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Problems of Modern Aesthetics

Thirteen Soviet specialists arguing about aesthetics in 1968-69, before the door closed: naming Stalin and the cult, dating the doctrine to 1932, and reading Kafka and Ernst Fischer in their own words rather than simply denouncing them.

Serguei Mozhnyagun

Introduction to the 1969 Edition

This is not a monograph but a committee. *Problems of Modern Aesthetics* is a collection of thirteen essays by thirteen Soviet specialists, translated from the Russian *Problemy sovremennoy estetiki* and issued by Progress Publishers in Moscow under the editorship of Professor S. Mozhnyagun — who also contributes the longest and most combative piece in it. The imprint is worth stating plainly at the outset, because five of the volumes drafted for this series so far have turned out on inspection to be Foreign Languages, Raduga or Prague books wearing a Progress jacket. This one is not among them: "Progress Publishers" is the only house named in the text, and the two occurrences are both the publisher's own back-matter — an advertisement and a request to readers. This is a genuine Progress export title, and the export purpose is stated in the Publishers' Note: "The book is intended for the general reader with an interest in the cultural problems of the present day."

A collection has to be read as a collection, and the first honest thing to say is that the quality varies from essay to essay — which is itself a finding, because it tells you the book is a real symposium and not a single voice in thirteen masks. Some of these pieces are apparatus prose; two or three are genuine philosophy; and one, the editor's own, is the sharpest polemic against Western modernism that this series has yet met from a Soviet pen. The contents, in order, are: Alexei Metchenko on the basic principles of Soviet literature; Anatoly Dremov on the ideal and the hero; Georgy Lomidze and Pavel Trofimov on the national cultures of the USSR; Nikolai Silayev on labour as a source of aesthetic feeling; Victor Romanenko on the beauty of nature; Ivan Astakhov on the origin of aesthetic feeling; Alexander Myasnikov on tradition and innovation; Mikhail Ovsyannikov on the artistic image; Mozhnyagun on modernism; Alexander Dymshits on realism and modernism; Nikolai Leizerov on the scope and limits of realism; and Boris Suchkov on the historical development of realism. Suchkov's presence is a bridge to the companion volume in this series: four years later Progress would publish his *A History of*

Realism (1973), and his essay here is the seed of that book.

The date is the whole of the matter

The sharpest instrument this volume hands you is its date. There is no copyright page in what survives of the scan and no printing history, so the text has to be dated from inside, and it dates cleanly and recently. The latest live matter in it is the debate over "realism without shores" that ran through the international writers' meetings of the mid-sixties — the Leningrad Forum of Writers of 1963 is discussed at length, Roger Garaudy's *D'un réalisme sans rivages* (1963) is attacked by name across three essays — and the freshest event in it is the affair of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, whom the editor's essay treats as a present controversy rather than a settled one. The bibliographic years run out at 1968. This is a book whose Russian manuscript closed in 1968 and reached English in 1969, with almost none of the decade-long lag that misdates so many Progress titles. It should be read as exactly what its spine says: a book of 1969.

And 1969 is a precise place to stand. It sits in the narrow trough between two events that closed the Soviet cultural thaw. Behind it is the trial of Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel in February 1966 — the first time since Stalin's death that writers were sent to the camps for what they had published abroad — and the crushing of the Prague Spring in August 1968. Ahead of it is the freeze: the expulsion of Solzhenitsyn from the Writers' Union in November 1969, the tightening that followed. A Soviet aesthetics collection of exactly this year is a document of the moment the thaw shut, and the interesting thing about it is that you can feel both the thaw and the shutting inside the same covers.

The de-Stalinisation register, and what it still cannot do

The first surprise, if you come to this book from the 1970s monographs in this series, is how much it will say. Avner Zis's

Foundations of Marxist Aesthetics (Progress, 1977) never prints the name Stalin; Suchkov's *A History of Realism* (1973) never prints it either, in a book that covers the whole Stalin period of Soviet literature. This collection prints it eight times, and several of those are critical. Metchenko records that "The Stalin personality cult, which had begun to have an adverse effect on the arts by the end of the thirties, delayed the development and deepening of the idea of commitment"; he notes that "During the years of the Stalin cult some writers painted images of heroes so ideal that they towered above reality." Mozhnyagun goes further, and takes on Stalin's philosophy directly: discussing whether art belongs to the ideological superstructure, he treats Stalin's Marxism and Problems of Linguistics as a piece of dogmatism to be worked around, and writes that his Western opponent Ernst Fischer "refutes' Stalin's dogmatism by resorting to dogmatism of his own." A book that can call Stalin's linguistics essay dogmatic in 1969 is a book of the Twentieth Congress settlement, still breathing the air of 1956.

The de-Stalinising candour reaches even to the founding events the later monographs bury. Where Zis performs the origin of socialist realism as an assurance and Suchkov never lets the question arise, Myasnikov simply dates it: "The term 'socialist realism' was first coined in 1932 and the first detailed exposition of the basic principles underlying it was given at the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934." That single sentence names what neither monograph would name — the year, the congress, the institution. This is the most forthcoming any book in this cluster has been about where the doctrine came from.

And yet watch what the sentence does even as it concedes. The term "was coined" — by no one; the exposition "was given" — by no one. The origin is dated and de-agented in the same breath, and the missing agent is precisely the one a sibling Progress volume supplies. In *Soviet Literature: Problems and People* (Progress, 1970), Kornely Zelinsky, who was in the room, recalled the meeting at Gorky's house in October 1932 and wrote: "It was then that Stalin gave the Soviet writers' artistic method the definition of socialist realism." Myasnikov knows the counter-charge and rebuts it: he cites an American study by G. Yermolayev (1963) that "attempts to prove that socialist realism was decreed by Stalin and foisted upon the art of other countries," and answers with sarcasm — "What a strange belief Mr. Yermolayev has in the omnipotence of a decree!" One Progress author denies the doctrine was decreed by Stalin; another Progress author, printed a year later, prints an eyewitness saying Stalin named it at a private evening. The house that published both did not mind. The dates are given

here; the man who spoke them is what has been removed.

Where the origin is dated but de-agented, the doctrine's genealogy is asserted in the usual place. Metchenko's essay is the partiinost essay of the collection — though the English never uses the Russian word, translating it throughout as "commitment," which softens it. And Metchenko derives commitment exactly where Zis would derive it eight years later: "The Leninist principle of the commitment of literature and the arts to party ideals was first formulated concisely but penetratingly in the article 'Party Organisation and Party Literature' written in 1905." Lenin's article was written in November 1905, in a few weeks of legal press, about the publications of a political party that was illegal and had no state. Seventy years of Soviet cultural administration are made to rest on it. To his credit, Metchenko quotes the restraining half of the article too — that literature is "least of all subject to mechanical adjustment or levelling" — which is the half most Soviet citations drop; he performs the expansion of scope openly rather than by suppression. But the expansion is still performed, not argued.

The erasure that de-Stalinisation did not undo

The candour has a hard limit, and the limit is the standing test of this whole series: a Soviet may be recorded as having erred, but the category of the enemy is never turned inward, and the people the doctrine destroyed are erased at the point of their destruction. Here the erasure is legible against the book's own inclusions.

Anna Akhmatova is in this book. Dymshits names her three times, and warmly: he sets her above the modernists she was grouped with, and reports that Blok "saw that Anna Akhmatova did not 'fit in' this school, sensing warm, vital impulses in her poetry." That is a rehabilitation — the poet restored to the canon. What is nowhere in the book is what was done to her. Zhdanov: zero. The Central Committee decree of 14 August 1946 against the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, which named Akhmatova and drove her out of print: absent. The Fourth International had the scene at the time. Writing as Ernest Germain in "Purge of Soviet Culture" (*Fourth International*, vol. 10 no. 11, December 1949), Ernest Mandel reported that "the editors of two periodicals were removed from their positions for having permitted the poetess Akhmatova to express 'the emotion of loneliness ... foreign to Soviet literature'" — Zhdanov's report on *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*. Dymshits can praise Akhmatova's warm vital impulses in 1969 precisely because a decree he does not mention had made her name unspeakable for a decade. The

praise is the measure of the silence.

The pattern holds across the cast, and it is at its most revealing in Dymshits's essay, which names almost the whole silenced modernist generation — but only as poets. In one sentence he lists "Osip Mandelshtam, a prominent acmeist, Boris Pasternak or Marina Tsvetayeva" together with Bely and Khlebnikov as modernist writers whose best work came when they tried to free themselves from modernism. Every name in that sentence is a wound the book does not touch: Mandelstam died in a transit camp near Vladivostok in 1938; Tsvetaeva hanged herself in 1941; Pasternak and Akhmatova were driven from print. Dymshits gives Pasternak eleven mentions and a real critical judgement — "The legacy of Boris Pasternak has not, unfortunately, been the subject of critical research to date" — without one word about Doctor Zhivago or the Nobel scandal of 1958 that made him a non-person. The poets are admitted to the canon; the persecution that emptied it is not. Around them the enforcers are simply gone: Meyerhold, arrested and shot in 1940, zero; Zoshchenko, the co-target of the 1946 decree, zero; Isaac Babel, shot in 1940, absent. And the theorist whose vocabulary the realism essays borrow — Georg Lukács, the major Marxist theorist of realism in the century, alive while the book was written — appears not once, in either spelling, exactly as in Suchkov's monograph, which is built on his architecture without his name. The music resolution of February 1948, which broke Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Khachaturian for "formalism," is absent too, though "formalism" is a live word in the book, used twenty-two times as a charge against the living.

This is the reflexivity test in its sharpest form. Error is admissible: the cult "delayed" the idea of commitment, some writers "painted images of heroes so ideal that they towered above reality." The category is not: nobody who stayed inside is ever an opportunist, a formalist or an enemy, and the machinery that enforced the doctrine — the decree, the report, the resolution, the arrest — is simply outside the covers. The doctrine is dated to 1932 and 1934; the terror that carried it is dated to nothing.

What the book is actually fighting — and this is what fixes its year

Where the 1970s monographs read as retrospective, this collection reads as a book in a live fight, and the fight is the thing that dates it more precisely than any bibliography. Its real antagonist is the argument, then current across the European left, that socialist realism was too narrow and should be widened to admit Proust, Joyce and Kafka — Garaudy's

"realism without shores." The collection engages this at first hand and in detail. Kafka is named fifty-two times, most of them in Mozhnyagun's essay, which quotes Fischer's *From Grillparzer to Kafka* on Kafka's Prague as a "town of alienation" and argues the case out rather than dismissing it; Fischer himself is named forty-four times and read in his own books. This is the credit the book has genuinely earned: unlike the Progress volumes that name Adorno sixty times and cite him only through Soviet intermediaries, this collection reads its opponents in the original and quotes them with references. It takes modernism seriously enough to attack it properly.

And two of those live fights fix the year exactly, because history answered them while the ink was wet.

The first is Czechoslovakia. Myasnikov's essay engages, with unusual directness, the Czechoslovak aestheticians who held that "the term 'socialist realism' is not broad enough to cover all the riches of contemporary progressive art in Czechoslovakia," and who proposed instead a broader "socialist art" that "combines both progressive modernism and, as one of the trends in modern art, socialist realism." This is the aesthetic theory of the Prague Spring — the reform Marxism that wanted to open the doctrine — argued against on the page. The book contests the Czechoslovak position with words. In August 1968, five Warsaw Pact armies contested it with tanks. And here the silence is total in the way the brief predicts: the Prague Spring and its suppression are absent from the book. The single occurrence of "Prague" in the volume is Kafka's city; the invasion that settled the argument Myasnikov is having does not appear. A book that debates Czechoslovak aesthetics in the very months the debate was being closed by force, and mentions only the debate, is a document of a particular kind of blindness.

The second is Solzhenitsyn. Mozhnyagun's essay attacks the Western critics who "consider Alexander Solzhenitsyn's works an important contribution to art," and dismisses Solzhenitsyn's "righteous people" as "preachers of Christian obedience." This is the official line, taken up at the exact moment it was being enforced. On 4 November 1969 Solzhenitsyn was expelled from the Union of Soviet Writers. The Fourth International's press printed the record: *Intercontinental Press* of 1 December 1969 (vol. 7 no. 40) ran both "Solzhenitsyn's Denunciation of His Expulsion" and his defence at the Writers' Union meeting, in which he protested that the union had acted "in my absence, without even sending me a warning telegram, without even giving me the four hours to travel from Ryazan to be present." While this collection was being readied for foreign readers with a paragraph explaining why Solzhenitsyn was overrated,

the writer himself was being thrown out of the institution that administered the doctrine the collection defends.

What is worth keeping

None of this is a reason to throw the book away, and a reader told everything in it is worthless learns nothing. There is real philosophy here, and it should be credited concretely, essay by essay.

The best of it works on the specificity of the aesthetic — the question of what art does that nothing else does. Ovsyannikov's essay on the artistic image is a genuine engagement with the whole field of mid-century Western aesthetics; it opens by naming its opponents accurately — "phenomenology, existentialism," neo-positivist "semantics," "neo-Freudism and the modern forms of experimental psychological aesthetics influenced by information theory" — and defends the thesis that thinking in images is the specific characteristic of art against those who would dissolve it. Astakhov's essay on the origin of aesthetic feeling is a serious history that begins with Darwin and the biological theories and works forward; it is philosophy of a recognisable kind. Silayev's essay on labour as a source of aesthetic feeling opens a genuinely interesting front — the aesthetics of production and everyday life, beyond the fine arts — and states its case against Hegel with some point: "Hegel — that eminent thinker of the past — set down a rigorous demarcation line for this branch of philosophy, naming the fine arts as its sole subject," a limit Silayev wants to break. Romanenko's essay on the beauty of nature takes up, with care, the hard problem of whether natural beauty is objective. These are not catechism; they are contributions to arguments that were live in Western aesthetics too.

The book's honesty about its own discipline extends, as Zis's would, to admitting that Soviet aesthetics contained open questions — the essays disagree with one another, on the aesthetic in nature and on the boundaries of realism, and the disagreement is printed rather than hidden. That is the mark of a real symposium.

The reply

The tradition this series writes from answered these questions at the root, and the root argument is older than the book by thirty years. Trotsky's "Art and Politics in Our Epoch," written to *Partisan Review* on 18 June 1938, is the text to set against the whole enterprise. On the origin of the doctrine Myasnikov

dates so carefully, Trotsky guessed the mechanism before the archives could confirm it: "The style of present-day official Soviet painting is called 'socialist realism.' The name itself has evidently been invented by some high functionary in the department of the arts." He was guessing, and Zelinsky in the sibling volume supplies the functionary. But the deeper reply is at the level of first principles. Where the collection derives art from commitment, Trotsky derived it from unrest — "a protest against reality, either conscious or unconscious, active or passive, optimistic or pessimistic, always forms part of a really creative piece of work" — and drew the conclusion that Metchenko's whole essay exists to deny: that a revolutionary party is "neither able nor willing to take upon itself the task of 'leading' and even less of commanding art, either before or after the conquest of power," because art "not only does not seek orders, but by its very essence, cannot tolerate them." Trotsky's own book on exactly these questions, *Literature and Revolution* (1923) — written by a member of the Politburo and published in Moscow, then removed from Soviet intellectual life so completely that Metchenko can attack "the Trotskyite slogan 'the methods of Marxism are not the methods of art'" without acknowledging that the book making the argument exists — is the great suppressed Soviet work on the ground these essays cover. It is not held in any corpus this series can quote from, and it is cited here only by its argument.

There is a still more exact reply to what this particular collection is trying to do. Its labour, across Metchenko, Dymshits and Leizerov, is to supply socialist realism with a definition — to make it an arguable method rather than a police category. Reviewing Kurt London's *The Seven Soviet Arts in The New International* for October 1938 — the pre-split, Trotskyist *New International*, before the magazine went to Shachtman's minority in 1940 — Edna Margolin had already said why that labour would fail. The name, she wrote, "was delivered from on high without any definition or clue for its meaning," and would stay undefined on purpose: "unformulated, it makes a better weapon against those who fall from grace. It can be woven to fit any figure." Thirty-one years later, this collection is the attempt to weave the definition Margolin said would never be supplied — and it is being published in the same season the weapon was used to expel Solzhenitsyn and to answer the Czechoslovaks. For the Zhdanov machinery the book erases, Mandel's "Purge of Soviet Culture" (December 1949) and George Sanders's "J. Stalin, Music Critic" (*Fourth International*, vol. 9 no. 2, March–April 1948), on the 1948 resolution that broke Shostakovich, are the contemporaneous accounts.

Honesty requires holding our own side to the same standard. In

the same 1938 essay, Trotsky wrote that it was "impossible to read Soviet verse and prose without physical disgust," and consigned the whole art of the Stalin period to the record of decline. That verdict does not survive the century's evidence, and it does not survive this book: the essays here read Western modernism with real attention, and two or three of them do philosophy that any aesthetician could argue with. The tradition that holds Progress Publishers to the standard of the evidence has to meet it too.

What this book is

It is the most openly argumentative of the Soviet aesthetics volumes in this series, and the one caught most exactly in the act of a door closing. Because it is a symposium of 1968–69 and not a monograph of the settled seventies, it still says things the later books would learn not to say — it names Stalin and the cult, it dates the doctrine to 1932 and the 1934 Congress, it reads Kafka and Fischer in their own words and argues with them. And because it is a book of exactly 1969, it carries the freeze in its silences: it debates the aesthetics of the Prague Spring without the tanks, dismisses Solzhenitsyn in the month of his expulsion, rehabilitates Akhmatova without the decree that had silenced her. It is, in the end, thirteen serious and semi-serious people trying to give a police category the dignity of a philosophy, at the precise moment the police were using the category to do their work. Read it for Ovsyannikov and Astakhov, who are doing real philosophy; read Mozhnyagun for the best case the doctrine could make against modernism; and read the whole of it for the year, which it wears more plainly than any book in this cluster.

HISTORY

Modern History of the Arab Countries

Four centuries of the Ottoman Arab provinces, from the Turkish conquest to the hauling down of the Arab flag at Beirut in 1918 - reconstructed from the Moscow University lectures of an Arabist who died before the book appeared. Sharp on Sykes-Picot and the carve-up.

Vladimir Borisovich Lutsky

Introduction to the 1969 Edition

A reader who opens this book expecting the Arab world of 1969 — Nasser two years after the June defeat, the Ba'ath entrenched in Damascus and Baghdad, the fedayeen, the oil weapon — will be surprised to find that it ends in 1918, with British martial law being proclaimed over Damascus and the Arab flag hauled down at Beirut. Vladimir Borisovich Lutsky's *Modern History of the Arab Countries* is a history of the Ottoman Arab provinces from the Turkish conquest of the early sixteenth century to the collapse of that empire in the First World War. It closes on the exact threshold at which the modern reader assumes it will begin. That closing point is not an accident, and it is not a limitation. It is the key to what the book is, and to what it silently promises next.

A lecture course, not a book of 1969

The date on the spine is the least reliable fact about this volume, and the front matter says so plainly. Lutsky (1906–1962) did not live to see it published; the book appeared seven years after his death. It "consists of a series of lectures that took several years to prepare," and its editor, N. Ivanov, is exact about which years: "The present book is the fullest available version of the series of lectures delivered by Lutsky at Moscow University between 1949 and 1953." Where no verbatim transcript survived — the chapter on the French conquest of Algeria, for instance — the compilers fell back on a chapter Lutsky had contributed to the textbook *Modern History of the Colonial and Dependent Countries* (Moscow, 1940). Three younger Arabists, R. G. Landa, I. M. Smilyanskaya and M. S. Lazarev, prepared particular chapters for the press from his archive and from students' notes.

So the intellectual substance of this book is a late-Stalin-era university lecture course, built on foundations laid in the 1930s and 1940s and issued, unrevised in argument, in the détente-era jacket of Progress Publishers in 1969. Date the argument, not the printing. What we are reading is how the

founder of Soviet Arabism taught the subject to Moscow students in the years around Stalin's death — and the book bears the marks of that origin honestly. There is no cult apparatus in it. Stalin's name does not appear once in 146,000 words. Neither "opportunism" nor "revisionism," the twin classifiers that saturate so much of the Progress catalogue, occurs a single time. This is not a catechism dressed as history; it is history, written by a man the introduction calls, without exaggeration, "the founder of the Soviet school of Arab historians."

That claim is worth taking seriously rather than discounting. Lutsky began lecturing on modern Arab history in 1936, at a moment when, as Ivanov notes, "the Russian classical Orientalists of pre-revolutionary days showed no great interest in modern Arab history." The book was produced by the Academy of Sciences' Institute of the Peoples of Asia, the successor to the old Institute of Oriental Studies, and it reads as what it is: a founding synthesis in a field that barely existed in Russian before its author made it. Ivanov is candid about the seams — "Some of its chapters and sections lack development," there is "no section on the social and economic history of Morocco" — the sort of admission a propaganda tract never makes about itself.

