

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 *nomenklatura* [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.