

now reached its greatest possible dimension.”

A comprehensive program of transition to a market economy should include the privatization of industrial and agricultural property; provisions for free trade in shares at newly created stock exchanges; the denationalization of land; the creation of labor markets through the elimination of existing restrictions on the freedom of labor to contract; the immediate demunicipalization of housing; drastic cuts in military and other government spending; monetary reform aimed at achieving the convertibility of the currency in international money markets; and the liberalization of foreign trade.

The failure of socialism in Russia, combined with the enormous suffering and hardship of the people in all of the so-called socialist countries, is a powerful warning for the West against socialism, statism, and government interventionism. It is beyond the abilities of eco-

nomics analysis to calculate the opportunity-cost of the socialist experiment in Russia, but the human toll is estimated by historian Roy Medvedev at 41 million people who perished in the gulag during Stalin's collectivizations, purges, campaigns against “unearned” incomes, and other devilish experiments. But “the only lesson of history is that it does not teach us anything,” says a popular Russian aphorism. And it certainly seems true. “Despite the recent collapse of socialism and communism in Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe, socialism is still alive and growing,” says Nobel laureate Gary Becker. Socialism clearly still presents a mortal danger to economic freedom and the quality of life for us and generations to come.

Yuri N. Maltsev, associate professor of economics at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin, was an economic advisor to Mikhail Gorbachev's government.

Food, Felons, and Foreign Aid

by Robert Weissberg

A New Approach to Trade and Punishment

America's attempts to help the former Soviet Union have proven exceptionally frustrating. Nearly all government officials, Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, realize that something ought to be done. The possibility that continued economic crises will mean a return to a belligerent totalitarian state is both reasonable and justifiably dreaded. Even the most coldhearted lifelong anticommunist cannot enjoy seeing mobs of angry Russians protesting in the streets.

Unfortunately, we are stupefied about

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sands of unemployed and underemployed ex-Soviet officials could also be sent to the United States as mentors and role models to hard-pressed local police departments and district attorneys. This equivalent of the Peace Corps, perhaps called the Lavrenti Beria Memorial People-to-People Program, would provide fresh ideas in such areas as gaining confessions from reluctant prisoners, infiltrating the criminal community, keeping comprehensive records on potential troublemakers, making correctional facilities economically self-supporting, and organizing trials for the maximum public impact. By American standards these advisors would receive modest wages, but they would surely send part of their paychecks back to the Motherland, providing further financial help to our new friend. Moreover, given the material benefits of American life, plus the knowledge that they were helping their homeland's economy by fulfilling 125 percent of their prisoner quota, these rent-an-Ivans would invigorate American law enforcement. We can only imagine the fear among antisocial elements when they hear "The Russians are coming, the Russians are coming!" The prospect of confronting police officers unschooled in the American system of criminal rights and unable to speak English could frighten into retirement many urban predators. Mere talk of Comrade Ivan riding into town, à la Clint Eastwood, might restore law and order (Hollywood would surely jump at the opportunity to make films with titles such as *A Fistful of Rubles*).

Contributions could also be made to our problems of large-scale unruliness and breakdown of public order. As the fallout from the Los Angeles riots over the Rodney King verdict reveal, we are fairly inept at maintaining civil society under difficult conditions. Nor are we skilled at preserving harmony among antagonistic but physically close groups. Fortunately, as recent turmoil in Eastern Europe shows, ex-Soviet officials possess an underappreciated knack for keeping the peace in potentially explosive societies. This expertise should be employed before it atrophies. We could rent former KGB special state security units at bargain-basement rates. For a fraction of the cost of mobilizing the National Guard or paying police overtime, we efficiently solve our own problems while helping a friend.

United States public officials would

gladly pay thousands to attend conflict management seminars and workshops offered by ex-commissars with long experience in places such as East Germany, Poland, and the Asian republics. Guided educational tours, a great financial windfall for isolated, unattractive Russian localities, could also be offered. One can already envision Intertourist marketing "Ten Relocation Centers in Ten Days With Exciting On-Your-Own Side Trips" at the yearly conclaves of public officials. Big-city mayors nervous about upcoming long hot summers could gain valuable "hands-on" job training from their counterparts who "got the job done" when domestic discord struck Armenia, the Ukraine, or Georgia. The cost of such helping-hand exchanges and trips, while a boon for the former Soviet Union, are minuscule compared to the cost of a mismanaged urban disturbance.

There are also handsome psychological dividends, an infusion of collective self-esteem, for our demoralized former enemy. Imagine the pride of Moscovites upon seeing on TV advanced elements of the Red Army providing fraternal assistance at the request of local authorities to restore law and order in a riot-torn Philadelphia. Streets jammed with hundreds of Korean and Indian shopkeepers displaying their eternal friendship by waving little red flags while others hold homemade banners thanking their liberators. Pictures in *Pravda* of elderly shut-ins and children venturing into public parks for the first time in years under the vigilant gaze of their newfound protectors. Former Russian military leaders could again feel the traditional pride, as well as the financial benefits, of putting down ethnic unrest and crushing unruly elements. Equally important, Soviet troops stationed in Newark, Oakland, Detroit, and other potential trouble spots are no threat to Russian democracy.

All in all, it should be obvious that our former enemy has something of great value to us. The problem of helping the former Soviet Union is financially and politically solvable. A ten or fifteen billion-dollar transfer may seem enormous by the yardsticks of foreign aid, but it is minor by the standards of criminal justice. We would be contracting out much of our police work to somebody who can do the job better for perhaps a tenth of the price. A perfect example of Ricardo's Law in action. We also would be building democracy and

capitalism while getting something in return. There would be no stigma of charity, no charade over long-term loans never to be repaid, and no whining about helping foreigners while Americans go hungry. The whole operation is straight business: we get security while the Russians get to live better and feel useful. We simply export our great surplus commodity—criminals—to the one society whose economy can benefit from this exchange.

Robert Weissberg is a professor of political science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Saving the Small Farm

by Katherine Dalton

Community Supported Agriculture

St. Matthews Episcopal is a modern, manicured church set in the heart of suburban Louisville's East End. It contrasts somewhat with the dusty farm truck sitting in its parking lot.

Near the truck, half a dozen people say hello to a slender man in blue jeans and then mill around numerous apple crates filled with vegetables and melons. They chat among themselves and fill a bag with their share of produce. The amounts they can take are listed on cards attached to each crate: "8 large or 12 small" above the potatoes, "small handful" on the New Zealand spinach. It's 7:30 on a Thursday night in August, delivery time for Steve Smith's food guild.

Food guilds, subscription farming, community supported agriculture, or CSA—all are names for the kind of farming Steve does. A former market gardener who grew melons and tomatoes for stores and restaurants, Steve now sells a wide variety of vegetables, herbs, and some fruit directly to 79 families. His subscribers buy a share in a season's crop and pay their money up front in the early spring. From late April to mid-December they receive an average of a half-bushel of vegetables per week, all organically grown on Steve's farm in