What the scholarship is worth

Take the measure of the research before weighing the frame, because the research is the larger part. Lutsky reads his sources, and he reads them in the right languages. The Egyptian chronicler al-Jabarti — the indispensable Arabic eyewitness to Bonaparte's occupation — is quoted directly on the French warships burning at Abukir and on the depredations of the occupying armies. George Antonius's *The Arab Awakening* (1938), still the classic account of the Arab national revival, is cited by page. Volney's *Travels of 1784*, Cromer's self-serving memoirs, the reports of the French savants of the Egyptian expedition, the British historian George Young, Bremond's book on the French mission to the

Hejaz — the apparatus is that of a working historian who has gone to the documents. When Lutsky wants to convey what Ottoman decay did to the Egyptian fellah, he does not editorialise; he lets a French observer of the expedition speak: the peasant "sows the land with disgust, reaps with fear and tries to hide a meagre share of the grain from the grasping oppressors." This is the citation test that so many volumes in this series fail, and Lutsky passes it cleanly: his opponents and his witnesses are quoted and sourced, not merely characterised.

The Marxism here is likewise the real thing rather than an incantation. Lutsky uses Marx and Engels where they actually wrote about the region — the New-York Daily Tribune despatches on the Eastern Question, Anti-Dühring on Napoleon's cavalry, the Selected Correspondence on the origins of Islam — and Lenin's Notebooks on Imperialism (Collected Works, vol. 39) on the Fashoda and Agadir crises. He deploys them as analytic tools, not as proof-texts. His class reading of the Ottoman Arab lands — the tangle of state, waqf and private tenure; the sipahi fief; the multazim tax-farmer; the slow, uneven emergence of a commercial bourgeoisie in the shadow of a feudal-theocratic empire — is genuine social history, and much of it holds up.

And where the book is at its strongest, it is very strong indeed: on the European conquest of the Arab world. The financial strangulation of Egypt and Tunisia by Anglo-French bondholders; Disraeli's midnight purchase of the Suez shares with Rothschild money; the "European cabinet" of foreign controllers that reduced Egypt to "a colony of the Anglo-French bankers"; the crushing of Arabi Pasha's national movement in 1882 and the fastening of Cromer's proconsular dictatorship; the French wars against Abd el-Kader in Algeria and the "Algerian Commune"; the Italian conquest of Libya — this is powerful, largely accurate anti-colonial history, and Lutsky tells it with a controlled anger that the events warrant.

Lutsky also has a historian's instinct for the human texture of colonial rule, and a corrective eye for the figures the imperial record traduced. He rescues Khedive Ismail from the caricature of the spendthrift "Oriental despot" — Cromer had reproached him for "preferring the company of his coachmen and lackeys to that of European diplomats" — and insists, more justly, that "Ismail was an educated and energetic Egyptian statesman, a pioneer of capitalist development in Egypt," even while placing him squarely as a representative of a doomed landowning class. He restores Arabi Pasha, dismissed by "many bourgeois historians" as "an ignoramus," to what he was: "the son of a fellah," schooled at al-Azhar, a reader who followed the French Revolution and the Italian

Risorgimento. And he tells the Denshawai affair of June 1906 — that emblem of the whole colonial relationship — in full: a party of British officers out shooting pigeons in a Delta village, a scuffle with the peasants whose crops they trampled, an officer dead of sunstroke on the road, and four fellaheen hanged and others flogged at the foot of the gallows for a murder that never happened. The passage needs no editorial heightening, and Lutsky gives it none; the facts do the work, and they did more than any pamphlet to turn Egyptian opinion against the occupation.

The climax is the carve-up of the Arab East during the First World War, and here Lutsky is on ground where the documentary record has only vindicated him. He lays out the double- and triple-dealing of the Entente with precision: the promises made to Sharif Husein through McMahon to raise the Arab revolt; the Sykes-Picot Agreement negotiated in secret ("secret talks were going on in the cool comfort of the Entente's ministerial offices") that partitioned the very lands promised to the Arabs into British and French zones; and the Balfour Declaration of November 1917, which Lutsky reads without conspiracy-mongering as a calculated imperial manoeuvre — Britain enlisting the Zionist movement "to justify the separation of Palestine from the Arab state." He quotes the Declaration verbatim and follows the machinery honestly, down to Balfour dismissing the exposed Sykes-Picot text as a "figment of a malicious Bolshevik imagination." The betrayal of the Arab revolt, the imposition of the mandate order, the planting of the Zionist project under British auspices: on all of this Lutsky is a reliable guide, and a reader will learn real history from him.

Two things deserve particular credit because they cut against the reflexes one expects. First, Lutsky does not exempt tsarist Russia from the indictment. Russian imperialism appears in these pages as one predator among the others: "The question of capturing Constantinople was also connected with tsarism's desire for hegemony in Europe"; tsarist Russia "supported the aggressive plans of the Bourbon monarchy" in the seizure of Algiers; and Sykes and Picot did their bargaining in Petrograd, because Russia was a full partner in the partition until the Revolution tore up its share. A Soviet historian could afford this honesty — tsarism was the *ancien régime* October had overthrown — but the honesty is real, and it makes the anti-imperialism even-handed rather than merely anti-Western. Second, on Zionism Lutsky is empirical and restrained. He treats it as a political movement instrumentalised by British strategy, gives the sober figures — a Jewish population of scarcely 90,000 in Palestine on the eve of the war, with only forty-three agricultural settlements among them — and does

not reach for the demonology of the world-Zionist conspiracy that Soviet publishing was embracing at the very moment this book went to press. Set beside its own stablemates in this catalogue — Yuri Ivanov's *Caution: Zionism* (1970), Galina Nikitina's *The State of Israel* (1973) — Lutsky's pages read like the work of a scholar who died before that campaign began, which is precisely what they are.

The frame, and where it points

None of this makes the book innocent of its politics; it makes its politics worth examining seriously. The organising idea of Lutsky's history is the progressive national movement, and the class he credits with carrying it is, again and again, the national bourgeoisie. Mohammed Ali's state-building reforms are "of a progressive nature" — Lutsky reaches for Marx's estimate of him as "the only man" capable of replacing the Ottoman turban with a real head. The Wahhabi movement is progressive not for its theology but because it "weakened feudal anarchy and Arabian disunity." The Egyptian *wataneun*, Arabi the fellah's son, the Young Tunisians, the merchants and liberal landlords pressing the *Tanzimat* forward — these are Lutsky's heroes, the bearers of a bourgeois-national advance against feudal stagnation and colonial subjection. It is a coherent, defensible schema for the period it covers, and for a "modern history" ending in 1918 it is largely unobjectionable: there was as yet scarcely an Arab proletariat, still less an Arab communist movement, to carry anything.

But the schema does not stop at 1918 in the mind of the reader Progress had in view. The choice to end the "modern history" (*novaya istoriya*) at the First World War is itself a periodisation with a politics. In the Soviet scheme, 1917 divides modern from contemporary history, and a companion volume of contemporary history would pick up exactly where this one lays down — with the mandates, the inter-war national movements, and the post-1945 revolutions. Lutsky's book is the prologue to that sequel, and it is built to hand off cleanly to it. Its final sentence is not an ending but a cue: the close of the war "opened a new period in the history of the Arab people, a period of struggle against British and French imperialism for the complete national liberation of the Arab countries." The hero is already cast — the anti-imperialist national movement — and the villain is already named. What is missing, structurally, is any warning about that hero's limits.

The seam shows most clearly in the book's treatment of 1917 itself. The moral pivot of Lutsky's whole narrative is the Bolshevik publication of the secret treaties in November 1917 and the Soviet government's "Appeal to All the Working

Moslems of Russia and the East" of that December. This is accurate — the Bolsheviks did expose the Sykes–Picot text, and it was a genuine revolutionary act that electrified the colonial world. But in Lutsky's telling it also does ideological work: it makes Soviet Russia the redeemer of the Arab East, counterposed to the Entente's treachery, the *deus ex machina* of the anti-colonial story. Written by a man teaching in Moscow around 1950 and published in 1969 at the high tide of Soviet–Arab alignment, that counterpoint is the one place where the frame reads back into the history. The Arab liberation the book foretells has a natural patron, and the reader is meant to know who it is.

The sequel the doctrine could not face

Here honesty requires a boundary. This book ends in 1918; it says nothing about Nasser, the Ba'ath, the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948, or the fate of the Arab communists, because none of it had happened when Lutsky lectured, and the mandate period itself lies a year beyond his last page. To convict him of silence on these things would be to convict him of not writing a different book. The proper criticism is not of what Lutsky omitted but of where his schema was heading — of the doctrine that this progressive-national-bourgeoisie framework became, once Soviet policy extended it past 1917 into the living politics of the Arab world.

For by 1969 that framework had a name and a policy: the "non-capitalist path of development," the theory of "national democracy," under which Moscow armed and courted precisely the Arab-nationalist regimes — Nasser's Egypt, the Iraqi and Syrian Ba'ath — as vehicles of an anti-imperialist, socially progressive advance. And here the tragedy the doctrine could not face is the one the Fourth International named as it unfolded. Those same regimes jailed, tortured and killed the Arab communists whom Soviet policy was simultaneously instructing to support them. Nasser's prisons; the Iraqi Communist Party — for a time the strongest in the Arab world — hunted underground by Kassem and then slaughtered wholesale after the Ba'athist coup of 1963. The class that Lutsky's history teaches the reader to see as the engine of liberation turned, in power, on the workers and the communists in its own countries. Lutsky did not live to see this; but the way of thinking his book so ably founds is the way of thinking that could not, in advance, explain it.

The answer that was already in print

The counter-analysis was not a later wisdom. It existed, in the

anti-Stalinist Marxist tradition, in the very years Lutsky was lecturing, and it was aimed at exactly the question his schema begs: can the national bourgeoisie of a colonial country carry the anti-imperialist revolution through to the end?

Trotsky's answer, in the concluding theses of *The Permanent Revolution* (1930), is the theory the Soviet volumes attack by name and never state. Thesis 2: "With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses." An "independent" bourgeois-democratic dictatorship in a colonial country, Trotsky argued, could only be of the Kuomintang type — turning, in the end, "entirely against the workers and the peasants." That was written of China in 1927. It reads as a forecast of the Arab East thirty years on.

And the Fourth International applied it to that East in real time. When the Free Officers took Cairo in July 1952 — while Lutsky's lecture course was still fresh — the movement's press read the coup with a class eye that events would confirm: "The coup d'etat of the Egyptian army therefore does not in any way constitute a revolution. The old institutions are preserved" (S. Munir, "The Military Coup in Egypt," *Fourth International*, vol. XIII no. 5, September–October 1952). The great anti-imperialist upsurge of 1951–52, Munir wrote, had "assumed a clearly proletarian character from the outset," only to be "led into a blind alley and suppressed." A decade later, an Arab socialist writing in the *American International Socialist Review* drew the balance sheet the "non-capitalist path" refused to draw: "The new Egyptian state is a capitalist state and the class in power there is the national bourgeoisie," and Nasser had "launch[ed] a witch-hunt against" the communists "including all means of propaganda and police terror" (A. Sadi, "'Arab Socialism' and the Nasserite National Movement," *International Socialist Review*, vol. 24 no. 2, Spring 1963). Sadi even quoted the Arab communist parties' own programme back at them — the call for "a national democratic state 'which does not represent one certain class'... which opens the way for a peaceful transition to socialism" — the exact doctrine, in the CPs' own words, that would leave the workers' movement disarmed before the regimes that were about to crush it.

This is the reading Lutsky's book cannot supply, and it is the reading it makes one want. His *Modern History of the Arab Countries* is honest scholarship on the making of the modern Arab world under the Ottoman and then the European yoke —

reliable on the carve-up, sharp on Sykes–Picot and Balfour, generous to the peoples whose struggle it recounts. It is also the opening chapter of a story whose next installment Soviet doctrine was determined to tell as a romance of the progressive national bourgeoisie, and which turned out, for the Arab communists, to be a tragedy. Read Lutsky for the century he actually covers, where he is a trustworthy and often admirable guide. For what came after, and for why the framework falters there, read the tradition that was already, in 1952, watching the same events and refusing the same illusions.

PHILOSOPHY

Leninist Theory of Revolution and Social Psychology

The founder of Soviet social psychology - a historian of the French popular risings, writing from below - assembling Lenin's scattered remarks on the moods of the masses into the foundations of a science. Supple, and better stated than most of its period.

Boris Fedorovich Porshnev

Introduction to the 1970 Edition

This is a short book — some twenty thousand words, seven brief chapters — with a large ambition. Boris Porshnev sets out to comb Lenin's scattered remarks on the moods, instincts, sentiments and "frame of mind" of the masses and to show that, taken together, they amount to the foundations of a science: a Marxist social psychology of revolution. It was issued in Moscow in 1970 by the Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, priced at twenty-one kopecks — the format and the price of an export pamphlet, an English-language item for the foreign reader rather than a domestic monograph. The book is therefore two things at once, and the interest of reading it now lies in the seam between them. It is a genuine and often subtle piece of intellectual work by a serious scholar. It is also a document of the precise moment when Soviet social psychology was being made respectable again, and of the terms on which that permission was granted.

Take the author first, because he is not an apparatus functionary and it would be a mistake to read him as one. Boris Fyodorovich Porshnev (1905–1972) was among the most original Soviet historians of his generation. His major historical work was on the popular uprisings of seventeenth-century France in the decades before the Fronde — a history written emphatically "from below," attentive to the crowd, the riot and the collective temper, and it won him a Stalin Prize in 1950. He was also the effective founder of Soviet social psychology as a discipline, and the theorist of the "we"/"they" opposition — the split of the social world into us and them — as its bedrock category. And he was, by the end of his life, a heterodox and somewhat isolated figure, whose speculative work on the origins of humanity, including a stubborn defence of surviving "relict hominids," drew ridicule and cost him standing. This is a man capable of fine-grained observation of how large numbers of ordinary people actually think and feel. That capability is the reason the book is worth republishing, and it is also what makes its central limitation worth naming.

The date on the imprint is the real date, and the year matters. Under Stalin, social psychology had been effectively proscribed as a bourgeois pseudo-science; a discipline that studied the mind of the crowd as something with its own dynamics was not welcome in a state that preferred to speak of the masses as an object to be led. Only in the mid-1960s was the field cautiously revived, and Porshnev's own *Social Psychology and History* (1966) was one of its founding texts. Seen against that background, this pamphlet is a legitimization exercise before it is anything else. Its opening sentence is candid about the situation it addresses: "Of late Soviet scholars have shown decided interest in social psychology." The problem such scholars faced was not lack of interest but lack of licence, and the surest licence available in 1970 was to demonstrate that the new science had impeccable Leninist credentials — that in studying the psychology of classes and masses one was not importing something foreign but recovering something Lenin had practised all along. That is the book's true commission. It is less an application of Lenin to psychology than a use of Lenin to protect psychology.

Within that frame Porshnev does real work, and it should be credited plainly. His governing thesis is that social consciousness is not exhausted by ideology. "Social consciousness consists not only of ideology (theory, world outlook and systems of concepts) but psychology as well," and to forget the second term "leads to vulgarisation of the teaching on basis and superstructure." Against the crude picture in which the economic base is mechanically mirrored by ideas, he insists on an intermediate layer — the shifting, half-articulate moods and sentiments of a class — through which economic conditions actually register in consciousness. He recovers this from Plekhanov, and does so with care, quoting Plekhanov's five-term analysis of the social structure in which "a definite state of mood and morals" mediates between the form of society and its religion, philosophy and art. His conclusion is a genuinely anti-economistic one: "an ideology does not directly stem from economic changes but is a reflection of social psychology, being its ideological quintessence." A reader who expects only wooden catechism

will be surprised by how much of this is alive.

The best chapters trace what one might call the molecular life of mass feeling — and here Porshnev's instincts as a historian of crowds are unmistakable. He is drawn to Lenin's descriptions of contagion and cumulation: how "the workers of neighbouring factories gain renewed courage when they see that their comrades have engaged themselves in struggle," how the word "striker" came to displace the word "student" in the peasant's mouth as a term of respect, quietly redrawing the line between us and them. He organises a whole chapter around what he calls the "summation of revolutionary sentiments" — the patient task, as he puts it, of "tirelessly merging all separate rivulets, streams and drops of social protest" into a single current. And he handles the dialectic of spontaneity and consciousness without flattening it, arriving at a formulation that does the theory justice: "spontaneity can be both a major support and a major obstacle in the way of revolution." Spontaneous discontent is the indispensable raw material of revolution and, left to itself, the reliable route back to bourgeois ideology; the work of the party is to catch the first before it becomes the second. On the psychology of the revolutionary situation he is similarly exact, quoting Lenin's compressed formula — "(α) the lower orders won't, the upper classes can't (β) growth of misery (γ) extraordinary activity" — and rightly seeing that its first term is a statement about mass consciousness, about the moment the oppressed cease to consent to being ruled in the old way. As an account of how a revolutionary mood accumulates and turns, the book is a real contribution, and it is continuous with the honest social history Porshnev wrote elsewhere.

The difficulty is not in what the book contains but in the boundary it draws around itself, and the boundary is drawn on purpose. Porshnev's Lenin is interested in social psychology "only as a revolutionary." In the final chapter this is stated as a methodological principle: "Lenin took an interest in social psychology only as a revolutionary," and was therefore "almost exclusively interested in dynamic socio-psychological phenomena, a category often referred to as the 'frame of mind'." The dynamic, changing, insurgent moods of the masses are the proper object; the "comparatively stable category described as 'the psychological make-up' or 'character'" is set aside as of little interest. This sounds like a technical scoping decision. It is in fact the hinge on which the whole book turns, because it quietly guarantees that the science of mass consciousness will be pointed only at the past and only at the enemy's society. Revolution, in this book, is always something that happens to tsarist Russia or capitalist society; the psychology of a ruling order that has ceased to

command belief is not a subject the method is allowed to reach.

Watch what happens to the vocabulary of apathy, servility and habit once the revolution has won. Before 1917 these are diagnostic terms, and sharp ones: Porshnev follows Lenin in dissecting "the psychology of wretchedness and servility," "the force of habit in millions and tens of millions," the somnolence of a people "accustomed to the omnipotence of the government." After 1917 the same words survive, but their target is silently switched. They no longer describe the relation between rulers and ruled; they describe "survivals of capitalism" lodged in the masses themselves, defects to be "expunged" by the new state. Chapter six, on the psychology of the post-revolutionary order, is entirely a chapter of tasks — retaining power, raising labour discipline, the moulding of the new man — and its emotional register is supplied by Lenin's most disciplinarian passages, quoted with approval: the call to combine "public meeting" democracy "with iron discipline while at work, with unquestioning obedience to the will of a single person, the Soviet leader, while at work." The problem of a population that submits, that goes quiet, that loses its belief in the resolutions passed in its name — the very problem the book handles brilliantly for the years before 1917 — is declared solved, in principle, by the fact of the revolution. It cannot recur, because the category that would detect it has been defined as belonging only to the pre-revolutionary world.

There is one passage where the cost of this is almost visible on the page. Porshnev quotes, approvingly, Lenin's contempt for a Soviet that has become "a meaningless plaything that can only produce apathy, indifference and disillusion among the masses, who are legitimately disgusted at the endless repetition of resolutions and protests." Lenin was describing the Menshevik-led soviets of 1917. But read in Moscow in 1970, the sentence describes with uncomfortable precision the Supreme Soviet of the USSR — an assembly whose resolutions were repeated and unanimous and whose relation to the mass mood was exactly the one Lenin scorned. Porshnev's own instrument, turned on his own state, would register something. He does not, and by the terms of his method he cannot, turn it. This is the finding the book yields to a patient reader: not a falsehood asserted but a question forbidden. A social psychology of the rising consciousness of the masses that is structurally incapable of becoming a social psychology of their manufactured consent has told you where its loyalties lie. The silence is not incidental. It is the discipline's price of admission.

The reply to this book is not an argument the anti-Stalinist left

had to invent for the occasion; it is the tradition's oldest possession, because a social psychology of revolution is precisely what Trotsky wrote. In his Copenhagen address of 1932, *In Defense of October* — the germ of the *History of the Russian Revolution* that followed — Trotsky put the thesis in a single sentence: "The active intervention of the masses in historical events is in fact the most indispensable element of a revolution." The whole method of the *History* is the working-out of that sentence: revolution studied as the "forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny," and the historian's task the tracing of the molecular changes in mass consciousness by which a submissive people becomes an insurgent one. On the specific point where Porshnev is strongest — that the revolution remakes the people who make it — Trotsky is stronger, and had said it first: "The most profound meaning of the Revolution... consists in the fact that it forms and tempers the character of the people." So far the two men are describing the same country and the same process, and a reader could be forgiven for thinking them allies.

They part on the question Porshnev will not ask. Trotsky did turn the analysis on the post-revolutionary order, and *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) is the book Porshnev's method is built never to write. Where Porshnev sees the psychology of the masses after October as a field of heroic tasks, Trotsky sees a bureaucracy that has "given to the masses the well-known gospel of obedience and silence." Where Porshnev quotes "unquestioning obedience to the will of a single person" as a slogan of socialist labour, Trotsky describes a "Stalin regime, rising above a politically atomized society, resting upon a police and officers' corps, and allowing of no control whatever" — Bonapartism, whose "democratic ritual... is the plebiscite," in which "the voter feels the barrel of a revolver between his shoulders." This is not a different subject from Porshnev's. It is Porshnev's subject — the frame of mind of the Soviet masses — carried across the one line he draws and refuses to cross. The tools are the same; only the courage to use them on the near side of 1917 is different. Trotsky's masses under the bureaucracy are apathetic, silenced, atomised, their unanimity extracted rather than felt — every one of these a social-psychological category, and every one of them unthinkable within Porshnev's science, which has ruled in advance that the mood of a socialist people is a problem of construction and never of rule.

