

1990 presidential candidate) Mario Vargas Llosa. Paz says that socialism in underdeveloped countries swiftly turns into despotic "state capitalism." Vargas Llosa, once an enthusiastic backer of Fidel Cas-

tro, has since concluded that sacrificing freedom is not the way to overcome injustice. Perhaps there may be something to the heroic image of the Latin American writer after all.

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## OTHER NATIONS

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### *Going Halfway*

"The Vietnam Communist Party Strives to Remain the 'Only Force'" by Charles A. Joiner, in *Asian Survey* (Nov. 1990), Univ. of Calif., Room 408, 6701 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, Calif. 94720.

Communist leaders in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have taken two big steps toward revitalizing their moribund economies. One is to move toward free markets, the other is to surrender the communist monopoly of political power. Many analysts believe that both steps are essential for the nations' economic health. But not everyone has agreed. Kim Il Sung in North Korea and Fidel Castro in Cuba have refused to take either step. Others have not been quite so steadfast in their Marxist-Leninist faith. In Vietnam, Nguyen Van Linh and his colleagues, like their counterparts in China, have decided to go halfway—they're taking the economic step, but not the political one.

Since the Sixth Party Congress in December 1986, says Joiner, a Temple University political scientist, Vietnam has tried to free up the command economy. "The 'new way of thinking' (*doi moi*), 'renovation' (*canh tan*), and 'openness' (*cong khai*) have become the entrenched party line," he says. Despite some limited gains, however, the country's enormous economic difficulties remain. Among them: low productivity, inadequate public services, and continued dependence on subsidized loans and trade with the Soviet

Union and the nations of the former Soviet bloc. Declines in the loans and trade are sure to worsen Vietnam's problems.

Overcoming them requires political, as well as economic, reform, one member of the party's Politburo dared to suggest last year. Tran Xuan Bach, who was a leader in party ideological affairs, warned that "You can't walk with one long leg and one short leg and you can't walk with only one leg." His "erroneous views" were not well received by his colleagues. He was expelled from the Politburo and the party's Central Committee. Linh, the party's general secretary, said in a major address in 1990 that the Vietnam Communist Party must remain the "only force" because "ours is a party of the people, by the people, relying on the people and for the people."

Vietnam's "ubiquitous security system" is, of course, "a major deterrent to most forms of dissenting behavior" by the 67 million Vietnamese, Joiner notes. Perhaps it and "renovation" will be enough to enable the party to maintain its monopoly of political power. Still, he says, "whether it is possible to walk with one long leg and one short one throughout much of the 1990s is far from being definitively resolved."

### *A Swedish Dilemma*

"Sweden: Social Democrats in Trouble" by Stefan Svallfors, in *Dissent* (Winter 1991), 521 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

During the early 1930s, when the United States and Europe were trying to cope with the Great Depression, many progres-

sives looked to Sweden's social democracy as a successful "middle way" between dogmatic free enterprise and doctrinaire so-

cialism. Now, with the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the new enthusiasm even there for free markets, some progressives once again have turned their eyes toward the "Swedish model." What they are finding, however, is a model in danger of cracking up.

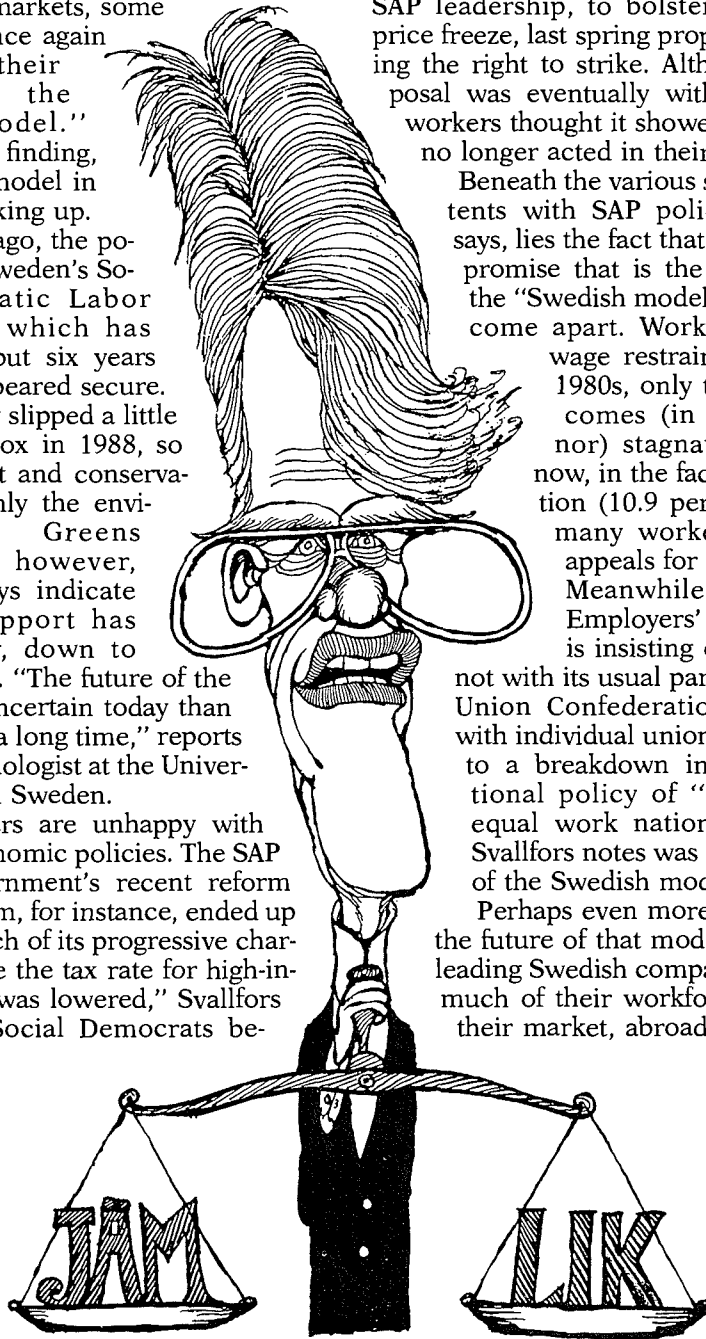
Three years ago, the political grip of Sweden's Social Democratic Labor Party (SAP), which has ruled for all but six years since 1932, appeared secure. While the party slipped a little at the ballot box in 1988, so did the centrist and conservative parties; only the environmentalist Greens gained. Now, however, opinion surveys indicate the SAP's support has fallen sharply, down to just 35 percent. "The future of the SAP is more uncertain today than it has been for a long time," reports Svallfors, a sociologist at the University of Umea in Sweden.

