

The volume edited by Chirot brings together essays first presented at a conference in Seattle, Washington in October 1990, while Jowitt's latest book is a collection of writings previously published in various places from the early 1970s until the early 1990s, including "The Leninist Extinction" published in the Chirot collection.

The central focus of the collection edited by Chirot is that of the causes and consequences of the undermining and collapse of Communist political regimes in several East European countries in 1989 and 1990, though some of the essays in the volume range far from that subject. Chirot's own contribution to the collection attempts to identify the causes of the fatal crisis of East European communism at the end of the 1980s. He contends that the weaknesses of the East European regimes were deeply rooted and had been gradually worsening over a long time. His analysis especially emphasizes the erosion of the moral and political legitimacy of those systems and astutely points to the increasing hollowness of the ideological basis for their authority, the problems posed by the expanding use of Western Europe as a benchmark for comparison and evaluation, and the key role of urban middle and professional classes in generating instability and setting the tone for change.

Stephen Hanson's essay offers an interpretation of the outlook which led Mikhail Gorbachev to undertake the restructuring of Soviet political and economic institutions, and of the reasons why Gorbachev's program ultimately proved unsuccessful. Hanson emphasizes a fact that many observers have failed to realize: Gorbachev was not only a committed reformer but a convinced Marxist-Leninist. That insight leads Hanson to the exploration of the contradictions inherent in Gorbachev's objectives and expectations, which were tensions built into Marxism-Leninism from its origins in Lenin's hands and which reached their peak when Gorbachev attempted to stretch the boundaries of the ideology farther than ever before because of the scope of his ambitions for partial Westernization of the Soviet system. As Hanson points out, after a few years of attempted reform, those contradictions blocked the successful realization of Gorbachev's hope for harnessing popular initiative to revitalize the Soviet system, and finally led Gorbachev to break with Marxism and Leninism by 1990. Today Hanson's analysis holds up well, even though his was a fairly unorthodox view when it was first offered not too long ago.

W. W. Rostow, as might be expected, looks at recent events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet republics in relation to broad, world-wide trends in technological development and economic growth. He sees the crucial flaw of systems of the Soviet type as their lack of technological absorptive capacity (which indeed was
the main problem of which Gorbachev complained when he first sought reform in Soviet institutions).

Bruce Cumings' wide-ranging survey of both the post-communist and capitalist worlds in the aftermath of the events of 1969 offers him the opportunity to cross swords with a number of newspaper columnists and pop theorists. He emphasizes the need to avoid using the celebration of the collapse of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as an excuse for neglecting the study of the formidable contradictions which remain in the "liberal capitalist" system of the West.

Elizabeth Perry reports that the outcome of the upheaval in China in 1989 "has been tragically anticlimactic" (p. 129) in comparison with the rapid and sweeping changes in Eastern Europe. Her unique contribution to the widespread discussion of the causes of the blocking of political reform in China is her description of the limitations in the thinking of the proponents of reform themselves. On the other hand, Nicholas Hardy notes that the failure of the movement for political reform did not block economic reform in China after 1989. He points out that selective economic reforms proceeded after the regime repressed its political critics, and he predicts the eventual resumption of more rapid change in economic patterns.

David Calleo's essay deals with relations between the United States and Western Europe after the disintegration of the Soviet alliance system, and pays attention to the possibility that the completeness of the Western victory over its Communist adversaries may bring the destabilization of "many habitual relationships, the transatlantic alliance among them" (p. 153). Though he recognizes the complexity of competing U.S. and West European interests, he concludes that the greatest threat to continued European acceptance of America's status as the undisputed superpower is posed by the problems within the economy of the USA.

Seymour Martin Lipset's chapter is the most empirically grounded and richly detailed of any essay in the Chirot collection, and therefore seems to this reviewer the most valuable of the pieces in that volume. Lipset's thesis, which does not seem open to serious dispute, is that the socialist parties of democracies other than the USA have experienced an accelerating shift to the right, leading to their enthusiastic embracing of many of the perceived virtues of capitalism and the market system by the 1980s. Lipset argues that the Democratic Party in the United States (though not a socialist party) was by the 1980s unique in adhering closely to "redistributionist, progressive tax, and antibusiness orientations" (p. 205), and that indeed that party had been moving farther to the left from the 1960s on. However, even in 1990 Lipset might have noticed the growing influence within the Democratic Party of the moderates who would come to victory in its national convention in 1992 with the nomination of Clinton and Gore. Lipset's essay does not have much to do with the downfall of Communism in Eastern Europe, except to remind us that the embarrassing record of performance of centrally planned economies in the USSR and Eastern Europe helped to encourage Western socialists to rethink the means of achieving their ideals. As Lipset's analysis indicates, the primary determinant of the economic policy posi-