None of this cancels what the book achieves, and the point of reading it is not to reduce it to its silence. Porshnev genuinely advances the materialist case that consciousness has a psychological substrate irreducible to doctrine; he genuinely

recovers Plekhanov's mediating "state of mood and morals" from the vulgarisers; he genuinely reads the contagion and summation of mass feeling with the eye of a historian who had spent his life among crowds. These are usable results, and a reader who wants a supple Marxist vocabulary for how a revolutionary mood gathers will find it here, better stated than in most of what the period produced. The tragedy — and it is worth calling it that, in a scholar of Porshnev's gifts — is that the man who could read the molecular life of the masses so well was permitted, and had learned to permit himself, to read it only in one direction. He built a science of how the oppressed stop consenting, and was not allowed to ask whether it might apply to the state that published him. The instrument outlives that restriction. Handed on to a reader who will point it both ways, Porshnev's social psychology of revolution becomes something he could not make it: a social psychology of the order revolution leaves behind, and the beginning of an answer to the question his book was designed not to raise.

INTERNATIONALISM

Petty-Bourgeois Revolutionism

A Comintern historian with archive access files Maoism, anarchism and Trotskyism as one disorder, diagnosed in the language of epidemic. A serious Soviet dossier on the Cultural Revolution, and some of its judgements have worn better than the Western enthusiasms of 1970.

Boris Leibson

Introduction to the 1970 Edition

Boris Leibson's book rests on a single claim, made in its opening pages and never afterwards doubted. Comparing Maoism with anarchism and with Trotskyism, he writes, "we find that, despite some differences between them, they all belong to the same species." Everything follows from that. Bakunin's secret Alliance inside the First International, the Barcelona anarchists of 1873, Trotsky's trade-union theses of 1920, the Fourth International's open letters to Peking, the Red Guards of 1966 and the students on the Paris barricades of 1968 are all specimens of one disorder, "petty-bourgeois revolutionism," which Leibson treats less as a political tendency than as an epidemiological fact — he uses the language of disease, diagnosis and epidemic throughout. It is an extraordinarily ambitious piece of classification, and the reader's task is to work out what is holding it together.

About the author the volume tells us almost nothing: "D. Hist." and a "lecturer at a higher educational establishment." That reticence is itself informative. But the footnotes are not reticent, and they identify him. They cite the Comintern Executive's October 1930 letter on the Li Li-san group; the stenographic report of the Sixth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (Moscow, 1930); the 1934 Moscow collection Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the National-Colonial Revolution; and a 1966 Moscow volume on Lenin's fight against petty-bourgeois adventurism. These are not the reading of a generalist. They are the working materials of a Comintern historian with access to party archives, writing from inside the Soviet party-academic apparatus. The Russian form of the name on the title page is Leibzon. Eleven years later Progress dropped the reticence: the back cover of his Unity, Solidarity, Internationalism (1981) describes him as "Professor Boris Leibzon of the Moscow Academy of Social Sciences", the Central Committee's own graduate institution, and "a leading Soviet authority on the international communist movement." In 1970 the export reader was not told that.

The date matters more than the author. The copyright page carries one line — "First printing 1970" — with no printing history behind it, so this is not one of the Progress volumes whose spine hides an earlier edition. But the text is a little older than the spine: the year 1970 occurs once in the whole book, in that printing line, and nothing in it postdates April 1969. This is a manuscript closed in the second half of 1969 and issued the following year, and it was written in the shadow of a very particular eighteen months: the Cultural Revolution at its height; the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in April 1969, which installed Lin Biao as Mao's designated successor; the armed clashes on the Ussuri River in March 1969 — Damansky to the Russians, Zhenbao to the Chinese — which brought two nuclear states to the edge of war; and the international meeting of communist parties held in Moscow in June 1969 to consolidate the anti-Chinese majority. Progress Publishers commissioned this book as export ammunition. Its intended reader is a cadre of a Western communist party who is losing members simultaneously to pro-Peking splinters and to a post-1968 far left recruiting out of his own youth organisation, and who needs a single argument that disposes of both.

That requirement shapes the book's most revealing passage, which is not about China at all. Complaining of those who hold that "a revolutionary must make revolutions," Leibson insists that "earnest, conscientious work in a socialist country is also an expression of revolutionism, that a diplomat pursuing the peaceful policy of a socialist country is also working for the revolutionary cause"; revolutionism today, he goes on, "is expressed not by fighting on barricades but by working to improve the socialist system, by raising its economic and military potential, by increasing its spiritual wealth." This is the détente-era Soviet state describing itself, and it supplies the measure by which every current in the book is judged. The last sentence of the volume states the rule outright: all those who "split the anti-imperialist front place themselves outside the ranks of the revolutionaries, no matter what loud phrases they use as camouflage."

Once that criterion is visible, the sociology stops working. Leibson is careful to say that petty-bourgeois revolt has often been progressive — the Jacobins, the Narodniks, Sun Yat-sen, José Martí — and that the revolutionary democrats leading newly independent states towards "non-capitalist development" deserve support: "Marxists consider it their duty to support them." In 1970 that meant, among others, the officer-led regimes of the Arab world and Africa then in receipt of Soviet arms. So a category defined by class origin turns out to include governments of soldiers and civil servants when they are friendly, and to exclude revolutionary socialists when they are not. The class analysis is not doing the sorting. Alignment with Moscow is doing the sorting, and the class vocabulary is applied afterwards.

It is worth being exact about that vocabulary, because the easy complaint against Soviet polemic — that it says "opportunism" too often — does not hold and should not be made. Leibson is a light user of the standard deviation words: opportunis- appears seventeen times in his 48,700 words, a rate of 3.49 per ten thousand, and revisionis- twenty times. The Fourth International's own Tenth World Congress documents run at 1.69 per ten thousand; the average across the 195 Progress volumes held here is 1.55. Nobody is convicted by a frequency table. What is distinctive in this book is which words carry the weight: adventuris- fifty-six times, 11.49 per ten thousand, and the title's own petty-bourgeois ninety-six times, 19.70. The diagnosis is the vocabulary, and it is a diagnosis of class origin.

Two questions can be put to it, and both can be counted. The first is whether the charge is ever cashed out into a described act that could be shown not to have happened. On China it repeatedly is, which is why the Chinese chapters are worth reading. On Trotskyism it never is: the POUM "engineered an uprising", the Trotskyists were "exposed as double-dealers and provocateurs", and no date, place, document or perpetrator is supplied for either. The second question is the harder one — whether the category could, in principle, apply to the author's own side. Eleven passages in this book place a deviation word within two hundred characters of "the C.P.S.U.", "the Soviet Union" or "the U.S.S.R." In all eleven the Party is the subject doing the combating: it was "implacable in the fight against Right-wing opportunism", it "displayed new vigour in exposing the adventurist nature" of permanent revolution, it "smashed the Leftist adventurists". Not once is it the object of the charge. And when the book does concede a fault at home — the personality cult, the "unwarranted reprisals", the "violations of socialist legality" — none of the taxonomy is available for it. The word used is "distortions", which names

no species and diagnoses no class.

Leibson wrote twice more for Progress, and both volumes are in this series, so the instrument can be watched over eleven years. In *The Revolutionary Vanguard* (1977), written with Mikhail Basmanov, petty-bourgeois has fallen to 3.56 per ten thousand and adventuris- to 0.86, while opportunis- has climbed to 8.96 and revisionis- to 10.36: the sorting has moved from a class to a doctrine, and the new test is the attitude to the Party. By *Unity, Solidarity, Internationalism* (1981) the whole apparatus is down — petty-bourgeois 0.62, adventuris- 0.49, opportunis- 2.84 — and Trotsky, named 207 times in the book you are holding, appears exactly once. The volume of 1970 is the high-water mark of a schema its own author quietly abandoned. That is worth knowing before reading it. This is not the settled doctrine of Soviet Marxism; it is one instrument at its maximum extension, shortly before it was put down.

The historical chapters show the cost. On Trotsky, Leibson's method is to quote Lenin's polemics of 1910–1914 at length — "windbag," "hero of the phrase," the man who "has never had any 'physiognomy' at all" — and then stop. He concedes in a single clause that "In 1917, when revolutionary events were quickly coming to a climax, Trotsky came close to the Bolsheviks," and never says what that came to: election to the Bolshevik Central Committee at the Sixth Congress in August 1917, the chairmanship of the Petrograd Soviet from September, and the Military Revolutionary Committee that organised the insurrection. The book also quotes Lenin's "Letter to the Congress" of December 1922 for the clause about Trotsky's "excessive self-assurance and... excessive preoccupation with the purely administrative side of the work." The same document calls Trotsky the most able man in the Central Committee, and its postscript of January 1923 proposes removing Stalin from the post of General Secretary. Leibson uses the Testament as a character reference and suppresses it as a political document.

Then there is what the book will not say at all. Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Radek, Pyatakov and Rakovsky are absent — and absent under the misspellings a scanner produces, and under the -ovsky/-owski and -sky/-ski forms a Soviet translator might have chosen, which is a check worth running, because in Leibson's own 1981 volume a name reported as missing turned out to be present in a mangled spelling. Here the silence is real. The year 1937 does occur twice, and neither time does it mean 1937: once as the date of two lectures by Mao, once inside the title of a Soviet monograph on wartime aid to China. What remains is one sentence, in the chapter "No Squeamishness About Means":

"When the Trotskyists were finally exposed as double-dealers and provocateurs, they found themselves in a social vacuum." That is the prosecution's vocabulary, minus the prosecution. Fourteen years after the Twentieth Congress, the book's only acknowledgement is a quotation from the 1967 CPSU Theses conceding "unwarranted reprisals and other violations of socialist legality" and immediately adding that "These distortions, for all their gravity, did not alter the nature of socialist society." Leibson names one Left Oppositionist economist, Yevgeni Preobrazhensky, and does so only to reject his views on piece rates. Preobrazhensky, co-author of *The ABC of Communism* and the theorist of "primitive socialist accumulation," was shot in 1937. The book's readers in Milan and Manchester were not told.

The treatment of Spain is a compressed version of the same technique. Leibson writes that "At the most critical period of the Civil War in Spain, the Trotskyist POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista) engineered an uprising against the Republican Government in Barcelona." The Barcelona May Days of 1937 began when police moved to seize the CNT-held telephone exchange; the fighting that followed was a defensive reaction by anarchist and POUM workers, and the POUM leadership was pulled into it rather than launching it. George Orwell, who was there and in the POUM militia, described the sequence in *Homage to Catalonia* (1938). What Leibson omits is the sequel: the POUM was outlawed in June 1937 and its leader Andreu Nin was seized, held outside Republican jurisdiction and killed, his death never accounted for. On the Aragon collectives the historiography is genuinely divided — coercion in some villages is well documented, voluntary and productive collectivisation in others — and Leibson reports only the first, while passing over the dissolution of the Council of Aragon by force in August 1937.

One of the book's operations can be checked directly against the document it is describing, and it should be, because it is the clearest case in the volume. Leibson reports that in September 1960 "the so-called Fourth International sent an open letter to the Central Committee of the C.P.C., in which it applauded its stand, saying that it coincided with Trotskyist positions", and he quotes it: "The Fourth International," the letter read, "which from the moment of its foundation has been fighting . . . against the ideas against which you are fighting today, supports you." The letter exists. It is dated 10 September 1960, it is addressed to the leadership and members of the Chinese Communist Party, and the International Secretariat printed it in Fourth International no. 11. Leibson has closed his quotation marks one clause early. The sentence goes on. The Fourth International "stands on your side in the fight against the

opportunist conceptions" — and then, in the words Leibson does not print — "of the leadership of the CP of the USSR and of most of the leaderships of the Communist Parties all over the world."

Nor is the letter applause. Its complaint against Peking is that the quarrel is being conducted dishonestly — that the argument is being addressed to third persons, staged as a quarrel with the Yugoslavs when the real target is Moscow. And it is worth noticing what its charge against the Soviet leadership consists of, since that charge uses the same word Leibson uses. It is cashed out into events: "It was the policy of peaceful coexistence that at Yalta divided the world into spheres of influence, that led the Italian and French Communist Parties to hand over the power and arms to their weakened bourgeoisies, that brought the Greek revolution to defeat." A reader may think every one of those claims wrong. Each of them is the kind of claim that can be shown to be wrong. "Petty-bourgeois revolutionism" is not.

The same asymmetry runs through the book's apparatus, and it is countable. There are 114 footnotes. The Chinese sources are given scrupulously in the text, by paper, issue and date. Lenin is cited by volume and page — *Collected Works* vol. 16, p. 391; vol. 20, p. 160 — so his insults can be looked up and read in context. Not one footnote in the book cites a work by Trotsky or a document of the Fourth International. Where Trotskyists are quoted — the open letters, the claim that the "Chinese have worked out a theory directly related to the theory of permanent revolution" — the quotation marks stand empty of provenance. This proves less than it looks: our own tradition does the same when it is in a hurry, and Mandel's *Critique of Eurocommunism* characterises Berlinguer and Carrillo without quoting either. But it means that of all the opponents in this book, the Fourth International is the one whose words a reader could in principle check — and the one instance that can be checked was cut in the direction the argument required.

None of which means the book is worthless. It is not, and saying so plainly is necessary, because the chapters on China contain real work. Leibson reads Chinese, or has readers who do. He cites *Renmin ribao*, *Hongqi*, *Wenhui bao*, *Jiefang ribao* and the army paper *Jiefangjun bao* by issue and date; he quotes Liu Shaoqi's 1939 Yan'an lectures on the party's peasant composition; he reconstructs the 1958 communes and the backyard furnaces, the collapse of the "great leap," and the "learn from the People's Liberation Army" campaign of 1964 from Chinese sources rather than from denunciation. The chapter "'Barracks Communism'" documents the stripping of

authority from the All-China Federation of Trade Unions and the conversion of "economism" into a term of abuse for any demand about wages and conditions — which is to say, the destruction of the only organisations Chinese workers had. That is a workers'-movement criticism, and it is correct.

His figures on the CPC's social composition are the most useful thing in the book. By 1927, he reports, 58.3 per cent of members were workers; by 1949 the party had about seven million members, "only four per cent of whom were workers." Whatever one makes of the conclusions he draws, that transformation is the central fact about the Chinese revolution's social character, and the anti-Stalinist left was saying so too.

The same is true of his verdict on the Ninth Congress: "The delegates to it were not elected, but appointed. Chief among them were the military, who have become the backbone of the regime," and, flatly, "The Party has in fact ceased to exist." He goes further, warning that the Maoist group has taken a road "fraught with the danger of degeneration into a military-bureaucratic dictatorship similar to Asiatic despotism." The Lin Biao affair of 1971 made that look prescient.

And on the army he was not alone. The Fourth International's Ninth World Congress met in April 1969, in the same weeks as the gathering in Peking, and its resolution on the Cultural Revolution names "the outrageous cult of Mao; the absence of elections and democratic institutions controlled by the workers and peasants; the increased authority of the army under Lin Piao" — printed, with Livio Maitan's accompanying "Report on the 'Cultural Revolution' in China", in *Intercontinental Press* vol. 7 no. 26, 14 July 1969. Ernest Mandel, writing as Ernest Germain, had been over the same ground earlier still: "The Cultural Revolution: An Attempt at Interpretation", written in 1967 and printed in the *International Socialist Review* vol. 29 no. 4 (whole no. 187), July–August 1968, reconstructs the Red Guard movement from Maoist papers and dispatches by name and date, exactly as Leibson does, and reaches the conclusion that the mobilisation was "supposed to exert pressure on the bureaucracy rather than one which was supposed to sweep it out."

But the convergence should not be overstated, and where it breaks is instructive. Maitan, reading the same congress in "The Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party" (*Intercontinental Press* vol. 7 no. 27, 28 July 1969, following his "Toward the Congress of the Chinese CP — the Contradictory Components of the Maoist Line", vol. 7 no. 7,

24 February 1969), concluded almost the reverse of Leibson on the central point. The congress, he wrote, "essentially represented a reorganization and reaffirmation of the party" as the instrument of command in every sphere of Chinese life, and the new statutes were "a reflection in statutory terms of the fundamentally bureaucratic nature of the regime". Leibson said the party had ceased to exist; Maitan said it had been rebuilt as an instrument of command. On the evidence of the following decade Maitan was nearer right, and Leibson's flat sentence reads as polemical overshoot rather than prescience.

The deeper difference is the diagnosis, and it is the whole argument of this introduction in one line. Both traditions rejected Mao's account of the Cultural Revolution as a proletarian revolution. The Fourth International's resolution called it "a phase of sharp public conflict in an intrabureaucratic struggle between divergent tendencies in the topmost circles of the Chinese Communist party leadership" — a bureaucracy, which is the same category that tradition applied to Moscow, and to itself when it looked for the social pressures on its own sections. Leibson called it petty-bourgeois revolutionism, a category which, on the count above, never once attaches to Moscow in his own pages. Two hostile readings of the same Chinese press, and the distance between them is not the evidence. It is whether the naming instrument can be turned on the hand holding it.

That is not an abstract test, and it is not one our own side passes by assertion. In March 1940 *The New International* — then still the journal of the American Trotskyists, before Max Shachtman took the magazine with him at the split the following month — printed Trotsky's "A Petty-Bourgeois Opposition in the Socialist Workers Party", written in December 1939. The category in Leibson's title is there applied by Trotsky to the leadership minority of his own organisation, by name: "It is necessary to call things by their right names. Now that the positions of both factions in the struggle have become determined with complete clearness, it must be said that the minority of the National Committee is leading a typical petty-bourgeois tendency." One can think that judgement wrong, or unfair to Burnham and Shachtman, and many in the tradition have. The point is only that the sentence is available to be written. Nothing of its shape occurs anywhere in Leibson.

Leibson even lands one honest blow on Trotsky. In the chapter on "barracks communism" he recalls that Trotsky, at the Ninth Party Congress in 1920, defended the militarisation of labour on the ground that "man strives as a rule to evade work, it can be said that man is a rather lazy animal," and that in Terrorism

and Communism he treated intimidation as an instrument of policy. Trotsky did argue this, and the anti-Stalinist tradition has never had a comfortable answer. Lenin opposed him in the trade-union dispute, as Leibson correctly notes. That the man who later wrote the sharpest analysis of Soviet bureaucratic rule had earlier proposed labour armies is a fact his admirers should hold, not hide.

But the framework cannot explain what the book itself documents. Every feature Leibson attributes to the peasant social base of Maoism — the personality cult raised to hysteria, the criminalisation of disagreement, the militarisation of labour, the mobilisation of youth against the party apparatus, the rewriting of party history around one man — had close Soviet precedent within living memory of his readers. His own text concedes the cult, the reprisals, the violations of legality. In Moscow these are "distortions" that leave "the nature of socialist society" untouched; in Peking the identical practices are class characteristics of the petty bourgeoisie. A category that yields sociology for one state and absolution for the other is not a category. It is a verdict looking for evidence.

The point is sharpest on 1968. Leibson devotes a paragraph to the French May: ten million on strike, a regime shaken, and then "the country's ruling forces succeeded in strengthening their positions with the help of the Maoist, Trotskyist and anarchist groups," so that the bourgeois press was right to say that "if ultra-revolutionary groups had not existed in France, they should have been invented." This was the French Communist Party's line, and the book gives no account whatever of what the PCF and the CGT actually did — channelling the general strike into the Grenelle wage settlement and the June elections. The reply is in the archive and can be read against him: Pierre Frank, "Crisis of Revolutionary Leadership in France," *Intercontinental Press* vol. 6 no. 22, 10 June 1968, and the United Secretariat's "First Lessons of the Revolutionary Upsurge in France," vol. 6 no. 24, 24 June 1968.

