

¹³ Bahro, p. 93.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

¹⁶ Lucio Colletti, *From Rousseau to Lenin*. New York: Monthly Review, 1972.

¹⁷ Ernest Mandel, "Fatalism as an Alternative?" *Critique*, No. 10/11, 1978-79, pp. 121-22.

¹⁸ Bahro, p. 131.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 446.

²¹ Jeff Goldthorpe, "A Deafening Silence: Sexuality and the Leninist Left," *Theoretical Review*, No. 28, May/June 1982, pp. 15-18.

²² Bahro, p. 447.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

²⁸ Singer, 1982, p. 18.