



PROGRESS QUARTERLY

Critical Introductions to the Reissued Classics

VOLUME II · NUMBER 3

ПРОГРЕСС · МОСКВА

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Outline History of the Communist International

The official history of the Comintern from 1919 to 1943, written inside the Institute of Marxism-Leninism with the co-operation of surviving participants - Ulbricht, Ibarruri, Duclos, Palme Dutt. The account every other history of the Comintern has had to argue against.

Andrei N. Sobolev

Introduction to the 1971 Edition

This is the official Soviet history of the Communist International — the Third International, the Comintern — from its founding under Lenin in March 1919 to its dissolution by Stalin in June 1943. It was produced by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the Central Committee of the CPSU, by a group of seven historians headed by A. I. Sobolev, and issued by Progress in Bernard Isaacs's translation under the modest Russian title *Kratkii istoricheskii ocherk* — "short historical sketch." At some 207,000 English words it is not short, and it is not a sketch. It is the institutional self-portrait of the organisation whose degeneration called the whole anti-Stalinist tradition into being, and no book in this series is more directly the thing that tradition exists to answer.

The credentials are worth reading closely, because they announce what kind of document this is. The title page thanks, "with the co-operation of," a roll of surviving Comintern leaders and functionaries — Walter Ulbricht, Dolores Ibárruri, Jacques Duclos, Tim Buck, Palme Dutt, Boris Ponomarev and others. These were not consulted historians; several were participants defending their own past. The head of the authorial group, A. I. Sobolev, is the same Sobolev who sits as a Deputy Chairman of the editorial committee of the International Working-Class Movement volumes elsewhere in this catalogue, under the chairmanship of Ponomarev — who also appears here among the co-operators, and who as Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee had in 1971 instructed cadres to expose Trotskyism's "kinship with open anti-Communism." This is not an outside scholar's account of the Comintern. It is the apparatus writing the history of the apparatus.

The date of the text, and its year

The copyright page reads © Progress Publishers 1971, "First printing 1972." Nothing internal contradicts it: the latest events the book can reach are the international Meeting of

Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow in 1969 and the Karlovy Vary conference of European Communist parties of April 1967. This is a genuine text of 1970–71, not a lagged reprint dressed in a later jacket. That places it squarely in the confident middle of the Brezhnev years, and its confidence is the confidence of an institution that believes the storms are behind it. De-Stalinisation has been quietly halted; the "cult of personality" formula of 1956 survives as a fixed, minimal concession rather than a live inquiry; and the book fights on two fronts at once. It defends Moscow's line against the Trotskyism it inherited as an enemy, and against the Maoism that had split the world movement in the decade just past. The Sino-Soviet rupture is the loudest silence and the loudest noise in the book together: Chapter Seven closes with a sustained denunciation of "the Mao Tse-tung group, which has sunk to anti-Leninist positions and is pursuing a Leftist adventurist policy of great-power chauvinism," while the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 — the event that convened the very 1969 Meeting the book treats as its terminus — is nowhere mentioned at all. A history that ends in 1943 was under no obligation to discuss 1968; but a book so anxious about the "unity of the communist movement," written in the year after Warsaw Pact tanks entered Prague, tells its date by what it will not name.

What the book gets right, and why that is the tragedy

A critical introduction to a Progress volume usually has to hunt for the salvageable. Here it is not hard to find, and honesty about it is the price of being believed on everything else. The early chapters — the Comintern of Lenin, the first four congresses of 1919 to 1922 — are, within the limits of their piety, a serviceable and often faithful record. The book reconstructs the founding congress, the drafting of the Twenty-One Conditions, the debates of the Second Congress in real detail. It gives Lenin's theses on the national and colonial questions their proper weight, and states their core correctly: that victory over world imperialism is "impossible

without an alliance between the revolutionary proletariat and the national liberation movement." It follows the Congress of the Toilers of the Far East (1922), the anti-imperialist united front of the Fourth Congress, the League Against Imperialism of 1927 — the real and lasting contributions of the early International to the theory of colonial revolution. It even records, without flinching, that the united-front tactic was born against resistance from within the Comintern's own leadership: that in 1921 the "Open Letter" of the German party was condemned as "a non-revolutionary act" by none other than the Comintern's chairman Zinoviev and by Bukharin, and that Lenin had to intervene to defend it as "a model political step."