And then the silence that decides the book. Czechoslovakia does not appear in it. Not the Prague Spring, not Dubček, not the entry of five Warsaw Pact armies in August 1968, not the doctrine of limited sovereignty advanced in *Pravda* a month later. A volume printed in 1970, on the theme of false revolutionism as a danger to socialism, which finds space for the Karlovy Vary conference of 1967, the Japanese elections of 1967, the Ussuri clashes and the Paris barricades, has nothing to say about the largest military action inside the socialist bloc in its own lifetime. The omission is not

carelessness. It is the place where the framework would have broken. The Czechoslovak reformers were not ultra-left, not adventurist, not petty-bourgeois: they were a communist party leadership pursuing economic reform and the relaxation of censorship, and they were removed by tanks. "Petty-bourgeois revolutionism" cannot process them, so they are absent. The answer Leibson could not print was published at the time, and it was published before the event as well as after it. *Intercontinental Press* vol. 6 no. 28, 2 September 1968, carries two declarations of the United Secretariat: "End the Soviet Occupation of Czechoslovakia!", issued on 22 August, and — printed in the same issue — "Defend the Right of the Czechoslovak Workers and Peasants to Self-Determination!", issued on 1 August, three weeks before the tanks moved. See also "Czechoslovakia — First Balance Sheet, First Lessons," vol. 6 no. 33, 7 October 1968; and Ernest Mandel, "The Present Stage of Workers Self-Management in Czechoslovakia," vol. 7 no. 15, 21 April 1969. There is a final irony for the reader of this book. In the winter of 1969–70, as Petty-Bourgeois Revolutionism went to press, the normalised Czechoslovak authorities announced that they had uncovered a Trotskyite plot. The United Secretariat of the Fourth International answered on 21 January 1970 with a declaration "On the 'Trotskyite Plot' in Czechoslovakia", printed in *Intercontinental Press* vol. 8 no. 5, 9 February 1970, which sets the discovery in its sequence: "After Dubček's elimination from the government, after the purge of the Central Committee, the repression is becoming all-pervasive. Now they have discovered a 'Trotskyite plot.'" The word Leibson was using to name a species was, in the same season, being used to frame an indictment.

Read this book, then, for what it is: a competent Soviet dossier on the Cultural Revolution, assembled by a serious historian working with an instrument calibrated to one question. Its Chinese material deserves attention, and some of its judgements have worn better than the Western enthusiasms of 1970. Its failure is instructive precisely because Leibson was not a fool. Near the end he writes, generously, that "Marxist-Leninists do not think that there are sincere and honest revolutionaries only among them" — and then, in the very next paragraph, rules that whoever splits the anti-imperialist front stands outside the ranks of the revolutionaries. The generosity and the rule cancel each other, and the rule is the one that governs the book.

HISTORY

Central Asia in Modern Times

An Indian Marxist historian working from New Delhi and Tashkent: the best archival account of the Great Game of its generation, and a clear-eyed anatomy of the Tsarist colonial economy in Turkestan. Written from outside the system, by a man who admired it.

Devendra Kaushik

Introduction to the 1970 Edition

Almost every volume in this series was written inside the Soviet system, by authors it had formed. This one was written by an outsider who admired it. *Central Asia in Modern Times* is the work of Devendra Kaushik, an Indian Marxist historian who came to the subject from New Delhi, not from Moscow or Tashkent — a scholar who held a fellowship at the Lenin State University in Tashkent from 1962 to 1965, worked in the Indian archives as well as the Soviet ones, and offered his book, in his own words, to readers in a country whose "friendship of the peoples of the Soviet Union with the people of India is increasing daily." That difference of standpoint is the most interesting thing about the book, and it is what makes it a sharper test than the average Progress title of the question this series exists to press. Kaushik is not a functionary reciting a required line. He is a genuine historian, a sympathiser rather than a servant, who has chosen the Soviet account of Central Asia and made the case for it with real learning. When such a writer applies the category of colonialism with unsparing force to one empire and cannot bring himself to apply it to the other, the failure cannot be laid at the door of a censor. It has to be laid at the door of the framework itself.

Date the argument, not the spine. The English edition carries "© Progress Publishers 1970," but the preface is signed from New Delhi in January 1968, and the book reads as a document of the middle 1960s: its running statistics lean on the census of 1959, its Tashkent research belongs to 1962–65, and it was written before the Soviet tanks entered Prague in August 1968. It belongs to the high season of Soviet–Indian friendship — the years in which Moscow brokered the Tashkent Declaration between India and Pakistan (January 1966) and presented itself to the newly decolonised states of Asia and Africa as the one great power that had abolished national inequality on its own soil. Kaushik states the export purpose himself, without embarrassment, in his preface: the Central Asians "were the first in the world to bypass capitalism in their transition from pre-capitalist relations to socialism," and "their experience is

likely to be of interest to the nations which have broken with colonial slavery and embarked on the path of independent economic and political development." The book is a regional history, but it is also an exhibit in a case being made to Delhi, Cairo and Jakarta: look what socialism did for our own backward peoples; it can do the same for yours. That the exhibit was prepared by an Indian scholar, edited and given a foreword by the Soviet orientalist N. A. Khalfin, made it more persuasive to its intended audience, not less.

The doctrine

The organising idea is the "non-capitalist path" — the claim that a society still living under feudal and pre-capitalist relations could be carried directly to socialism without first passing through capitalism, provided a proletarian state undertook to carry it. Central Asia is presented as the doctrine's first and most complete proof. "In Central Asia," Kaushik writes, "the problem before the Soviet power was to turn a technically backward, small and partially patriarchal and natural peasant economy into a large-scale mechanised collective socialist economy, bypassing the stage of large-scale capitalist farming." Bound up with the leap is a second idea that recurs throughout the book, and which the Soviet editor is careful to underline in an editorial footnote to the preface: the *sblizhenie* (drawing-together) of the Central Asian peoples with "the revolutionary forces of the Russian Empire," a convergence "vital for the future overthrow of the rule of the tsar." The leap over capitalism and the drawing-together toward Russia are the twin engines of the whole account.

A reader who follows this series into its Third-World volumes will recognise the theory at once, because those books are its heirs. The "non-capitalist path," or "socialist orientation," is the doctrine on which Kaysone Phomvihane's Revolution in Laos (Progress, 1981) sets a peasant nation on "the direct transition to socialism bypassing the capitalist stage of development," and on which Ten Years of the Ethiopian Revolution (Progress, 1986) presents a junta of army officers

as "bypassing capitalism." Central Asia is where that export theory comes home — or rather, where it started. It is worth noticing, in passing, an irony the book cannot afford to notice: the direct leap from backwardness to socialism, skipping the capitalist stage, is precisely the terrain of the theory of permanent revolution that the official Soviet literature spent decades denouncing by name. The forbidden idea is celebrated here, provided no one calls it by its author's name.

What the book gets right

The credibility of everything that follows depends on saying plainly, first, how much of this book is good. A great deal of it is.

Kaushik's central scholarly contribution is genuine and, in 1970, unusual: an account of the nineteenth-century Anglo-Russian rivalry over Central Asia written from the Indian side, using Indian archival material alongside Russian. His demolition of the British "bogy of a Russian invasion of India" — the pretext, "demagogically stirred up by British imperialist circles to give moral cover to their expansionist activities" — is careful, sourced and persuasive, and it corrects a genuine distortion in the British imperial historiography. His portrait of the Tsarist economy in the region is a real piece of Marxist colonial analysis: after annexation "Central Asia was converted into a raw material supplying base for the metropolitan industries," its land turned over to cotton at the expense of food grain until cotton-ginning alone made up "81.2 per cent of the total industrial output" in 1913 — the classic deformed, single-crop colonial economy, described with precision. And he is a scholar, not a propagandist, in his handling of evidence: he rebukes earlier Soviet writers such as Fyodorov and Galuzo for the crude habit of treating every revolt against Tsarism as a "national liberation movement," insisting instead on distinguishing genuine popular risings from the "intrigues" of feudal beks and mullahs. A hack does not correct his own side's exaggerations. Kaushik does, repeatedly.

The gains he credits to the Soviet period were also real, and they should be stated without grudging. Before the revolution literacy among the Uzbeks stood at around two per cent, among the Turkmens at 0.7, among the Kirghiz at 0.2; several peoples had no written language at all, and "literacy was totally absent among nomads and women." Within a generation a mass literacy campaign — the kultpokhod, or culture-march — taught, on the book's figures, "more than a million people, mainly peasants" to read and write in the two years 1930–31 alone. Schools, clinics, a national press and a

native intelligentsia were built where the emirs had maintained an army of forty thousand mullahs and not one secular school in Bukhara. The emancipation of women was the sharpest break of all. The Central Asian woman had been "hidden away from the sun by the feudal household wall and the thick horse-hair veil (parandja)"; the Soviet campaign to lift that veil was met, as Kaushik honestly records, by "the furious resistance of the reactionary forces, threats and even murder" — and he does not hide that women were killed for unveiling. The end of the khanates and the Emirate of Bukhara, the abolition of debt-slavery and the jaziya poll-tax on non-Muslims, the first women deputies and the first women on the stage: these happened, and for the people to whom they happened they were liberation. A reader told the whole thing was a fraud would be badly misled, and this introduction does not tell him so.

The category that only points one way

The quarrel is not with what the book affirms. It is with the boundary the book draws around a single word. "Colonialism," in *Central Asia in Modern Times*, is a fully operative category — devastating, precise, richly documented — for everything the Russians did before 1917, and it switches off, as if by a governor on a machine, at the moment the Bolsheviks take power. After that the same phenomena reappear under names that carry no charge.

Consider the evidence the book itself supplies about Tsarist rule, and then ask whether any of it recurs, unnamed, in the Soviet chapters. Kaushik describes the flooding of Central Asia with Russian settlers who seized the best land; he describes the crushing of the 1916 uprising — a mass anti-colonial rising he treats with full sympathy — in which "especially severe was the repression against the Kirghiz nomads," when "about 300 thousand of them fled to China from the Semirechye" and "their lands were confiscated and turned over to Russian settlers." A colonial state that drives a third of a million nomads across the border and hands their pasture to settlers of the ruling nationality: the book names this exactly, and names it colonialism. It is the great strength of the volume that it can see this so clearly. It is the great limitation of the volume that it can see it only when the perpetrator is the Tsar.

Turn to the Basmachi — the armed insurgency (from *basmach*, "raider") that fought Soviet power across Ferghana and the former emirates into the 1920s. Here the sympathy that flowed so readily to the rebels of 1916 is switched off. The Basmachi

are "an anti-popular movement," their fighters "bandits," a "microscopic minority" — "ten thousand basmachi" among Ferghana's two million — sustained not by their own people but by "foreign imperialists," the clergy and the *bais* (the wealthy notables). In the areas they held, "things differed but little from the old regime of the khans." Some of this is true; the movement did draw on reactionary forces and did commit atrocities. But watch what happens to the causes. Kaushik is honest enough to record that the revolt fed on real grievances — closed bazaars, requisitioning, economic collapse — and, remarkably, that "the distortion of the Party's nationality policy by some individual local Bolsheviks also played into the hands of the basmachi." The admission is real and it is instantly neutralised: the coercion that drove peasants to revolt becomes the fault of "individual local Bolsheviks," a local distortion, never the policy of the centre. It is the identical move by which the Tsarist land-seizure was policy and the Soviet one an aberration. The category "anti-colonial resistance," granted without hesitation to the rebels of 1916, is refused to the rebels of 1919 — though both fought Russian power in the same valleys for many of the same reasons.

The deepest silence lies over collectivisation, and it is structural, built into the architecture of the book. In its opening pages Kaushik defines his subject so as to exclude Kazakhstan: "the term Soviet Central Asia refers only to the four of the above mentioned five Soviet republics, and does not include the Kazakhstan which, despite ethnic and cultural affinities, is geographically distinct." Kazakhstan is present in the book when the crime is Tsarist — the "merger of Central Asia and Kazakhstan into the Tsarist Russian Empire" — and defined out of it precisely where the greatest catastrophe of the Soviet period fell. For it was in Kazakhstan that forced collectivisation and the compulsory settling of nomads produced, between 1930 and 1933, a famine that killed on the order of 1.3 to 1.5 million Kazakhs — something approaching two in five of the entire nation, the highest proportional death toll of any Soviet people in those years. (The figures are genuinely contested and the range is wide; the standard modern account is Sarah Cameron's *The Hungry Steppe*, 2018.) That famine does not appear in this book. What appears in its place is a sentence explaining, in the language of natural economic law, that "the transition from the extensive cattle-breeding nomad economy (especially in Kirghizia and Turkmenia) to settled agriculture was bound to affect the importance of cattle." The destruction of the nomad economy is rendered as a phase of development; the deaths are not rendered at all. And where the book cannot avoid the collapse of the herds — the mass slaughter of animals that accompanied collectivisation everywhere it was imposed — it assigns the

whole of it to the class enemy: "the *bais* and their agents went about persuading the peasants not to join collective farms, to slaughter their cattle and flee abroad." The animals die because the kulaks willed it; the peasants who slaughtered them, and starved, have no motive the book can see.

The same governor operates on the national delimitation of 1924 — the redrawing of Central Asia into national republics along lines settled in Moscow. Kaushik knows this is the point on which Western scholars press hardest, and he meets them head-on, quoting Mustafa Chokayev, Hugh Seton-Watson and Richard Pipes, who read the delimitation as a deliberate "divide and rule," a manufacture of nations "which could be kept apart from each other, played off against each other, and linked individually with the Russian nation." He answers that there is "not a grain of truth in these assertions," that the borders followed genuine ethnography and Leninist principle, and he has real arguments — Lenin did reject the pan-Turkic "Republic of Turks" proposed by Ryskulov, and the region's peoples were genuinely intermingled. But the argument is conducted entirely on one side of a line: the possibility that a policy can be both a sincere application of nationality doctrine and a consolidation of central control is never entertained, because the book's vocabulary has no slot for a Soviet interest that is not identical with the peoples' own. Russification receives the same treatment. The replacement of the Arabic script first by Latin and then, at the end of the 1930s, by Cyrillic is presented as a pure convenience that "brought the working people of Central Asia nearer to the socialist culture of their Russian and other brotherly peoples." The drawing-together is always a movement toward Russian, and it is always free.

Above all, the book proclaims a right it never asks whether anyone could exercise. Kaushik quotes the Decree on Peace and the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia at length on "the right of the peoples of Russia to self-determination up to secession and establishment of independent states," and cites, with evident approval, an early Turkestan Bolshevik promising that "if the will of the people expressed by referendum favoured separation from Russia we would defend their right to secession." The promise is printed as a settled glory of Soviet policy. That in the half-century between that promise and this book no Central Asian republic could conceivably have put secession to a referendum, and that the man who would have organised one would have been shot, is a question the framework cannot pose. The right of self-determination is affirmed exactly to the extent that it is certain never to be claimed.

The reply

The answer to this book was written, from within the revolutionary-Marxist tradition, more than thirty years before it, and it goes precisely to the seam Kaushik cannot open. In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), in the section "Nationality and Culture," Trotsky granted everything real in the Soviet advance and then named the thing the advance concealed. The much-advertised flowering of the national cultures is, under the bureaucracy, a controlled performance: "The Ukrainian, White Russian, Georgian, or Turk newspapers and books are only translations of the bureaucratic imperative into the language of the corresponding nationality." There can be, he wrote, "no talk of uniqueness of national culture when one and the same conductor's baton, or rather one and the same police club, undertakes to regulate all the intellectual activities of all the peoples of the Soviet Union." And the drawing-together that Kaushik celebrates as free convergence wears, in Trotsky's account, a specific and involuntary face: "bureaucratism inevitably takes the color of an autocratic Russification, leaving to the other nationalities the sole indubitable cultural right of celebrating the arbiter in their own language." A book in which the honour of the Central Asian languages is that they may now translate the resolutions of Moscow is the confirming instance of that charge.

Two honesties are owed, and they cut in both directions. The first is that Trotsky wrote in 1936, before the wartime deportation of whole nations and before the worst of the Russification of the 1940s and 1950s; *The Revolution Betrayed* is a diagnosis of the disease at an early stage, not a witness to its full course, and for the Kazakh famine and the deportations the historical record itself, not Trotsky, must carry the weight. The second honesty is more interesting, because it narrows the quarrel to a single point. On the underlying science Trotsky and Kaushik largely agree: Trotsky too mocked "the theory of unchanging racial types," did not deny that Soviet nations could and would draw together, and would not have disputed a word of Kaushik's chapters on literacy or the veil. The whole dispute reduces to the one question the book is built to suppress — whether the drawing-together was the free movement of emancipated peoples or something done to them, at times at gunpoint, by a state that then entered the vanished herds and the settled nomads in the ledger as progress. Trotsky's own formula is the sharpest statement of the alternative Kaushik never considers: what the USSR practised was "not of the oppression of one nationality over another in the proper sense of the word, but of oppression by the centralized police apparatus over the cultural development of all the nations, starting with the Great

Russian."

The pattern is not peculiar to this book; it is the house method of the whole Progress literature on the Soviet nationalities, and the companion volume in this series makes that plain. In *The Peoples of the North and Their Road to Socialism* (Progress, 1975), the Evenk historian Vasily Uvachan tells the identical story for Siberia — the same real emancipation of a people the empire had left to die, the same "non-capitalist path," and the same governor on the category of oppression, which points with full force at the Tsarist *inorodtsy* (alien-subject) regime and never once turns homeward, in a whole book on the fate of small peoples that cannot name the small peoples the same state deported. Two authors, two regions, one structure. That the structure survives even when the author is a Siberian native writing his own people's history, and even when the author is a sympathetic Indian writing as a free man in Delhi, is the measure of how little it depends on any individual's courage or servility. It is a property of the doctrine, not of the man.

What it is

Central Asia in Modern Times should be read for both of the things it is. It is a real and valuable history: the best Indian-archival account of the Great Game of its generation, a clear-eyed Marxist anatomy of the Tsarist colonial economy, and an honest record of gains — literacy, medicine, the unveiling, the end of the emirates — that were real and were not free of cost only because someone paid it. And it is a monument to a single, disabling silence: a book that wields the word "colonialism" with a scholar's precision against one empire and cannot form the word against the other, that narrates the flight of the Kirghiz to China under the Tsar and defines the Kazakh famine out of its subject, that grants the rebels of 1916 the dignity of resistance and denies it to the rebels of 1919, and that prints the right of secession as an ornament precisely because it had been made unusable. The most telling fact about the book is that its author was, by conviction and by nationality, an anti-colonialist — a man from a country then only two decades free of the British Raj, who knew exactly what a metropolis extracting cotton from a captive periphery looked like, because he had grown up inside one. He recognised the shape at once when it wore a Tsarist uniform. That he could not recognise it when it wore a red flag is not a personal failure. It is the exact thing this series was assembled to show.

HISTORY A Soldier's Duty

The war memoir of the general who held the line before Moscow, closed the ring at Stalingrad and destroyed Army Group Centre - precise on the fighting, frank about mistakes, and written under the constraints of a state that had made the war its founding myth.

Konstantin Konstantinovich Rokossovsky

Introduction to the 1970 Edition

This book begins in the spring of 1940, and where it begins is the first thing to understand about it. "In the spring of 1940, after a holiday with my family in Sochi, on the Black Sea coast, I had an invitation from Marshal Semyon Timoshenko." So opens the war memoir of Konstantin Rokossovsky — one of the two or three finest field commanders the Soviet Union produced, the general who held the line before Moscow, closed the ring at Stalingrad, broke the German army in Byelorussia, and took the surrender of Field Marshal Paulus. The sentence is warm, domestic, unremarkable: a soldier back from leave, summoned by an old comrade to resume his career. It is also a lie of omission so large that once you see it you cannot read the rest of the book the same way. In the spring of 1940 Rokossovsky was not coming back from the Black Sea. He was coming back from prison.

The Russian original, *Soldatsky dolg*, was published by Voenizdat, the Soviet military publishing house, in 1968 — the year Rokossovsky died. Progress Publishers issued this English translation in 1970 for export: the memoir of a Marshal of the Soviet Union, offered to the world as first-hand testimony of how the war was won. It is testimony, and much of it is true and valuable. But it was written and cleared under the constraints of the late Brezhnev years, when the Great Patriotic War had hardened into the central legitimating myth of the Soviet state — not the increasingly awkward Revolution of 1917 but the victory of 1945, around which the whole civic religion of eternal flames and anniversary parades had been built. The memoir observes those constraints with a discipline that is itself its most revealing subject. The most important fact about the text is not what it contains. It is what it is not permitted to say.

Rokossovsky, to his credit, half-tells us as much. Early on, describing the frontier defences he inspected in the spring of 1941, he draws a line he will keep for the whole book: "I did not go into the aspects of high policy then, and shall not do so

now; I speak as a commander." It reads as a soldier's modesty, a professional declining to play politician. It is also a precise map of the fence the censorship built. Everything on the near side of "high policy" — terrain, tactics, the courage and failings of named officers — he will describe with unflinching candour. Everything on the far side — why the army was in the state it was in June 1941, why the Poles would not trust him in August 1944, where he himself had been from 1937 to 1940 — lies in the territory he has just promised not to enter. Read as an aesthetic choice, the line is graceful. Read as evidence, it is the author showing you where the muzzle sits.

The three missing years

Here is what the historical record establishes and the book does not. On 17 August 1937, at the height of the Yezhov terror, Rokossovsky was arrested. He was accused, on the standard fabricated charges, of espionage for Poland and Japan. He was imprisoned — held for two and a half years, most of it in Kresty prison in Leningrad — and he was tortured. The accounts that come down to us, some from his own family, describe teeth knocked out, ribs broken with a hammer, and at least one mock execution, in which he was taken out to be shot and the trigger pulled on an empty chamber. One of the witnesses named against him had been dead for years. He refused to confess. In March 1940 he was released, uncharged and unexonerated, and restored to command. Timoshenko's cordial invitation, in the book's opening lines, is the sound of a man being let out of a cell and told to go and win a war. He would do exactly that.

