Франц 1790 года.
Sustained research on the launching of the Stalin revolution of the late 1920s and early 1930s has demonstrated that state policies were improvised and profoundly chaotic. Remarkably, however, the result of this muddled social-engineering gamble was not ignominious collapse but the formation of a new socio-political order, known in the Anglophone world as Stalinism and within the USSR as socialism. Herein lies a challenge for would-be interpreters.

One could call attention to the outcome of the 1930s and argue that critical elements of continuity in ideas and political organization must somehow link the programmatic campaigns begun in 1929 back to 1917, as Stalin himself maintained. But it is also possible to portray the Stalin-era as an unremitting upheaval, emphasizing the haphazard nature of policy conception and implementation, diminishing the importance of ideas, and arguing for discontinuity between the second revolution and 1917. In such a way two sides of a non-intersecting dialogue have taken shape, between what can broadly be described as the totalitarian view and its many critics.

In one highly influential attempt at synthesis, Moshe Lewin sought to combine an analysis of events in the 1920s and the subsequent grand mobilization with a macro-level characterization of the resultant Soviet “system.” Acknowledging the “system’s” apparent stability, Lewin nonetheless highlighted the confusion of its origin and disparaged the unforeseen outcome as a pathology (Stalinism, not socialism).1 Another influential commentator, Sheila Fitzpatrick, has stressed the intended linkages between the October Revolution and Stalin’s radicalism, but she argues that after 1932 a conservative turn set in, rooted in the cultural preferences of the new elite. To characterize the resulting society, she referred to a peculiar “Soviet” mentality, not

*Thanks to Greg Castillo and the seminar on socialist architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, the participants in the European lunchtime seminar at Princeton University, and Robert Weinberg for their helpful comments. Funding was provided by IREX, SSRC, Princeton University, and the University of California, Berkeley.

1. See especially his two essays, "Grappling with Stalinism" and "Society, State, and Ideology during the First-Five Year Plan," in Moshe Lewin, The Making of the Soviet System: Essays in the Social History of Interwar Russia (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 286–314 and 209–40, respectively. With regard to the latter essay, it is interesting to note that Lewin did not write comparable essays on the nature of society during the Second or Third Five-Year Plans.