This is the tragedy the book cannot see because it is standing inside it. The distance between the Comintern that debated the workers' government and the colonial united front in 1920, and the instrument that branded Social Democrats "social fascists" in 1931 and endorsed the shooting of its own leaders in 1938, is the whole subject of the anti-Stalinist critique — and it is a distance the Outline History is structurally unable to measure, because measuring it would mean admitting that the line changed, and changed catastrophically, at the dictation of a faction. So the book narrates a continuous, self-correcting ascent, in which every turn was basically right, every error was a "sectarian deviation" promptly overcome, and the leadership that presided over the founding congress and the leadership that presided over the Terror are the same unbroken "Leninist" thread. The material for the counter-history is often present in the book's own pages. It has only to be read against the grain the authors cut.

The citation test: leaders named, and unburied

The sharpest instrument this series has is also the simplest: who is quoted to his own words, and who is only characterised. An opponent who is cited can be checked; an opponent who is only described cannot. In the companion IWCML volumes the test is stark — volume three cites Luxemburg's collected works sixteen times and Trotsky not once, though it attributes a whole doctrine to him. The Outline History is a shade less absolute: Trotsky is actually quoted here, a handful of times. But he is quoted exclusively as a defendant, in fragments selected to make him absurd — his China polemics turned into self-parody, his 1928 protest to the Sixth Congress cited only to be dismissed — and never once as what he in fact was, a leader of the Communist International in its first years, the author of several of its founding manifestos. The label attached to him is fixed and prior to any argument: a resolution of the Fifth ECCI Plenum, which the

book endorses, defines Trotskyism as "a system of fighting Leninism of many years standing." Once the category is settled as an essence, the quotations serve only to illustrate it.

The most telling result of the test, though, is not about quotation but about death. The Comintern's first president was Grigory Zinoviev; the book names him more than thirty times, correctly, as chairman of its Executive from 1919. Its second dominant figure at the top was Nikolai Bukharin, who drafted the Comintern's programme and sat as deputy chairman of its Executive; the book names him too, and even records, in 1929, the ECCI plenum's decision "to remove Bukharin from his work in the Comintern" for a "Right deviation platform." Both men led the Communist International. Both men were shot — Zinoviev in August 1936 after the first Moscow trial, Bukharin in March 1938 after the third. The Outline History never says so. It never mentions the Moscow trials at all; the phrase does not occur in the book. Zinoviev and Bukharin simply cease to be spoken of once their political defeat is narrated, and the reader who did not already know their fate would close this history believing its first two presidents had merely lost an argument. The same erasure swallows Béla Kun, praised on one page as an "outstanding leader" of the Hungarian party and present at the Seventh Congress of 1935, then gone — arrested and shot in 1938, though the book records only his sectarian errors and his silence thereafter. Pyatnitsky, the organisational secretary who ran the apparatus for a decade, is named among the leaders of the mid-1930s and then vanishes on the same road. This is the citation test in its most damning form: the men the International cannot bring itself to bury are exactly the men it had murdered.

1933: the decisive test

Everything turns on Germany. The Comintern's "Third Period" line, adopted from 1928 and hardened at the ECCI plenums of 1929–31, declared Social Democracy a variant of fascism — "social fascism" — and the main enemy, forbidding the united front with the Social-Democratic workers precisely when Hitler's movement was mounting. The result was that the two mass parties of the German working class, the Communists and the Social Democrats, marched separately to the greatest defeat in the history of the labour movement, and Hitler took power in January 1933 without a shot fired against him. This is the event that made Trotsky abandon the demand to reform the Communist International and call for a new one. How the Outline History handles it is the measure of the whole book.