None of this is in the memoir. There is no arrest, no prison, no torture, no rehabilitation; the words do not appear. The book simply starts at the gate, dressed as a holiday. A reader who came to it knowing nothing would take the three-year hole in the narrative — Rokossovsky commanded the 5th Cavalry Corps, the text notes in passing, "in 193637," and then reappears in 1940 with no account of the interval — for the ordinary elision of a busy life. It is not that. It is the shape of a

wound, and the censorship has dressed it as a vacation.

The system that did this to him then required him, thirty years later, to write its silence into the story of his own life. That is the thing to hold onto through everything that follows. This introduction is not a case against Rokossovsky. He was among the most sympathetic figures the Soviet officer corps produced, admired by his men for a humanity the memoir amply displays, and he was a victim of the apparatus this series exists to criticise — very nearly a murdered one. The case is against the machinery of falsification that made him a great commander, almost killed him, and then obliged his memoir to pretend the second half of that sentence never happened.

"Some serious blunders were made"

Rokossovsky's own catastrophe was not an isolated act. It was one edge of the deliberate decapitation of the Red Army's command in 1937–38, when the Tukhachevsky group was shot in June 1937 and the purge then swept downward through the officer corps — by the higher estimates tens of thousands of commanders removed, a large proportion of them killed, on the very eve of the war. The army Rokossovsky would rebuild under fire in 1941 was an army his own jailers had gutted three years earlier.

The book acknowledges this in exactly one sentence, and the sentence is a masterpiece of the passive voice. Describing the state of the forces before the war, Rokossovsky writes: "It is true that in the late thirties some serious blunders were made. Our regular army personnel also suffered, and this could not but have a detrimental effect on our army organisation and troop training." That is the entire treatment. "Blunders were made" — by no one. "Personnel also suffered" — from nothing named. There is no Yezhov and no Beria in the book; there is no Tukhachevsky; the year 1937 does not appear as a year at all. The decapitation of the officer corps — the single most important cause of the disasters of 1941, the catastrophe the whole first third of the memoir is spent describing — is present only as weather, a bad season that happened to the army the way a hard winter happens to a crop. A man who had his ribs broken in that "bad season" wrote the sentence.

It is worth pausing on what that sentence cost. Rokossovsky was, by the evidence of these pages, a scrupulously honest tactician, quick to name a mistake when it was operational. The gap between that honesty and this evasion is not a flaw in the man; it is the exact measure of what the censorship reached and what it could not. It could not make him stupid. It could

make him mute.

Poland, the Home Army, and the name that is never spoken

The silence that does the most damage to the book as history is the one around Poland — and it damages precisely the chapter, "Warsaw," that Western readers have most often reached for.

In August 1944 Rokossovsky's 1st Byelorussian Front stood on the Vistula as the Home Army — the *Armia Krajowa*, loyal to the Polish government-in-exile in London — rose in Warsaw against the Germans. Over the next two months the Germans crushed the rising and razed the city while the Soviet front, a river away, largely stood still; the first significant Soviet supply drops, by the memoir's own account, did not begin until 13 September, six weeks after the rising started. The Warsaw Uprising is one of the most bitterly contested episodes of the war, and the honest historiographical position is that both things are true at once: Rokossovsky's front had genuinely outrun itself, having advanced more than six hundred kilometres in Operation Bagration and met a hard German armoured counterblow at Praga in early August; and Stalin had a plain political motive to let the Germans destroy a non-communist Polish army that answered to London rather than to Moscow. The memoir presents only the first of these, and it presents the second as the moral failing of the rising's leaders rather than of anyone in the East.

Read what the book actually says at this junction. The timing of the uprising, Rokossovsky writes, "was just about the worst possible in the circumstances. It was as though its leaders had deliberately chosen a time that would ensure defeat." The Home Army commanders "had performed their evil mission and disappeared, leaving the people they had provoked into this gamble to pay the price." Warsaw, he concludes, "could have been liberated only in a new major offensive operation — which was launched later on." The insurgents' rank and file are honoured; their leaders are cast as cynics who rose only "to isolate the insurgents from any contacts whatever with the Red Army." And there is real anguish in it — "The tragedy of Warsaw kept worrying me, and the realisation that it was impossible to launch a major rescue operation was agonising" — anguish one has no reason to doubt.

But notice what cannot be said, and therefore what the reader is never given the means to weigh. The chapter cannot explain why the Home Army so distrusted the Red Army that it would not place itself under Soviet command. The answer has a name — Katyn — and the name never appears. In the spring of

1940, the very months Rokossovsky was being let out of Kresty, the NKVD shot some 22,000 captured Polish officers and officials in the Katyn forest and elsewhere; the Germans discovered and announced the graves in April 1943; the Soviet government used the Poles' request for a Red Cross inquiry as its pretext to break relations with the London government. That rupture is the whole reason the Home Army and the Soviet command met as antagonists in 1944. The book presents Polish suspicion of Moscow as motiveless treachery because the single fact that would make it intelligible — that Moscow had massacred the Polish officer class four years earlier — is unmentionable. Katyn does not occur in these pages. It could not.

The cruelty of this is sharpened by who Rokossovsky was. He was of Polish descent, a man with roots in Warsaw itself, who after the war would serve for seven years as the Polish People's Republic's Minister of Defence — the Soviet-installed one the Poles resented. The front that halted on the Vistula was commanded by a Pole who had himself been imprisoned by the same apparatus that shot the Katyn officers during the same months. He is made to write the destruction of Warsaw as a Polish self-inflicted wound, in a book that may not mention either the massacre that poisoned Polish-Soviet relations or the prison that is his own missing 1937–40. No paragraph in the series shows more plainly what these silences are for, or costs more to read.

What the book genuinely is

None of this makes *A Soldier's Duty* a bad book, and a reader told to throw it away would be badly advised. Strip out the enforced silences and what remains is one of the most valuable field-level memoirs of the Eastern Front by any commander on either side — concrete, professional, unusually candid about failure, and written by a man who was actually there, in charge, at four of the decisive battles of the twentieth century.

The operational narrative is the real thing. The opening chapters on June 1941 — the 9th Mechanised Corps thrown into the frontier battle "mechanised only in name," with obsolete T-26 and BT tanks, a third of its establishment, and infantry with "no trucks and not a single cart" — are among the best short accounts we have of what the collapse felt like from inside a corps command. Rokossovsky's Yartsevo stand west of Vyazma; his defence of the Volokolamsk approaches before Moscow in the terrible autumn of 1941, where his portrait of General Panfilov — the divisional commander who "really knew them all," his subordinates, and whose men

would become a legend of that defence — is a small classic of the soldier's regard for another soldier; his command of the Don Front at Stalingrad, where he directed the northern jaw of the encirclement and, in February 1943, took the surrender of Paulus's Sixth Army; his conduct of the Central Front in the defensive victory at Kursk; and his execution of Operation Bagration in the summer of 1944, the offensive that annihilated Army Group Centre: all of this is narrated with a grip on terrain, timing and logistics that only a first-rate professional could supply, and that no official institute history can match. The reader who wants to understand how the Red Army actually fought — as against how the Institute of Marxism-Leninism said it fought — will learn more from these chapters than from a shelf of the official histories this series also republishes.

What lifts it above competent staff-work is the honesty about his own trade. Rokossovsky criticises the high command to its face on the page. Of the botched Orel operation in 1943 he writes that "undue haste was displayed — haste, moreover, completely unjustified by the situation," and he is willing to ask aloud, of a costly failure at Stalingrad, "who was to blame for this miscalculation." He credits subordinates lavishly and by name, worries constantly about the exhaustion of his men — the fifty-kilometre forced marches, the "forest replacements" gathered stunned from the woods and made whole again — and treats even the defeated enemy as a human being: brought the captured Paulus, he records, he offered him cigars and "a glass of hot tea, which he gratefully accepted," adding that "our conversation was not in the nature of an interrogation." This decency is not a pose. It is the same quality his soldiers remembered, and it is the strongest reason the book survives its own censorship. Read for the campaigns, and for the temperament of the man conducting them, *A Soldier's Duty* is genuine testimony and worth every reader's time.

The reply the tradition had already written

The anti-Stalinist left had named, in advance and in the moment, precisely the thing this memoir cannot. Writing in 1936, before Tukhachevsky was shot, Trotsky had already read the political meaning of the Kremlin's reconstruction of a privileged officer caste. In *The Revolution Betrayed* — the standard against which every Soviet account of Soviet society should be read — he devotes a chapter, "Foreign Policy and the Army," to the restoration of ranks, titles and hierarchy in the Red Army. "A still more deadly blow to the principles of the October revolution," he wrote, "was struck by the decree

restoring the officers' corps in all its bourgeois magnificence." The elevation of five commanders to the new rank of marshal, he argued, gave the army nothing: "The reform pursues a purely political aim: to give a new social weight to the officers" — to bind a caste to the bureaucracy that created it. Among the five marshals he names in that 1936 text, in a sentence whose irony history supplied a year later, is "the present marshal, Tukhachevsky." Trotsky was analysing the army the bureaucracy was building; within twelve months the bureaucracy shot the man he had just named, and began the terror that put Rokossovsky in Kresty.

When that terror came, the Fourth International read it exactly as the memoir forbids. In Fourth International in October 1941 — as the rebuilt Red Army was reeling back toward Moscow — John G. Wright set down the plain sequence in an essay on Trotsky and the Red Army: "The flower of the Red Army command was either shot or imprisoned as 'enemies of the people'" in the years of the Moscow frame-ups. Note the disjunction — shot or imprisoned. That is Rokossovsky's own fate, stated by his tradition's opponents six years before he could not state it himself. Wright's roll of the destroyed commanders — "Tukhachevsky, Gamarnik, Yakir, Uborevich, Bluecher, Primakov (the outstanding Red Cavalry commander)" — even reaches the cavalry, the arm in which Rokossovsky had spent twenty-seven years and from which so many of the shot had come. The point the Fourth International pressed was the one *A Soldier's Duty* converts into weather: the gutting of the army in 1937–38 was not a "blunder" but a deliberate act of a bureaucracy defending its own rule against the institution it feared most, and the price was paid in 1941 by the survivors who had to rebuild under fire. Rokossovsky's memoir is the finest available evidence for that rebuilding. It is silent, by command, on the gutting — and on its own author's place among the imprisoned.

That is why the book is worth republishing exactly as it stands. Its operational chapters are a real contribution to the history of the war, made by a man of evident courage and decency. Its silences are a real contribution to the history of the state that published it — a record, written into the life of one of its own most loyal servants, of what such a state requires a man to forget in order to be honoured. Read the campaigns for the truth they carry. Read the blank where his three years should be for the truth that had to be left out. It is the truest thing in the book, and Rokossovsky was not allowed to write it.

Maoism Through the Eyes of Communists

Nineteen articles from eleven countries on the Cultural Revolution, each footnoted to its source. Much of the dossier holds up - the collapse of output, the army at the centre of the state - and its prediction of a military-bureaucratic turn was vindicated within eighteen months.

Vasilii Krivtsov

Introduction to the 1970 Edition

The title is the argument. *Maoism Through the Eyes of Communists* does not say "Soviet communists," or "the communist parties allied to Moscow." It says communists, without qualification, and it invites the reader to understand that what follows is the settled judgement of a world movement. Nineteen articles from eleven countries, assembled in Moscow, translated into English by David Skvirsky and shipped abroad by Progress Publishers: the plurality of datelines is the point. No single Soviet author could have produced this effect. So the first question to put to the book is not whether its criticisms of Mao are true — many of them are — but whose eyes these are, and which eyes were not invited.

The roster is easily reconstructed, because every article carries its source in a footnote. Bulgaria contributes one piece, from *Novo Vreme*. The German Democratic Republic contributes four: one from *Einheit*, two from *Deutsche Aussenpolitik*, one from the economics journal *Wirtschaftswissenschaft*. The Soviet Union contributes three unsigned surveys, two from *Kommunist* and one from *Pravda*, over and above the speech by Brezhnev that opens the volume. Then one article each from Czechoslovakia's *Nová mysl*, Hungary's *Társadalmi Szemle*, the Warsaw weekly *Polityka*, and the Mongolian party journal *Namyn Amdral*. That is twelve of the nineteen articles, all of them from ruling parties of the Soviet bloc. The remaining seven come from four non-ruling parties: three from the Japanese Communist Party's monthly *Zen-ei*, two from the *American Political Affairs*, one from the Indian Communist Party's *New Age*, and one from the French party's daily *L'Humanité*.

Now the absences. There is nothing from Italy — from the *Partito Comunista Italiano*, then the largest communist party in the capitalist world, with a million and a half members and a quarter of the Italian vote. Nothing from Britain, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland or Australia. Nothing from Romania, whose party had refused to break with Peking and

went on refusing. Nothing from Yugoslavia, nothing from Cuba, nothing from the Vietnamese or Korean parties, which declined throughout these years to take a side in the quarrel. And nothing, of course, from Albania, or from the pro-Chinese groups that Brezhnev's opening speech says "now exist in nearly 30 countries." The common thread is not hard to find. The parties that criticised the entry of Warsaw Pact troops into Czechoslovakia in August 1968, and the parties that declined to condemn China, are absent to a man. What the volume presents as the verdict of a movement is the verdict of the parties that agreed with Moscow about both.

The enterprise was not a one-off, and its second run is the best reason for reading the first this way. Five years later Progress issued *Present-Day China: Socio-Economic Problems* — thirteen papers from the China institutes of the Warsaw Pact, each author's country printed after his name, the same ruling parties assembled, and again no Romania, no Yugoslavia, no Cuba, no Vietnam, no Korea. What changed was the trade. The 1975 volume is the work of economists and demographers, prints wage tables from named Chinese enterprises and marks its own estimates as estimates; this one is journalism, party-journal commentary translated and bound. Two books that share a roster and a set of exclusions while differing completely in method tell you that the exclusions were not a by-product of the genre. Somebody was choosing the guest list, and choosing it the same way twice.

The Italian case is the sharpest, because the PCI is in the book — as a quotation. In the Czechoslovak contribution, Miroslav Mika writes that "The newspaper *L'Unita* has correctly observed" that the Cultural Revolution had produced "a picture of an extremely acute political struggle which has caused a deep split in the country's ruling circles and among the people." The Italian party is good enough to be cited when it agrees about China. It is not good enough to be given an article, because on Czechoslovakia it did not agree about anything.

Which brings us to the Czechoslovak contribution itself, and to

the most revealing single fact about the book's construction. Mika's article is footnoted to *Nová mysl*, No. 4, 1967. It was published before the January 1968 plenum that brought Dubček to the leadership, before the Action Programme, before the abolition of censorship, and before the invasion. When Progress needed a Czechoslovak voice for a volume printed in 1970, it reached back past the Prague Spring to the last year in which the Czechoslovak party journal could be relied upon. And the invasion is not passed over in silence: the Bulgarian contributor A. Kozharov states the doctrine outright. "Troops of five socialist countries entered Czechoslovakia in order to prevent the counter-revolution from seizing that country and prevent Czechoslovakia from falling prey to the imperialists." A few pages later, listing the Soviet Union's services to the revolution, he includes the defence "of socialist Hungary in 1956 and of Czechoslovakia today against the inroads of the counter-revolution." So the book contains a Czechoslovak article from 1967 and a Bulgarian justification of the tanks that arrived in 1968, and the reader is asked to take the two together as the eyes of communists.

The Japanese entries are stranger still, and the book depends on the reader not knowing why. Three articles — more than any country except the USSR and the GDR — come from the Japanese Communist Party. The JCP had broken with Peking in 1966; it had also condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and its relations with Moscow were frozen for most of the following decade. Mitsugu Hashimoto's long essay is a defence of the sovereignty of the national party against outside interference, built on Lenin's polemics against liquidationism. He objects that the Maoists engage in "Great-Power interference in and subversion against our Party and the Japanese democratic movement." Every word of that sentence had, in 1968, a second address. The volume reprints the argument and suppresses its other half. The two American articles from Political Affairs are the only pieces in the book whose footnotes admit that they are "Printed here in abridged form" — an editorial hand acknowledged nowhere else, on the only contributions from a party outside Europe and Asia. They are also the oldest things in the volume. Both are replies to Lin Piao's "Long Live the Victory of People's War!"; the first opens by noting that "On September 3 of this year there appeared in *Jenmin Jihpao*, organ of the Communist Party of China, an article which brings the controversy in the world Communist movement to a new point," and neither cites anything later than 1965. They were written in the autumn of that year and printed at the beginning of the next — that is, before the Cultural Revolution which this volume exists to describe had begun. (The footnotes as scanned give their issue year as 1960, which the contents make impossible; the digit is

damaged.) Two of the nineteen articles predate the book's subject entirely, and a third, the Czechoslovak one, predates the events that made its author's country unquotable.

None of this would matter much if the reporting were worthless. It is not, and it is important to say so plainly, because the book's factual core is the reason to reprint it. The Soviet survey from *Kommunist* No. 4, 1969 is a serious piece of work, and its central finding is one that the anti-Stalinist left reached independently and by the same route. "The Communist Party as the leading force of society, the elective organs of state power, the trade unions, the Young Communist League and all other public organisations have been disbanded or paralysed," it reports; and then, precisely: "With the disbandment of the Party organisations and of the elective organs of power (people's committees), the workers have been deprived of the possibility of defending their interests, while the abolition of the trade unions left their occupational interests unprotected." The *Pravda* article records that "The All-China Federation of Trade Unions, the Communist Youth League and other public organisations have been disbanded." The Hungarian contributor Gyula Denes notes that "The protest of the workers was expressed in strikes and in actions against the hungweipings," and that the Maoists answered by demanding a "rational low wage." The German economist Klaus Mähnel reconstructs the model oilfield at Taching, where "Wages had been halved in order to create large accumulation funds" and "the workers had made dugouts for themselves in order to save funds for the state." Jean-Emile Vidal, writing in *L'Humanité*, puts the conclusion in one line: "Mao Tse-tung unquestionably plans to use the working class after the Party and the trade unions are destroyed."

That is a workers'-movement criticism of the Cultural Revolution, and it is substantially correct. The campaign against "economism" was a campaign against wage demands; the dismantling of the trade unions did leave Chinese workers with no organisation of their own; the strikes and the Shanghai stoppages of early 1967 were suppressed. The other tradition was reading the same Chinese press at the same moment and reaching the same finding. Ernest Mandel, writing as Ernest Germain between May and December 1967 — while Mähnel, Hashimoto and Yonezawa were writing their articles — went to the strikes this volume only alludes to and named them: the general strike in Shanghai transport of December 1966 and January 1967, the railway strike at Harbin, the national mobilisation of contract workers at Peking demanding wages owed since 1958 and lent out by the communes at "famine wages". His conclusion was that "A part of the working class was beginning to move independently," and that the army was

brought in to stop it ("The Cultural Revolution: An Attempt at Interpretation," *International Socialist Review*, vol. 29 no. 4, whole no. 187, July–August 1968). Livio Maitan reached the same place from the same sources; see his "Report on the 'Cultural Revolution'" in *Intercontinental Press*, vol. 7 no. 26, 14 July 1969, and "The Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party," vol. 7 no. 27, 28 July 1969, where he observes of the Congress that "the play of democracy was fundamentally perverted from the start." Two hostile traditions, reading the same press, arrived at overlapping judgements. Nor is the convergence a coincidence: both were asking what had happened to the independent organisation of the working class, and that question has only one answer in China in 1967.

There is even a moment of intellectual honesty, and it is worth noticing where it falls. The Polish contributor Włodzimierz Wowczuk closes his survey of the Chinese economy by conceding that "It is impossible to check the authenticity of the information coming from China and that unfortunately makes it extremely difficult to sift facts or attempt to assess the actual situation," and the Japanese economist Hideo Yonezawa opens his by presenting his verdict as "the author's personal conclusion drawn from his analysis of the present situation and of the meagre information that has been made available." The two admissions of ignorance in the volume come from Warsaw and Tokyo. Neither sentence would survive in a Soviet-authored chapter. They are the sound of writers who have been allowed to say that they do not know.

But the book cannot ask its own question of itself, and this is where it fails. Hashimoto counts Mao's purge exactly: of the 172 Central Committee members and alternates elected at the Eighth Congress in 1956, "the number attacked by the Mao group during the 'proletarian cultural revolution', removed from office or forced to 'confess' has, according to the latest information, already reached 107." It is a devastating figure and it is very probably right. It is also a figure with a Soviet precedent that no contributor mentions: of the 139 members and candidate members of the Central Committee elected by the Seventeenth Congress of the CPSU in 1934, 98 were arrested and shot, a fact stated by Khrushchev to a closed session of the Twentieth Congress in 1956 and published in the West within months. Every charge the book brings against Maoism — the personality cult, the appointment of congress delegates, the criminalisation of disagreement inside the party, the promotion of soldiers into political authority, the rewriting of party history around one man — describes something that had happened in the Soviet Union within the adult memory of the men writing. Not one of them says so.