Many workers are unhappy with the party's economic policies. The SAP minority government's recent reform of the tax system, for instance, ended up destroying much of its progressive character. "Because the tax rate for high-income earners was lowered," Svallfors says, "many Social Democrats be-

lieved that a fundamental principle was discarded." But backsliding on income redistribution isn't the only grievance. The SAP leadership, to bolster a wage-and-price freeze, last spring proposed suspending the right to strike. Although the proposal was eventually withdrawn, many workers thought it showed that the SAP no longer acted in their interests.

Beneath the various surface discontents with SAP policies, Svallfors says, lies the fact that the class compromise that is the foundation of the "Swedish model" has begun to come apart. Workers agreed to wage restraint in the early 1980s, only to see their incomes (in constant kronor) stagnate or decline; now, in the face of high inflation (10.9 percent in 1990), many workers reject any appeals for wage restraint. Meanwhile, the Swedish Employers' Confederation is insisting on negotiating, not with its usual partner, the Trade Union Confederation, but rather with individual unions. That has led to a breakdown in labor's traditional policy of "equal pay for equal work nationwide," which Svallfors notes was "a cornerstone of the Swedish model."

Perhaps even more significant for the future of that model is that many leading Swedish companies now have much of their workforce, as well as their market, abroad. Volvo, for in-



*Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson and his Social Democratic Labor party favor jämlik (equality), but their economic policies of late have made many workers unhappy.*

stance, recently announced that it was going to cut back production in its Swedish facility because its factory in Ghent, Belgium is more profitable. In the end, Svallfors concludes, it will be not the

SAP's domestic policies but rather "the character of Western Europe's integrated market and the future direction of Eastern Europe [that] will largely determine the fate of the Swedish model."

## *Bolshevik Czars*

"Czars and Commiczars" by Robert C. Tucker, in *The New Republic* (Jan. 21, 1991), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Most Western sovietologists have long regarded the October Revolution of 1917, in which Lenin and his fellow Bolsheviks seized power, as marking a decisive break with the Russian past. But many Soviet intellectuals, free now in the glasnost era to speak their minds, have been taking a very different view, Princeton political scientist Tucker reports. As they see it, he says, czarist absolutism and historic Russian statism simply returned in a new guise during the Soviet period.

This was true from the regime's very outset, Soviet thinkers such as historian A. Mertsalov and *Literaturnaya Gazeta* editor Fyodor Burlatsky contend. The retention of the minority-inhabited territories on the periphery meant the Russian empire remained intact in all but name. And, also under a different name, a new line of de facto czars emerged, starting with Lenin.

The dark, final years of Stalin after World War II, Tucker observes, were strikingly similar in many ways to the repressive 1830s and '40s under Czar Nicholas I. When the Marquis de Custine visited Russia in 1839, Tucker writes, he found "not the civilized monarchy he had imagined, but a true tyranny, a serf state with a czar-cult upheld by officialdom." The form of government, as Custine wrote in his book *Russia in 1839*, was "absolute monarchy moderated by murder."

The Soviet Nicholaian period, Tucker says, extended through the reign of Leonid Brezhnev and the early 1980s. And then, just as the "czar-liberator" Alexander II (who abolished serfdom) succeeded the tyrant Nicholas I, so a new "czar-liberator," Mikhail Gorbachev, came to power in 1985. What has happened under Gorba-

chev, according to Soviet historian Vladen Sirotkin, is not unlike what happened under Alexander II in the 1860s and 1870s. "It was then," writes Tucker, "that a schism opened up within the czarist *no-menklatura* [ruling elite] between reformers who supported Alexander II's perestroika and conservatives who opposed it." That czar's rule ended in 1881 when he fell victim to a revolutionary extremist's bomb, and under his successor, Alexander III, reaction set in.

As the Soviet era appears now to be coming to an end, Soviet intellectuals are divided as to what "time" in Russian history it is. Some think that the country is entering a period like the one that afflicted Muscovy in the early 17th century, when the death of Czar Boris Godunov brought on disorder, civil war, and intervention by Poles and other foreigners. That *smuta*, or Time of Troubles, ended only with the crowning of Mikhail Romanov in 1613 and the establishment of a new dynasty that was to last for three centuries. But other Soviet intellectuals contend that Russia is in a revolutionary period like that of the early 20th century, with the country in crisis and the question being whether a new October 1917 can be avoided.

Tucker suggests that the alternative "times" are really, in essence, the same. The revolutionary period was actually a new Time of Troubles, and from it, too, a new dynasty emerged. So the crucial question now is: Can Russia finally escape from the cycles of its own history? If the answer is to be yes, Tucker says, "much time and much effort, no little good fortune, and maybe substantial assistance from the United States" will be required.