The measure of it is a single number. In one hundred and ten thousand words, the name Stalin does not occur once — not as a comparison, not as an admission, not even as an insult thrown at Peking, which was the easy move and the one the Chinese were making in the opposite direction. Yet the book uses the phrase "personality cult" six times, and that phrase is a Soviet coinage minted in 1956 for one man. Mika writes that "Fear of the spirit of the 20th Congress of the CPSU made Mao Tse-tung, Marshal Lin Piao and the other members of this group settle accounts ruthlessly with all the people who could make them see their own reflections"; the unsigned *Kommunist* survey traces Peking's whole line to "a desire to halt the process started by the 20th Congress of the CPSU." The Twentieth Congress is invoked twice as the thing Mao was running from, and what happened at it is never said. Khrushchev himself appears once in the volume, quoted by Edgar Snow on the subject of the atom bomb. The vocabulary of de-Stalinisation is fully operational here, and its referent has been surgically removed.

The right test of a book like this is not how often it says "opportunism" — the Fourth International's own congress documents of these years use the word at much the same rate. It is whether the charge is ever cashed out into an act that could be shown not to have happened, and whether the category could ever turn on the speaker. On the first the book is uneven rather than worthless: Hashimoto's complaint of "Great-Power interference in and subversion against our Party" names an organisation and a behaviour, and the JCP could be argued with about it, whereas Brezhnev's frame — "Right-wing opportunism is a slide-down to liquidationist positions" — is an essence with no act attached. On the second there is no unevenness at all. Trotsky is named sixteen times and no work of his is cited once; "permanent revolution" appears twice, in scare quotes both times. Hashimoto, who builds his article on Lenin's struggle against liquidationism and calls Trotsky's the "most pernicious" variety of it, quotes Trotskyists — Shigemi Ota, and J. Posadas on the "overthrow of bureaucracy in a workers' state" — but never Trotsky. An opponent who is cited can be checked; one who is only characterised cannot. And wherever the deviation vocabulary comes within reach of the CPSU, the CPSU is combating it and never charged with it. The category is applied outward only.

The same asymmetry governs Indonesia. The GDR contributor Gerhard Weisser writes that Peking's influence on the Indonesian Communist Party "gave the reactionary forces the possibility of dealing the progressive movement in that country a crippling blow and starting a reign of terror against

Indonesian Communists," and N. K. Krishnan of the Communist Party of India treats the episode as evidence in a factional argument. What neither says is what happened: between late 1965 and 1966 the Indonesian army and allied militias killed somewhere between half a million and a million people, and destroyed the largest communist party in the non-socialist world. Estimates remain genuinely contested, and the lower and upper bounds differ by a factor of two, but no serious account is smaller than the first figure. The PKI's fate is used here as a debating point about Peking's advice, and the massacre itself is never described. The party that was destroyed gets no article; it is only the moral of someone else's story. Nor was the fact unavailable, or available only to those with no stake in blaming Peking. George Novack wrote of the "Indonesian Blood Bath" in the American Socialist Workers Party's *International Socialist Review* within months of it, and laid it at Peking's door; Joseph Hansen, in the same journal in January 1968, wrote that the Maoists' policy "helped pave the way for a defeat of major historic proportions and the slaughter of as many as 500,000 Communists" ("The Political Crisis in China," vol. 27 no. 4, whole no. 177, Fall 1966; "Report on the International Situation," vol. 29 no. 1, whole no. 184, January–February 1968). The indictment this volume wants to bring had already been brought, harder, by people willing to say what had happened to the members.

There is one more silence, and it is the silence the 1975 volume keeps as well. The Great Leap Forward is attacked here at length and from every direction, and the mechanism is right. Mika: "In both 1958 and 1959 the autumn harvest was not brought in because nearly 80 million people were 'smelting steel' in primitive blast-furnaces." Mähnel: agricultural production "falling below the 1954 level in 1960 despite the population increment of 90 million in the course of these six years." What no contributor has is a single dead person. "Starvation" does not appear in the book at all. "Famine" appears three times and not once about 1959–61 — the unsigned Kommunist survey writes of "the constant threat of famine" in the present tense of 1969, and Dénes and Vidal use the word only of the old China the revolution abolished, Vidal writing that "An end was put to famines, an eternal scourge that used periodically to take a toll of millions of lives." The volume possesses the phrase "take a toll of millions of lives" and spends it on the emperors. Mika closes his account of the catastrophe by saying China "found herself up against serious economic problems, which were aggravated by a series of elemental calamities" — Peking's own euphemism, the three years of natural calamities, reproduced by a hostile critic without a mark on it, and Yonezawa repeats it, dating the flight of villagers into the cities to "the 'big leap' and the elemental

calamities of approximately ten years ago." The worst thing the book will say happened is that "industry and agriculture remained at the 1957 level."

Be exact about what this does and does not convict them of. Nobody outside China knew the scale of the deaths of 1959–61 until the 1982 census was released and the demographers went to work; a book of 1970 could not have supplied a number, and the charge is not that it failed to know one nobody knew. The anti-Stalinist left was no better placed and did no better: the Fourth International's Ninth World Congress, in the resolution quoted below, got no further than "the near-famine period at the beginning of the sixties." The charge is narrower than that, and it holds: these authors chose to condemn the Great Leap as an economic policy, to describe its consequences entirely in tonnages, and to borrow the accused regime's own word for the thing they would not name. One fact they certainly did have. In 1960 the Soviet Union withdrew its specialists from China and cancelled its contracts, in the middle of the worst agricultural crisis in the country's history. The volume mentions Soviet experts exactly once, and then only to complain that during the Leap "the advice of Soviet experts and the warnings of own specialists were ignored"; the withdrawal appears nowhere in it, exactly as it appears nowhere in the 1975 companion. The Fourth International, no friend of Peking, called that rupture "a stab in the back of the Chinese revolution and the Chinese people, at the very moment when they were confronted with near-famine at home," and put "The historic responsibility for breaking up the Sino-Soviet alliance ... at the door of the Kremlin" (Resolution on the "Cultural Revolution" in China, Intercontinental Press, vol. 7 no. 26, 14 July 1969). Two Progress volumes, five years apart, different authors, different disciplines, leave out the same event. Neither of them mislaid it.

On the Ussuri, the book gives the Soviet version and only that. Kommunist No. 5, 1969 calls "the outrageous armed provocations organised by the Mao group on the Soviet-Chinese frontier on March 2, 14 and 15 of this year" the central link of Peking's anti-Soviet line, and concedes only that the clashes "took a toll of life on both sides." Here the reader should know that the historiography has moved. The ambush of 2 March at Zhenbao/Damansky is generally now attributed to a Chinese plan; the far heavier engagement of 15 March was a Soviet counter-blow with armour and artillery; and the fighting at Tielieketi in Xinjiang that August was initiated from the Soviet side. What the book cannot say at all is what Moscow was privately considering that summer. In September 1969 the Soviet journalist Victor Louis, a man used by Soviet

departments for unattributable messages, published in the London Evening News the suggestion that the doctrine invoked over Czechoslovakia might be extended to China, and speculated openly about a strike on the nuclear installations at Lop Nor. Pierre Frank set that alongside the Czechoslovak precedent at the time, in "Concerning 'Limited Sovereignty'," *Intercontinental Press* vol. 7 no. 38, 17 November 1969 — the reply that this book's readers in Turin and Tokyo were not offered.

One further weakness is worth naming because it is the book's own, not the censor's. Mika's explanation of Maoism runs through Confucianism, imperial despotism, the Taiping rebellion and the claim that "China is the only country in the world where to this day the millennia-old civilisation continues to be part and parcel of national and state life." He even offers, as evidence of continuity, that in China "a young man cannot quite independently choose a wife, nor can a girl choose a husband." This is culturalism, and it sits badly beside the class analysis the rest of the volume advances; a party's degeneration cannot be explained both by the weight of the peasantry and by three thousand years of national character, and the second explanation is doing no analytic work at all.

Read the book, then, for what it is. It is a dossier, and a good deal of the dossier holds up: the destruction of Chinese workers' organisations, the collapse of industrial output, the substitution of appointed committees for elected ones, the army's arrival at the centre of the state. Its most confident prediction — that China was moving towards a military-bureaucratic dictatorship — looked prescient within eighteen months, when Lin Biao died fleeing the country. What fails is the frame. Vidal asks, in the French article, the question the whole volume ought to have turned on itself: "What are those people now thinking who once maintained that the purpose of the 'cultural revolution' was to 'overthrow the bureaucracy' and establish a 'new proletarian democracy'?" It is a fair question, and it is fatal in both directions. A book that assembles its witnesses by first excluding everyone who disagrees, and then presents the result as the eyes of communists, has answered a question about Mao by demonstrating something about Moscow.

Soviet Literature: Problems and People

A survey of Soviet literature by a man who was there: Zelinsky knew Mayakovsky, Pasternak, Fadeyev and Ehrenburg, attended every writers' congress as a delegate, and writes about them with the ease of personal acquaintance.

Kornely Zelinsky

Introduction to the 1970 Edition

This is not a committee book. *Soviet Literature: Problems and People* was written by one man, Kornely Zelinsky, who signs his preface "Moscow, 1970" and who breaks into his own text often enough — inserting "—K.Z." into quotations to gloss them — that the reader never loses sight of him. Progress issued it in English translation, but for once the date on the spine is close to the date of the text: the most recent books discussed are Sergei Zalygin's *Solyonaya Pad* of 1967–68, and Konstantin Paustovsky, who died in 1968, is spoken of as newly dead. Twenty-four chapters run from "The Revolution and Literature" to "Literature of the Future", with the middle of the book given over to portraits: Gorky, Mayakovsky, Yesenin, Fadeyev, Alexei Tolstoi, Pasternak, Fedin, Leonov, Ehrenburg, Paustovsky, Sholokhov. It is a personal survey addressed, as Zelinsky says, "not just for specialists but for the general reader", and its second purpose is polemical: he wrote it, he explains, after reading "some of those works on Soviet literature published in the West, mainly in the United States". It is, in other words, an export product with a job to do.

Zelinsky's credentials for the job are the most valuable thing about the book, and he states them himself. He graduated from Moscow University in 1918, worked as a civil war correspondent, returned to Moscow in 1922 and "joined the constructivist group, attended all the congresses of Soviet writers as a delegate". He knew Mayakovsky, Bely, Pasternak, Fadeyev and Ehrenburg personally. And he tells us: "once I had understood these new truths, I became a convert of socialist realism, and have been one ever since the early [nineteen-thirties]." A man who converted in the early thirties and was still writing the official survey in 1970 has lived through everything this book declines to describe. The introduction that follows is not written to catch him out. It is written because the silences in a book by a witness are evidence of a different order from the silences in a book by a compiler.

What 1970 was

Consider what a Moscow literary critic knew in the year he finished this manuscript. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn had been expelled from the Ryazan branch of the Writers' Union on 4 November 1969, the expulsion confirmed nationally three days later and announced in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* on 12 November. In February 1970 Aleksandr Tvardovsky was forced out of the editorship of *Novy Mir*, the journal that had published *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. In October 1970 Solzhenitsyn would be awarded the Nobel Prize. Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel had been tried in February 1966 and were serving their sentences in the camps. Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* had appeared, cut, in the magazine *Moskva* across the winter of 1966–67 and was the literary event of the decade.

Here is what the book contains on all of it. "Solzhenitsyn" appears zero times. "Sinyavsky" zero. "Daniel" zero. The year 1966 appears zero times — it is the only year between 1950 and 1965 that the book never once names. *Novy Mir* is mentioned exactly once, in a list of magazines founded in the early 1920s; Tvardovsky is discussed at length and warmly, twenty times, always as the author of Vasily Terkin and *Space Beyond Space*, never as an editor. "Zhdanov" appears zero times, and so the Central Committee decree of August 1946 against the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* — the decree that destroyed Zoshchenko and Akhmatova — has left no trace whatever. Zoshchenko appears five times, always as a satirist of the 1920s. Akhmatova appears three times, twice as a name from forty years ago that we should be careful not to let "block our view of the floodtide of popular artistic endeavour". Czechoslovakia is named once, as a place people emigrated from after a revolution.

This is not a book that argues against the dissidents. It is a book in which they have never existed. That is a harder thing to do, and it required the author to write a twenty-four-chapter survey of Soviet literature in 1970 in which the central literary fact of the preceding eighteen months does not occur.

The room at Gorky's house

And yet this is also a book that contains something no anti-Stalinist critic could have supplied, and which is worth the price of the volume. Describing the dissolution of the literary groupings by the Central Committee decision of 23 April 1932, Zelinsky writes:

In October 1932, that is several months after a committee had been elected to organise the first congress of Soviet writers, a meeting was held in Gorky's house which was attended by Stalin and other Party and Government leaders. I was present at that meeting and was one of the speakers there. It was then that Stalin gave the Soviet writers' artistic method the definition of socialist realism.

He immediately softens it — "Actually he merely formulated what was already in the air" — but the sentence stands. The doctrine that would govern every Soviet writer for fifty years was named by the general secretary of the party at a private evening in a novelist's house, and one of the men in the room has told us so in print.

Set beside it Trotsky, writing in exile on 18 June 1938, in "Art and Politics in Our Epoch", the essay that remains the sharpest thing written on the subject:

The style of present-day official Soviet painting is called "socialist realism." The name itself has evidently been invented by some high functionary in the department of the arts.

Trotsky was guessing, and guessed slightly low. Zelinsky, thirty-two years later, supplies the missing name and does not notice that he has done so. In the same essay Trotsky wrote that "a truly revolutionary party is neither able nor willing to take upon itself the task of 'leading' and even less of commanding art" — a proposition Zelinsky's whole book exists to deny, and denies with the single argument that the writers wanted it: "It was not the dictates of the Central Committee which 'planned' literature... It was by the inspired, heroic atmosphere reigning in the country."

The dead

The test of a Soviet literary history is not what it says about the living but what it can bring itself to say about the dead, and here the book is exact in a way that repays close reading. Rehabilitation restored the work; it did not restore the manner of the death.

Boris Pilnyak gets several pages and a set of dates — "Boris Pilnyak (1891–1938), whose real name was Vogau". The dates are printed. What happened in 1938 is not; Pilnyak was arrested in October 1937 and shot the following April. The reader is left to assume illness. Isaac Babel is treated at length, with real critical attention to his sentences — and given a birth year, 1894, and no death year at all. The chapter closes on the judgement that Babel's "very artistic method testified to his ideological weakness", because "only a writer whose imagination had run away with him could have compared a crowd of Russian peasants to a herd of lice". Babel was arrested in May 1939 and shot in January 1940. The criticism offered of a murdered man is that his metaphors were ideologically unsound.

Osip Mandelstam, who died in a transit camp near Vladivostok in December 1938, appears nowhere: zero occurrences. Yevgeny Zamyatin: zero. Vsevolod Meyerhold, tortured and shot in 1940: zero. Marina Tsvetaeva, who hanged herself at Yelabuga in August 1941, is named once, in a list of poets who liked "formalistic experimentation", alongside Semyon Kirsanov and "the French dadaists". Mikhail Bulgakov is named once, and the mention is hostile: "This is why the West clutched at such works of literature as Mikhail Bulgakov's plays and his story *Fateful Eggs* (1925)". Three years after the serialisation of *The Master and Margarita*, Bulgakov is a thing the West clutched at.

The exception is Andrei Platonov, and it is worth saying plainly that Zelinsky's pages on him are good criticism. He notes Platonov's standing among young writers, records that Hemingway admired him, and finds the right formulation: Platonov "did not dwell on the darker sides of Soviet life for their own sake, but on human pain", writing so that "the pain reflex keeps him remembering man". Nothing in these pages hints that Platonov was publicly destroyed in 1931 and lived out his last twenty years unable to print his major work. But the appreciation is real, and a reader who had been told everything in this book was worthless would be badly misled.

Two suicides

Zelinsky knew Mayakovsky and Fadeyev. He describes Mayakovsky's death on 14 April 1930 at length and honestly reports that "people often ask why he did it", quoting the suicide note before concluding: "We shall probably be nearest the truth if we put Mayakovsky's suicide down to extreme nervous stress."

The second is more remarkable. Alexander Fadeyev, novelist,

theorist of socialist realism, and chairman of the Union of Soviet Writers through the years in which its members were being arrested, shot himself in May 1956, less than three months after Khrushchev's secret speech to the Twentieth Congress. Zelinsky's sentence:

Fadeyev's sad end (he shot himself through the heart on May 13, 1956, at his country home in Peredelkino) appears to lack a motive and clashes with the entire image of Fadeyev as writer and public figure.

Appears to lack a motive. It is the most self-indicting phrase in the book, and it is not written cynically; Zelinsky plainly cannot find the motive, because the search for it would have to run through territory he has closed to himself.

Trotsky, writing in 1936 in *The Revolution Betrayed*, in the chapter "Family, Youth and Culture", had already described the mechanism:

There has been created for all groups a general compulsory organization, a kind of concentration camp of artistic literature. Mediocre but "right-thinking" storytellers like Serafimovich or Gladkov are inaugurated as classics. Gifted writers who cannot do sufficient violence to themselves are pursued by a pack of instructors armed with shamelessness and dozens of quotations. The most eminent artists either commit suicide, or find their material in the remote past, or become silent.

Serafimovich and Gladkov are both praised in Zelinsky's pages, by name, in exactly the terms Trotsky predicted they would be. And of the three fates Trotsky lists, Zelinsky's book records instances of all three without ever connecting them: Mayakovsky and Fadeyev dead by their own hands, Alexei Tolstoi turning to Peter the Great, Pasternak taking his "emergency exit" into translating Shakespeare and Goethe. Zelinsky's own phrase for the late 1930s is "the difficult years of inhibited spiritual activity."

Two Nobel Prizes

Nothing shows the machinery better than the book's handling of the Nobel. Of Pasternak, Zelinsky writes that the publication of his novel abroad and "the awarding of the Nobel Prize to the author (which Pasternak had declined)... created an unhealthy stir round the poet's name", making it "a trump card in the cold war, in the game of nerves". He then quotes at length Pasternak's letter to *Pravda* of 6 November 1958 — a document extracted under a campaign of public denunciation

and the threat of exile — and presents it as voluntary testimony. The pressure, he explains, "which allegedly was brought to bear on him had nothing to do with this: Pasternak was too big a man to be influenced in his opinions and actions by such a despicable thing as cowardice." The compliment does the work of the denial. Twenty chapters later, on Sholokhov: "And the 1965 Nobel Prize came as a just reward."

Zelinsky is not obliged to like Doctor Zhivago, and his critical objection — that the novel's Christian pathos left its author unable to grasp "the humanism of revolution as such" — is at least an argument. But he cannot hold the two prizes in one hand. When the Swedish Academy honours a writer the state approves of, the award is a just reward; when it honours one the state does not, the award is an operation of the cold war. That is not criticism. It is the position of the state, rendered into criticism.

What holds up

Point by point, this book is more useful than its politics. Zelinsky is an eyewitness to the 1920s and his chapters on that decade have texture no later scholar could manufacture: the founding of Krasnaya Nov and Oktyabr, the constructivists and LEF, the disputes he was personally party to, Bely "baldheaded, his movements somehow elusive". His account of the "no-conflict" theory of the late Stalin years is candid and specific — critics evolved a doctrine in which "a conflict between the excellent and the more excellent was considered quite all right", and some writers "wallowed in ode-singing", Belinsky's phrase. He states outright that "it was after 1935 that the oppressive consequences of the Stalin personality cult began to manifest themselves with particular force" and that the resulting pressure on literature "was very hard indeed". He gives a fair account of the thaw's real range — Ovechkin, Tendryakov, Nilin, Panova, Zalygin, Victor Nekrasov's war writing "without bravura" — and he does not pretend that the young poets were docile.

The two chapters on the non-Russian literatures are the best-researched in the volume and the least often read. The figures are concrete and checkable: a bibliography of non-Russian books translated into Russian in 1934–1954 filling 750 pages; "no more than a hundred books in Tatar" indexed in the libraries of Kazan in the decades before 1917, against 145 works of fiction in 1934 alone. He introduces Yuri Rytkheu, the Chukchi writer; Djansi Kimonko, the Udeghe; Yuvan Shestalov, writing in Mansi, a language with fewer than seven thousand speakers; the Daghestani poets writing in Avar

and Lezghin. The framing is triumphalist and the account of what happened to the Ukrainian and Central Asian intelligentsias in the 1930s is absent. But the literary information is real, and much of it is still not easily found in English.

Where the reply is

The Fourth International answered this literature as it appeared, and the reader who wants the other side has a specific shelf to go to. Trotsky's "Art and Politics in Our Epoch" (18 June 1938) and chapter 7 of *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) are the foundational texts. For the machinery of the Writers' Union at work, L. Yakovlev's "The Blind Alley of Soviet Literature", *Fourth International* vol. 2 no. 6, July 1941, reported from the Soviet literary press itself that it was "no simple task to provide a realistic depiction of the civil war without once mentioning the name of Leon Trotsky... and always portraying Stalin as a genius." For the Zhdanov years that Zelinsky cannot name, Ernest Mandel — writing as Ernest Germain — gave the fullest contemporary account in "Purge of Soviet Culture", *Fourth International* vol. 10 no. 11, December 1949, quoting the decree against *Zvezda* and Leningrad for permitting Akhmatova "the emotion of loneliness ... foreign to Soviet literature", and setting down the axioms of the resulting criticism, among them: "There are no conflicts in a classless society." That is the doctrine Zelinsky, seven years later, would describe as the "theory of 'art without conflict'" without saying where it came from.

For the year of this book, there are two documents. Intercontinental Press of 1 December 1969 printed the Ryazan expulsion meeting nearly verbatim, and it is the necessary companion to Zelinsky's chapters on the Union — the provincial writers speaking one after another, including the one who said of Solzhenitsyn's recent work: "We, of course, are not familiar with his latest works. We have not read them. But they run counter to what we are writing." And on 6 April 1970, in the same paper, Gerry Foley reviewed a new Soviet novel that revived the Moscow trial charges against Trotsky in anti-Semitic form, noting that "the recent expulsion of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and the apparently forced resignation of the mildly independent Aleksandr Tvardovsky from the editorship of *Novy Mir* show the role the Kremlin has assigned to official 'literature.'" That review was published while this book was in production.

One last thing. In 113,000 words on the literature of the Russian revolution, the name of the man who organised the Red Army appears exactly once — inside a quotation from

Virgin Soil Upturned, in the mouth of Sholokhov's Makar Nagulnov: "We grew attached to the Party not with our learned gristle, like Trotsky, but with our hearts and the blood we shed for the Party." A history of the literature of October in which Trotsky survives only as a term of abuse in a novel is not a history that has been argued with. It is one that has been arranged. Zelinsky was in the room in October 1932 when the arranging began, and he was still working when this book went to Progress. That is why it is worth reading: he tells you more than he intends to, and everything he cannot say is legible from the shape of what he does.

MARXISM

Lenin: The Great Theoretician

The centenary volume: fourteen contributors, the full resources of the Soviet academy, and the most systematic exposition ever assembled of official Leninism - written for export in 1970, at the height of the contest with Peking over Lenin's mantle.

P. N. Fedoseyev and others

Introduction to the 1970 Edition

The first printing of Lenin the Great Theoretician is dated 1970, and for once the date on the spine can be trusted, because the date is the whole point. This is a centenary book. It was manufactured for the hundredth anniversary of Lenin's birth, the occasion Fedoseyev names in his opening pages when he writes that "the centenary of Lenin's birth is being celebrated" and that on this day "the significance of Lenin's ideas ... stands out ever more clearly." Everything about the volume — its scale, its solemnity, its fourteen contributors marching in step through philosophy, economics, the state, the party, and the national question — belongs to the machinery of that jubilee. To understand what it is, you have to understand what April 1970 was in the Soviet Union: not a scholarly conference but a liturgical event, the high noon of the official Lenin cult, planned years in advance and executed across every institution of Soviet ideological life at once.

It helps to picture the occasion. The Lenin centenary of April 1970 was among the largest ideological mobilisations the Soviet state ever mounted: years of preparation, a special decree of the Central Committee, medals struck, cities renamed, a wave of monuments, and a torrent of print in which volumes exactly like this one were commissioned by the score. Fedoseyev's opening essay quotes the document that set the key — the Address "Centenary of Lenin's Birth," adopted by the Moscow Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969 — and that provenance tells you the book's real audience. It was written for export, to be read by the fraternal parties whose delegates had gathered in Moscow the year before, and its unstated business was to hold them. 1970 was the height of the Sino-Soviet split; Peking had claimed Lenin's mantle for itself, and the Western parties were beginning to loosen their ties to Moscow. A centenary is, among other things, an occasion to assert ownership. The purpose of certifying the theory as a "single block of steel" belonging to the CPSU alone was to deny that anyone else — Chinese, Yugoslav, or Eurocommunist — could hold a legitimate share

in it. The book is a monument, and monuments are territorial.

The book is not the work of one hand. Its contents page lists fourteen essays by fourteen authors, and they are not obscure. The first and framing essay is by P. N. Fedoseyev, Vice-President of the USSR Academy of Sciences and one of the most senior academician-ideologues the CPSU possessed — the same man who, eight years later, would preside over the ceremonial volume *Triumph of Lenin's Ideas*. Around him are gathered A. F. Okulov on philosophy, Ts. A. Stepanyan on the laws of building communism, S. L. Vygodsky on the political economy of capitalism, G. A. Kozlov on the political economy of socialism, Y. A. Krasin on the theory of revolution, N. V. Tropkin on strategy and tactics, G. D. Obichkin on the party, V. V. Platkovsky on the dictatorship of the proletariat and the state, and others on the working class, agrarian theory, the national and colonial questions, the world communist movement, and proletarian internationalism. These are figures of the Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Marxism-Leninism — the professional custodians of doctrine, not independent scholars working at the edge of the permissible. The book was commissioned as a collective act of the apparatus, and it reads as one: a single voice in fourteen registers, expounding the completed system of "Marxism-Leninism" as the charter of the state that had adopted Lenin's name.

That word — system — is the key to the doctrine the book exists to transmit. Its argument, repeated in every essay, is that Lenin did not merely add to Marx but raised Marxism to "a new stage," "Marxism of the modern age," so that the two together form a single seamless body of truth. Fedoseyev states the ambition with an unforgettable image: Marxism is "an integral revolutionary doctrine, cast, as it were, from a single block of steel." Nothing may be added to it from outside; nothing genuine may be subtracted; and — the political sting in the metaphor — no one may claim a national or independent variant of it. "Marxists-Leninists," he writes, "must resolutely reject all ideas of pluralism, of different varieties of Marxism." In 1970 this was not an abstract point. It

was aimed at Peking, which claimed to be Lenin's truer heir, and at the Western communist parties then beginning to drift toward what would soon be called Eurocommunism. The centenary was a unity operation. The single block of steel was Moscow's, and the book's function was to certify that the theory belonged to the CPSU and to no one else.

Read purely as exposition, much of it is competent and some of it is genuinely useful, and this series does not pretend otherwise. Vygodsky's essay on Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism lays out Lenin's account of monopoly, finance capital, and the export of capital clearly and without obvious distortion; it remains a serviceable summary of a book that is itself still worth reading. The essays on agrarian theory and on the national and colonial questions transmit a real and creditable strand of Lenin — the insistence that the peasantry could be an ally rather than an enemy of the revolution, and that the socialist revolution was bound up with the liberation of the colonial world. Malysh's account of the worker-peasant alliance, the *smychka* (the practical bond between town and country on which the young Soviet state depended), states a genuine and central Leninist idea. And there is a small but real point of scholarly honesty worth crediting up front: when the book comes to the Brest-Litovsk peace of 1918, it attributes the "revolutionary war" position correctly — to the "Left-wing' Communists," the group around Bukharin — and does not, as several of its sister volumes in this series do, pin that position on Trotsky. The amalgam that recurs across Soviet foreign-policy writing is, here, absent. Where the book expounds the real Lenin, it should be read and used as such.

But the book cannot be read purely as exposition, because it is not offered as exposition. It is offered as the theory of a state — the "young socialist republic" grown into a superpower — and it is precisely at the point where the theory meets that state that the volume performs its central and defining act of suppression. The essay to watch is Platkovsky's, "Lenin's Theory of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Socialist State," because its subject is *The State and Revolution*, the pamphlet Lenin wrote in hiding in the summer of 1917. Platkovsky knows the text intimately; he quotes it repeatedly and correctly on the doctrine that the state must "wither away." What he does with it is the finding.

Recall what *The State and Revolution* actually demands. It is the most radically anti-bureaucratic thing Lenin ever wrote. The proletarian state, he insisted, is a state already dying from the day after the revolution — in Trotsky's later summary of Lenin's own words, "a state constructed in such a way that it immediately begins to die away and cannot help dying away."

Its officials are to be elected and subject to recall at any moment; none is to be paid more than a worker's wage; the standing army and the police are to be dissolved into the armed people; the bureaucracy is to be not reformed but abolished, and administration reduced to tasks so simple that, in Lenin's most famous formulation, every cook could be taught to take part in governing the state. That is the theory the centenary volume exists to honour. It is also the theory the Soviet state of 1970 had comprehensively negated — and Platkovsky's essay is the record of the doctrine built to conceal the gap.

Watch the substitution happen. In place of the state that begins to die at once, the book installs the doctrine of the 22nd Party Congress of 1961: the *obshchenarodnoe gosudarstvo*, the "state of the whole people." The dictatorship of the proletariat, Platkovsky explains, has already done its work and "ceased to be," but the state itself has not; on the contrary, "the socialist state will remain for a long time." He quotes the Party Programme approvingly: "The state as an organisation of the entire people will survive until the complete victory of communism." The withering-away, in other words, is acknowledged as doctrine and postponed as practice — indefinitely, to the far side of a communism that never arrives. And the book presents this postponement not as an embarrassment to be explained but as a triumph to be announced: the proletariat "has turned the state of its dictatorship into a state of the whole people. This is an historic act which no one can deny or gloss over." A theory whose entire thrust was the disappearance of the state has been converted into a justification for the state's permanence. Kozlov's economic essay completes the inversion from the other side, describing the "economic apparatus" as "part of the state apparatus that will remain and develop even after the state as a whole withers away" — the machine outliving even the machine.

Two things are worth pausing on here, because they show that the substitution is deliberate rather than careless. The first is that the doctrine Platkovsky is transmitting is not even Lenin's; it is Khrushchev's. The "state of the whole people" is the invention of the 1961 Party Programme adopted at the 22nd Congress, and Platkovsky says so plainly, praising "the new Programme adopted at its Twenty-Second Congress" for its "creative application and development of Lenin's theory of the socialist state." So the centenary book of 1970 defends its handling of the state not with a text of Lenin's but with a formula minted forty years after his death and a decade before the anniversary — a doctrine of a particular Soviet moment, dressed as timeless Leninism. This is the ordinary shape of the whole enterprise: the living voice of 1917 is used to bless the

settled arrangements of a much later regime.

The second is an outright contradiction inside the volume itself, and it is the sharpest single instance of the book failing its own reflexivity test. When Platkovsky's colleague comes to 1917, he denounces the very phrase Platkovsky will later consecrate. The Left Socialist-Revolutionary theoretician V. Trutovsky had called in 1917 for "the dictatorship of the working people in both town and country, and not the dictatorship of the proletariat"; the book rejects this out of hand, ruling that "the concept of the 'dictatorship of the whole people' was unsound because it ignored the dual, vacillating nature of the petty-bourgeois sections of the population." A category that is a petty-bourgeois evasion when a Left-SR uses it against Lenin in 1917 becomes, in the same book, an "historic act which no one can deny or gloss over" when the CPSU applies it to itself in 1961. The word "opportunism" tracks lineage rather than content across these volumes; here it is the phrase "the whole people" that does the same, condemned in one mouth and canonised in another, and the only thing that has changed is who is speaking.

Trotsky had named this exact operation thirty-four years earlier, in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), and its third chapter, "Socialism and the State," reads as though written against Platkovsky in advance. Quoting the same passage of *The State and Revolution*, Trotsky observed that Lenin's warning "now attacks with redoubled force the Soviet idolators with their cult of a bureaucratic state which has not the slightest intention of 'dying away.'" That is the sentence the centenary volume was built to prevent the reader from thinking. The bureaucratic state with no intention of dying is precisely the object the book asks us to admire, dressed as the fulfilment of the theory that condemned it.

The evasion sharpens when you follow the one piece of *The State and Revolution* the book cannot bring itself to leave out, and watch where it is allowed to apply. The demand that officials be elected and subject to recall does appear — in Obichkin's essay on the party. He quotes Lenin approvingly: all Party officials, "all leading bodies, and all institutions of the Party are subject to election, are responsible to their constituents, and are subject to recall." So the principle is in the book. But it is quarantined inside the Party's internal rules, and it is never once turned upon the state, where Lenin had aimed it. This is not an accident of arrangement. By 1970 the recall of officials was a dead letter in both places: the ban on factions of 1921 and the Terror of the 1930s had long since made the "accountability" of Soviet and Party officials to those below them a formality. What Trotsky wrote of the original

programme — that it prescribed "elections and recall at any time of all plenipotentiaries, abolition of material privileges, active control by the masses" — describes the very measures the Soviet state had abandoned. The book keeps the words and drops the thing.

And then there are the two silences that give the whole performance away. The first is arithmetical. Across 146,000 words devoted to Lenin's theory of the state, the concrete anti-bureaucratic prescriptions of *The State and Revolution* — officials on a workman's wage, the cook who governs, the abolition rather than the perfection of the apparatus — do not appear at all. The book expounds the withering-away as metaphysics and omits the mechanism as if it had never been written. The second silence is the more eloquent. The name Stalin occurs exactly once in the entire volume — in a single, warm reference to "Lenin's note to Stalin dated November 20, 1921," cited as evidence of Lenin's care for the national republics. That is the only Lenin-Stalin document the book of the great theoretician sees fit to mention. The other one — the "Letter to the Congress" of December 1922 and January 1923, the Testament, in which the dying Lenin, "horrified at the threatening growth of bureaucratism" (Trotsky's phrase, from *The Revolution Betrayed*, chapter five), proposed removing Stalin from his post — is nowhere in these pages. A volume that canonises Lenin as the theoretician of the state suppresses the last thing the theoretician wrote about who should run it.

The document the book cannot name was public, and had been anatomised in English for decades. Trotsky reproduced its verdict in *The Stalin School of Falsification* (1937): weighing every word, Lenin found Stalin "(a) rude, (b) disloyal, (c) inclined to abuse power," and drew the one organisational conclusion — "Remove Stalin from the post of General Secretary." That is the missing sentence at the centre of the missing document at the centre of this book. Its absence is not an oversight in a hurried compilation; it is the organising principle of a careful one. The theory is expounded in full precisely so that it need never be allowed to judge the state built in its name. Nowhere in the volume is Lenin's writing on the state permitted to touch the Soviet present as anything but praise. The theory is a monument, and a monument does not ask questions of the ground it stands on.

The most exact answer to the book was printed the same month it was celebrated. In *Intercontinental Press* of 20 April 1970 — the centenary itself — Ernest Mandel published "Lenin's Heritage," and reduced the whole matter to a sentence: "Lenin's last struggle was a desperate attempt to stop this perversion of his doctrine." That is the history the volume

is built to hide. Lenin spent his final active months not completing a system but fighting the apparatus that was capturing his state — over the Georgian affair, over the monopoly of foreign trade, over the swelling bureaucracy, and over the man he had raised to run the Party. He lost that fight, and the victors spent the next half-century converting the loser into a statue. The centenary of 1970 was the largest such statue ever cast. Trotsky's charge in *The Revolution Betrayed* holds against it precisely: the bureaucracy erected the cult of Lenin in order to bury the living, quarrelling, self-correcting Lenin who had become dangerous to it. A book that opens by comparing Marxism-Leninism to "a majestic tree which shoots new branches every year" is, in its treatment of the state, doing the opposite — embalming a doctrine and calling the embalming growth.

None of this makes the volume worthless, and the series is careful not to say that it is. As a historical document it is of the first importance: it is what the largest state descended from October actually taught, in the language of world circulation, at the moment of its greatest confidence — a photograph of official Marxism-Leninism at its noon, taken by its own official photographers. Its exposition of imperialism holds up. Its account of the worker-peasant alliance and of the colonial revolution transmits a real and usable Lenin. Its correct handling of the Brest debate shows that accuracy was available to these authors when nothing was at stake in it. The volume is not a tissue of lies; it is something more interesting and more characteristic — a work of real learning organised around a single unspeakable fact. The learning is genuine. The silence at the centre is genuine too, and it is the silence that tells you what the book is for.

The way to read Lenin the Great Theoretician, then, is against its own grain, with *The State and Revolution* open beside it. Let the pamphlet ask the questions the volume forbids. Where are the elected and recallable officials? Where is the workman's wage for the administrator, the armed people in place of the standing army, the cook who governs? Why does the state that was to begin dying in 1917 announce in 1961 that it "will remain for a long time," and call its own permanence an "historic act which no one can deny"? Why, in a hundred and forty-six thousand words on Lenin's theory of the state, is his last and most urgent word on the subject the one thing that cannot be printed? The book supplies no answers. But it poses the questions more sharply than any critic could, simply by being what it is: the most systematic exposition ever assembled of a theory, produced by the institution that had made a career of not applying it.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM

Caution: Zionism!

An antisemitic tract, reprinted as evidence with a critical introduction that says so. One of the founding texts of the Soviet "anti-Zionist" campaign after 1967, and the template echoed across the bloc for two decades. For students of the campaign, not for its arguments.

Yuri Ivanov

Introduction to the 1970 Edition

This is not a book about Zionism. It is a book that uses the word "Zionism" to say something older and uglier, and the first task of any honest introduction is to name what that is. Yuri Ivanov's *Caution: Zionism!* is one of the founding texts of the campaign the Soviet state launched after the Six-Day War of June 1967 under the banner of "anti-Zionism," and in substance it is an antisemitic tract. Under the cover of anti-imperialism it constructs a conspiracy theory — an invisible transnational power, an "international Zionist concern" run "from a single centre," directing governments, intelligence services and stock exchanges from the shadows. That is not a political analysis of a political movement. It is the myth of a secret world Jewish power, refitted in Marxist vocabulary and issued by a state publishing house. The distinction the book erases — between opposing Zionism and hating Jews — is the one this introduction exists to draw, because it is the whole of the matter.

What the book is, and when it was written

Caution: Zionism! appeared in English from Progress Publishers, the export arm of Soviet ideological production, carrying the date 1970 and the copyright line "© Progress Publishers 1970." The Russian original, *Ostorozhno: sionizm!*, was published in Moscow the year before. But the text tells its own date more precisely than the spine does. Its concluding chapter is signed "August 1968" — the month Warsaw Pact tanks entered Prague — while later passages were updated for the English edition and reach into early 1970: the Cherbourg gunboats of Christmas 1969, the West German NDP congress of 9 February 1970, an article in the French Communist daily of 8 March 1970. So the core was completed at the moment of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and the book we hold is that core brought forward to the spring of 1970. Both dates matter, because the book takes sides on both events: it blames "international Zionism" for the Prague Spring and celebrates

its suppression, noting with satisfaction that "with the aid of the fraternal socialist countries" Czechoslovakia "eliminated the danger that threatened her in August 1968."

The preface states the commission openly. "Lenin held that it was the fundamental duty of the Soviet press to make a concrete analysis of the forces acting against communism," Ivanov writes; "this book makes a study of modern Zionism, one of the most tenacious, though veiled varieties of anticommunism." That is the frame: a state undertaking, blessed by a Lenin citation, to expose an enemy. The text does not state Ivanov's official post, and I will not assert one I cannot source from it; he is generally identified as a functionary of the CPSU Central Committee apparatus, and the book plainly carried semi-official weight. Its own preface presents it as discharging a duty Lenin laid on "the Soviet press"; it is issued by the state's export publisher; and it became a template for the "anti-Zionist" literature that followed, of which the companion Progress volume in this series, Galina Nikitina's *The State of Israel* (1973), is the respectable, footnoted edition — Nikitina cites Ivanov by name for her own claim about a "New York-based and US-controlled international Zionist concern." Ivanov's book is the raw one.

It is essential to see what this campaign was continuous with. Soviet "anti-Zionism" after 1967 did not begin in 1967. It was the resumption, in a new key, of the "anti-cosmopolitan" campaign of Stalin's last years — the purge of "rootless cosmopolitans," overwhelmingly a euphemism for Jews, from 1948 onward; the murder of the Yiddish writers and the dissolution of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee; the "Doctors' Plot" of 1953, in which Kremlin physicians, most of them Jewish, were accused of a murder conspiracy directed from abroad, an affair halted only by Stalin's death. The Slánský trial in Prague in 1952 hanged eleven of its fourteen defendants, most of them Jews, on charges that fused "cosmopolitanism" and "Zionism." *Caution: Zionism!* stands in that line. And its deepest function was domestic. Whatever the English export edition says to a foreign reader about Israel

and imperialism, the Russian book was aimed inward, at the Jews of the Soviet Union — at a moment when a Jewish emigration movement was stirring and the regime wished to brand any Jewish national feeling as treason on behalf of a hostile foreign power. Read the sentence in which Ivanov explains that Zionist leaders want "all Jews, wherever they are and whatever their views," to "be classed as Zionists": in a book published in Moscow for Soviet readers, the effect of that logic, whatever its stated intent, is to place every Soviet Jew under suspicion of divided loyalty.

The distinction the book destroys

Two positions have to be held apart, and Ivanov's book exists to weld them together.

The first is anti-Zionism. The revolutionary-socialist tradition from which this series is written is, and has always been, anti-Zionist. It opposes the Zionist project as a settler-colonial enterprise that displaced the Palestinian Arabs from their land; it defends the national rights of the Palestinians, including the right of return; it judges the state founded in 1948 by what it did to the people already living there. That is a political position about a political movement and a state — arguable, answerable, and legitimate. One can debate it with evidence.

The second is opposition to antisemitism. The same tradition is, without a shred of qualification, anti-antisemitic. Antisemitism is a reactionary racism, a tool by which ruling classes have for centuries diverted the anger of the exploited away from themselves and onto a scapegoat; the workers' movement's oldest name for it, August Bebel's, was "the socialism of fools." A socialist opposes antisemitism for exactly the reasons a socialist opposes Zionism understood as chauvinism: because both set worker against worker on the lines of nation and race.

These two positions are not in tension. They are the same internationalism looked at from two sides. What makes Caution: Zionism! a work of antisemitism and not of anti-Zionism is that it collapses them — it takes the legitimate object, a criticism of Zionism as a political ideology, and fuses it with the racist object, the Jews imagined as a conspiratorial collective directing world events. That fusion is precisely what a genuine anti-Zionism must refuse, and precisely what Soviet doctrine manufactured. The book is not anti-Zionism. It is state antisemitism wearing anti-imperialism as a costume.

How the trick is done

The method is visible on the first page of the preface and never varies. Ivanov begins from a defensible Leninist proposition — that Zionism is a bourgeois nationalist movement — and then, sentence by sentence, inflates "the wealthy Jewish bourgeoisie" into a single, secret, omnipotent world organisation.

Watch the machinery assemble. Israel, Ivanov argues, could not have won in 1967 by itself; there must be "an intermediate link"; that link is "the international Zionist association," "acting as a secret channel between the most reactionary forces of the imperialist states." From there the entity swells until it governs everything. The World Zionist Organisation, the World Jewish Congress and "numerous other offshoots" are, he writes, "one of the world's largest associations of finance capital, a self-styled global 'ministry' for the affairs of 'world Jewry', an international intelligence centre, and a well-run misinformation and propaganda service," their operations "guided from a single centre." The order of world power is set out as a chain of command: "the Israeli militarists — international Zionism — Western imperialist circles headed by the USA." This is the structure of every modern conspiracy theory: a hidden directorate, a single centre, a power that is everywhere and accountable nowhere. That it is a Jewish hidden directorate is not incidental. It is the point, and it places the book squarely in the tradition of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion — the tsarist forgery that first packaged the fantasy of a secret Jewish world government for the twentieth century.

Ivanov even quotes the fantasy in so many words, and here he commits his most revealing falsification. To prove the reality of a "Jewish world government" he cites Hannah Arendt — whom he introduces, wrongly, as "the Israeli historian and journalist" (Arendt was a stateless, later American, German-Jewish philosopher, and no journalist) — on the Rothschilds: "Where, indeed, was there better proof of the fantastic concept of a Jewish world government than in this one family, the Rothschilds." But this line is from *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt's analysis of antisemitism, in which she is explaining how the real international structure of one banking family gave antisemites the raw material for their myth. Ivanov strips away her framing and deploys her account of the lie as evidence for its truth. To turn the great modern anatomist of totalitarian Jew-hatred into a witness for the prosecution against the Jews is the whole book in miniature: it is the citation test failed in a single stroke.

This is worth dwelling on, because Ivanov is not a crude

propagandist who invents his sources. He quotes real Zionist writers — Herzl, Nahum Sokolow, Justice Brandeis, Jabotinsky, Ben-Gurion — and he quotes them accurately, mostly on a peripheral question (whether the Jewish longing for Palestine is genuinely ancient) that he can win. On the load-bearing claim, though — the existence of the omnipotent "concern," the single centre, the secret intelligence service running imperialism — there is no Zionist source at all, because none exists. That claim is sourced to Soviet journalists (Y. Yevseyev, Ernst Henri), to Pravda, to the journal International Affairs, and above all to Ivanov's own assertion. The pattern is exact: the concrete, checkable citations attach to points that do not matter, and the extraordinary central charge floats free, "proved" by the confidence with which it is repeated. An enemy who is quoted can be checked; an enemy who is only characterised cannot.

Then comes the slide that makes the whole thing antisemitic rather than merely wrong. Ivanov is careful — the campaign was always careful — to post a disclaimer. "People who know little or nothing about Zionism," he writes, "tend to associate it either with the State of Israel as a whole, or with the Jews in general," and he insists this is a Zionist trick; he even affirms, in a footnote, "the right of the Israeli state to exist." Nikitina's companion volume states the same principle outright, that criticism of Zionism has "nothing in common with anti-Semitism." That is the correct position. It is also the position the prose does not keep, and cannot keep, because the argument requires the opposite. Having promised to speak only of "Zionism," Ivanov within pages is naming "the wealthy Jewish bourgeoisie," then "the Polyakovs, Oppenheims, Rothschilds and other multimillionaires," then a "'Millionaires' International,'" then "world Jewry" as such. The conspiracy is defined by Jewishness — by Jewish bankers, Jewish families, Jewish money — and no amount of front-matter throat-clearing about not meaning the Jews in general can undo a text whose every mechanism runs on exactly that. The disclaimer is not a limit on the antisemitism. It is the licence for it: it lets the author say the thing and deny having said it.

And the thing is said in the oldest available images. Ivanov's Zionists are forever "in the shadows," lifting a "veil," preferring "covert forms of activity"; his closing pages hunt "the old familiar faces behind the new masks" and rally the reader against "the owners of bulging purses." Most tellingly, he makes Jewish money-power a transhistorical constant. The Zionist leaders, he writes, have "always pursued only two basic objectives: re-establishment of control over Jewry and profiteering... the constants, so to speak, of their world

outlook." An eternal essence of avarice and secret control: this is the content of the antisemitic imagination, and it is printed here without disguise.

The final irony is what Ivanov does to Lenin, in whose name the book is written. Lenin was indeed a critic of Zionism and of the Jewish socialist Bund, on internationalist grounds — he opposed organising Jewish workers separately and rejected the idea of a "world Jewish nation." But Lenin's anti-Zionism was inseparable from his hatred of antisemitism: he attacked the pogrom as counter-revolution, and, as Ivanov himself quotes, Lenin ridiculed "the Zionist fable about anti-Semitism being eternal." Ivanov reproduces that line — and then writes a book whose entire premise is that Jewish financial conspiracy is eternal, a "constant" of the Jewish "world outlook." He has quoted Lenin refuting the very thesis his own book advances. Lenin's anti-Zionism was a defence of Jewish workers against the reactionaries who scapegoated them. Ivanov's inverts it into an indictment of the Jews as the reaction itself. That inversion is the distance between the two traditions, and it is not a matter of degree.

What can be rescued, and what must not be

The house rule of this series is that a book is not to be dismissed wholesale, and that credibility depends on saying plainly what holds up. Here honesty cuts a particular way.

There is a real and legitimate critique of Zionism, and it is not a Soviet invention. Zionism did entail the settlement of an already-inhabited land and the dispossession of its people; the occupation that began in 1967 was and remains real; the Emergency Defence Regulations of 1945, which Ivanov correctly notes the British handed to the Israeli state and which he correctly notes the Zionist leadership had once denounced when they were the target, are a genuine instrument of that occupation; the scale of United States financing of Israel was real. On scattered facts of this kind Ivanov is not lying. And the underlying cause — the national rights of the Palestinians — is a just one, defended by socialists long before and long after Moscow discovered its uses.

But this is exactly where the book does its damage, and the rescue has to be stated precisely. Caution: Zionism! does not carry a sound anti-colonial argument alongside its antisemitism; it takes the sound argument and poisons it. Every accurate fact is conscripted into the conspiracy frame — the occupation becomes evidence of the "concern," the financing becomes the "Millionaires' International," the Palestinian cause becomes a stick with which to beat "world

Jewry." A reader who accepts the book's antisemitism in exchange for its anti-colonialism has been robbed twice: made complicit in a racism, and handed a critique of Zionism so contaminated that it discredits the very Palestinian cause it claims to serve. That is the book's real and lasting harm. For a century, antisemites have offered the Palestinian struggle a poisoned alliance, and every acceptance of it has cost that struggle its moral standing among people of conscience. So the rescue here is not to salvage a few paragraphs of Ivanov's; it is to rescue anti-Zionism from Ivanov — to draw, hard, the line his book was built to erase. There is not a grain of truth to be credited to the antisemitism. There is only a just cause to be defended against those who would fuse it with a lie.

The reply that was already in print

The distinction Ivanov collapses was not a discovery waiting to be made. It was settled doctrine in the tradition this series speaks from, and it had been in print for decades.

The Fourth International had stated the position in 1948, in Ernest Germain's (Ernest Mandel's) "Draft Theses on the Jewish Question Today" (Fourth International, vol. IX, no. 1, January–February 1948). The Theses are anti-Zionist without ambiguity — "For the revolutionary proletariat, Zionism must be looked upon as a movement which is both utopian and reactionary" — and in the same breath they make the refutation of Ivanov's central trope a positive duty of socialists: "On every concrete occasion our sections must demolish the fascist lies about 'Jewish capitalism' or the 'Jewish monopolists.'" A movement that in 1948 instructed its members to demolish the lie of the "Jewish monopolists" is the exact opposite of one that in 1970 built a book on the "Millionaires' International." The two are not variants of a single anti-Zionism. One is anti-Zionism; the other is the socialism of fools — and the workers' movement had marked the difference twenty-two years before Ivanov wrote.

It had marked it against Stalinism in particular. In "Thermidor and Anti-Semitism" (February 1937) Trotsky had already diagnosed the mechanism Ivanov would later operate: the Soviet bureaucracy, in his account, deliberately emphasised the Jewish names among the Oppositionists and gave the antisemitic reflex its opening, as one more symptom of the Thermidorian reaction. In his 1934 interview "On the Jewish Question" he drew the entire line in a single clause — "I am, it is understood, opposed to Zionism" — while opposing, with the same breath, the pogromists. Anti-Zionist and anti-antisemitic together, in one voice. That is the position Caution: Zionism! was written to make unavailable.

When the post-1967 campaign arrived, the reply was immediate and specific, and it came from a press that had no need to choose between the two halves of the question. Intercontinental Press, the Fourth International's weekly of record, held both together without embarrassment. On the anti-Zionist side it gave its pages to the Israeli socialists themselves: its issue of 31 March 1969 (vol. 7, no. 12) carried the manifesto of the Israeli Socialist Organisation — the Matzpen group, "which has both Jewish and Arab members" — under the banner "Israeli Socialists Demand Withdrawal from Occupied Territories," a group it described as "one of the only organizations in Israel to defend the rights of the Palestinian refugees." That is anti-Zionism: named actors, checkable demands, and not one word about a hidden Jewish power. And on the other side the same paper named the Soviet-bloc campaign for what it was. On 14 April 1969 (vol. 7, no. 14) it reprinted from *Le Monde* the protest of Sartre, Aragon, Beauvoir and Alfred Kastler against the Polish purge, whose first sentence states the whole matter: "Under the pretext of anti-Zionism, a form of anti-Semitism has been developing in Poland." In November 1969 (vol. 7, no. 37) it recalled that the Slánský defendants had been hanged in Prague in 1952 on charges of "cosmopolitanism" and "Zionism," in a trial with "sharp anti-Semitic overtones." And on 6 April 1970 (vol. 8, no. 13) — the season Ivanov's book reached English — Gerry Foley reviewed Ivan Shevtsov's new Moscow novel under the headline "Moscow Novel Attacks Trotsky as 'Zionist,'" noting that it revived "the Moscow-trial, frame-up charges against Leon Trotsky" together with "the thinly veiled anti-Semitic slurs Stalin resorted to in attacking the founder of the Red Army." The novel's line — "Trotsky was a Zionist and his so-called party was only an offshoot of Zionism" — is Caution: Zionism! in the form of fiction, and it exposes the campaign's other face: the amalgam Ivanov aimed abroad at Israel's founders was, at home, being aimed at the founder of the Red Army and at every Soviet Jew.

Within months, the tradition delivered its verdict on the whole enterprise. Reviewing the Leningrad trials of Soviet Jews in January 1971, Intercontinental Press printed Nathan Weinstock's judgment that the USSR's "'anti-Zionism'... has a strong odor of anti-Semitism," the campaign's whole argument "topped off with an abundant anti-Semitic sauce disguised as anti-Zionism" (vol. 9, no. 3, 25 January 1971). The paper never named Ivanov — it did not need to, for the campaign's texts were interchangeable — but no sentence describes his book more exactly. It is worth noticing, too, what the reply never borrowed: across these years the Fourth International's press wrote at length on Zionism, Israel and Palestine and never once reached for "world Zionism" or "world Jewry" as

Ivanov uses them. The framing is absent from the answer because the answer refused it.

That is the position from which to read this book. The Palestinians had, and have, a right to their land and their return; the occupation was and is real; a socialist critique of Zionism is legitimate and necessary. None of it requires a single centre, a secret channel, a Jewish world government, or the owners of bulging purses in the shadows. Caution: Zionism! offers the just cause nothing but the poison. The caution the reader owes the world is not the one on the cover. It is caution toward a book that teaches an ancient hatred and calls it Lenin.

HISTORY

Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century

Marx's sustained indictment of a century of English foreign policy as an instrument of Russia - written for a Russophobe crank's newspaper, and left out of the Moscow anthologies that shaped what the left could read.

Karl Marx

Publisher's Introduction

In January 1983 the British section of the Fourth International published, in its theoretical journal *The International*, a long study by John Ross called "Marx on England". It was a serious piece of work, written into a live argument: the debate opened in the 1960s by Perry Anderson's *Origins of the Present Crisis* and E. P. Thompson's *The Peculiarities of the English* about the shape of English history and the character of the English ruling class. Ross went back to Marx himself, and he footnoted him exhaustively. The citations run to more than fifty: On Britain, Articles on Britain, On Colonialism, On Ireland, page after page of them. Among them is one to "Palmerston and the English Oligarchy, On Britain, p426" — Marx writing in the mid-1850s about the Whig grandee who ran British foreign policy, and about the oligarchy behind him.

He never once cites the book you are holding, which is Marx's sustained indictment of exactly that man's tradition, written in exactly those years. There is no reason to think Ross was avoiding it. He was working, as the whole English-speaking left worked, from the Moscow anthologies, and the Moscow anthologies do not contain it.

That is the fact this edition exists to expose, and it is worth stating precisely, because the usual way of putting it is too crude. Progress Publishers did not scrub David Urquhart from the record. Articles on Britain, the 1971 Moscow collection Ross was quoting, prints Marx's own dismissal of him in full — the Turcophile who "wants to revert to England's common law", who "wants to localise rather than centralise", of whom Marx wrote that "David is a prophet facing backwards, and fascinated like an antiquarian by the vista of old England". The volume's index gives him a straight biographical note: "Scottish diplomat, publicist and politician, Turkophile". The Marx who ridicules the Russophobe crank was perfectly publishable in Moscow. What was not publishable was the long, furious, documented book that Marx wrote for that crank's newspaper.

He wrote it in English, in London, in 1856 and 1857, and it appeared in instalments in *The Free Press*, the paper of Urquhart's small circle of followers, with whom Marx worked in these years without ever sharing their politics. He thought them cranks and said so; they printed what no one else would, and it paid. What he produced, gathered here under the title his daughter Eleanor gave it, is a running commentary on eighteenth-century diplomatic papers built to prove a single startling thesis: that the foreign policy of England had for a century been secretly bent to the service of Russia, and that the men who ran it were in one degree or another Russia's instruments. Around that argument Marx wraps a history of Russia itself — the rise of Muscovy under the shadow of the Mongols, the "bloody mire" out of which the modern Russian state crawled, the transformation Peter the Great worked on it. It is Marx at his most forensic and his most one-sided at once.

Be plain about the weaknesses, because the tradition this edition comes from has no stake in pretending they are not there. The governing idea — a hidden hand, a century-long conspiracy of ministers bought or duped by Petersburg — is the weakest kind of history, the kind that explains everything and therefore nothing. Marx, who elsewhere taught the world to look past the intentions of statesmen to the interests of classes, here does nearly the opposite, reading great events out of secret motives and personal treachery, and supplying the missing certainty himself where the documents decline to prove complicity. His account of Russia is worse: an unchanging drive to expand, handed down intact from the Mongol yoke through Ivan to the tsars of his own day, is exactly the sort of national essence that Marx's own method exists to dissolve. It is the least Marxist thing Marx wrote, and it carries the marks of the company he was keeping when he wrote it.

So why print it? Because a book can be wrong in its argument and revealing in its fate, and the fate of this one is very revealing.

The Soviet state made a career of publishing Marx entire: the juvenilia, the notebooks, the letters, the crossings-out. It built

institutes to do nothing else. And it left this book out of the editions that did the work — the anthologies that went into the world's libraries and the world's party bookshops, the volumes a militant in Manchester or Melbourne actually had on the shelf. The reason is not obscure. A book whose whole burden is that Russia is a uniquely predatory power, and that its statecraft is the continuous expression of a despotic tradition reaching back to Genghis Khan, was not a book a Russian great power dressed in red could put on open sale, least of all in the decades when that power was absorbing its neighbours and explaining, in Marx's name, that its expansion was liberation. The censor's instinct was sound. Marx had written the indictment, and it fitted.

What the Ross footnotes show is the second half of that operation, the half usually missed. A canon is not only a list of what is printed. It is a shape imposed on what can be thought with. Ross was not a Soviet author; he was writing for an organisation whose reason for existing was opposition to the Soviet state, in a journal that in the same issues was publishing attacks on the Kremlin's every position. He was, on this question, still reading the Marx that Moscow had assembled. The Moscow editors had selected, and their selection set the syllabus for their enemies. That is what a monopoly on the collected works buys, and it is why this series keeps returning to the apparently dry question of what went into which volume.

There is one witness who did look, and what became of him belongs to the same story. In the November–December 1951 issue of *The New International* — the journal of the Independent Socialist League, Max Shachtman's group, which had broken from the Fourth International's American section eleven years before — seven pages of these articles appeared under Marx's own title, *Revelations on Russia* (pp. 360–366), all but one section in the original English of *The Free Press* of February and April 1857, the one exception translated back out of French. The prefatory note is by Maximilien Rubel, and it is four sentences long, and it contains the whole argument of this introduction. The text, Rubel wrote, had been “suppressed by the editors of the works of Marx and Engels in the Russian language”, although Potemkin's official *History of Diplomacy*, from the USSR Academy of Sciences, had cited it on several occasions: “Phrases torn out of their context are placed within a chain of ideas which have not the slightest bearing upon the thought of Marx.” And he named the reason. Soviet historiography now presented Stalin's regime as “the logical consequence of Russia's entire historic evolution”, the completion of a labour of state-building begun by Ivan III and Peter the Great; and therefore “all the Slavophile theses of

former Russian historians have again been taken up by the official Soviet historians”. The excerpts were translated and edited by Henry Judd, who reviewed Rubel's Marx anthology in the pages immediately following, and who mentioned the “suppression by the Russian government” of Marx's writings in passing, as a thing that needed no arguing.

Then it sank. The note ran in a small American magazine, in a year when the tendency that printed it was absorbed in almost nothing but the Russian question; what it carried were extracts and not the book; and thirty-two years later a serious Marxist in the same tradition, working through more than fifty Moscow citations, did not know the book was there. That is the exact version of the claim this edition makes, and it is worth having exactly. It is not that nobody noticed the hole. Somebody noticed it, printed the evidence, and drew the right conclusion, and it changed nothing, because a note in a journal cannot compete with a shelf.

There is a temptation to be resisted here, and the anti-Stalinist reader is the one most likely to feel it. The temptation is to seize on this book as proof — to say that Marx himself saw, a century early, what the Soviet state would become, and that the *Secret Diplomatic History* is the founder's own verdict on the regime that suppressed it. That would mean adopting Marx's error in order to score the point. The bureaucratic state that arose in Russia after 1928 was not the return of an eternal Muscovy; it was a new formation thrown up by a real revolution isolated and starved into deformation, and to explain it by the ghost of the Mongols is to abandon materialism for the mysticism this book indulges. Trotsky, who understood that state better than anyone, never reached for a civilisational Russia to account for it. He reached for backwardness, isolation, scarcity, and a caste that raised itself above an exhausted working class.

The sharper reading is narrower. The state suppressed the book not because the book had secretly diagnosed it, but because the book's crude nationalism of eternal Russia was uncomfortably close to the crude nationalism the state was itself manufacturing — Great-Russian pride in a Marxist wrapper — and no regime can afford to hear its own myths said out loud by its own prophet in the wrong key. What the suppression exposes is not Marx's foresight but the editors' method: they trimmed their founder wherever he failed to flatter them, and this book failed spectacularly.

Read it, then, for two things at once. Read it as a period piece and a warning against a way of thinking — the conspiratorial history, the nation with a fixed character, the argument that

proves too much — and notice that the author of the warning is Marx, which is the most useful lesson available, since it means no name on a title page exempts a text from criticism. And read it as an exhibit in the making of canons. This series exists to show what the Soviet state did with the men it embalmed: what it printed, what it cut, what it corrected, and here, what it quietly declined to print. The Secret Diplomatic History is the clearest case of the last kind. Not a text falsified, but a text disappeared, so thoroughly that the one man who printed the evidence could print only extracts, and a hostile scholar writing a hundred and twenty-six years later, with every Moscow volume on his desk, did not know to look for it.

The text is Marx's own English, reproduced from the edition his daughter Eleanor Marx Aveling prepared and Swan Sonnenschein published in 1899, after her death; the publishers' brief preface, kept here at the front, records that she did not live long enough to see these papers through the press. Nothing has been modernised or corrected, and the reproduced documents keep their eighteenth-century spelling. What we have added is this introduction and nothing else.