The handling is more self-critical than a reader might expect — and the shape of that self-criticism is itself the finding.

Post-1956 Soviet historiography could concede the "social fascism" slogan as an error, because the corrective was itself a Comintern act: the Seventh Congress of 1935 and the turn to the popular front. So the book does concede it, in the abstract. It calls the equation of Social Democracy with fascism "a mistake"; it writes plainly that "it would be wrong, however, to apply this appellation to Social-Democracy and the reformist trade unions as a whole," and that "the social-fascism formula prevented the Communists from taking timely notice of the fact that with the onset of fascism the Social-Democrats... were capable of taking part in the anti-fascist struggle." As a sentence about a formula, that is very nearly correct.

But watch what happens when the book stops discussing the formula in general and reaches January 1933 in particular. "On January 30, 1933," it writes, "the monopolists put Hitler into power" — and the responsibility for the disaster is now placed, wholly and precisely, on the Social Democrats. The German Communist Party, in this telling, "made about a dozen offers to the Social-Democratic Party of Germany to organise a general strike against fascism, but each time received a refusal." The KPD is the party of unity heroically rebuffed; the SPD "torpedoed" the general strike. The causal arrow of the anti-Stalinist critique — that it was the Comintern's own line, dictated from Moscow, that made the united front impossible for years before January 1933, that "social fascism" was the doctrine which taught Communist workers to see Social-Democratic workers as the main enemy — is reversed. The error is conceded as a slogan and denied as a cause. And the concession is hedged even as a slogan: the "social-fascism" formula, the book insists, was a natural "reaction" to the treachery of the reformist leaders, who gave "definite grounds" for the charge. The Comintern is criticised for a tactical excess; it is never allowed to have lost Germany.

What the book does not stint on is the price. It records, without euphemism, the destruction of the German party: "Out of the 300,000 Communists which the Party had in 1933, 150,000 were subjected to persecutions and thrown into prisons and concentration camps, where they died by the thousand" — among them Ernst Thälmann, murdered at Buchenwald. (The extract prints "1953" for 1933, a plain scanner slip; the passage is about the Nazi terror on the KPD.) Here the vocabulary of atrocity is unstinting and exact. The reader should hold that exactness in mind, because a few chapters on, when the killing is done not by the Gestapo but by the NKVD, the same book will find only the palest words for it.

The direct answer to the whole passage was written, in real time, by the man the book quotes only to ridicule. More than a

year before Hitler took power, in "For a Workers' United Front Against Fascism" (8 December 1931), Trotsky told the German Communists that the Central Committee's line "proceeds from the recognition of the inevitability of a fascist victory," and gave them the formula the Comintern would not adopt until 1935, when it was five years too late: "March separately, but strike together!" His warning does not read, at this distance, as factional prophecy but as plain sight: "Worker-Communists, you are hundreds of thousands, millions... Should fascism come to power, it will ride over your skulls and spines like a terrific tank... Make haste, worker-Communists, you have very little time left!" The Outline History now endorses, in retrospect and in the abstract, the united-front policy Trotsky demanded on the day — while recording him, in its own narrative of those years, only as one of those who "described fascism as a supraclass power, a sort of Bonapartism." That the correction the book makes in 1971 was the argument Trotsky was expelled and hounded for making in 1931 is the fact the book is built not to notice.

The popular front, and the Terror inside the International

After 1935 the book is on ground it likes: the popular front, the Spanish Republic, the anti-fascist congresses, the mass parties of France. This is the period it treats as the Comintern's vindication, and it makes the case at length. A reader from this tradition enters two corrections. The first is that the popular front, as practised, meant the subordination of the workers' movement to the defence of bourgeois-democratic and imperial states — that in Spain it meant, alongside the fight against Franco, the suppression of the POUM and the crushing of the collectives, of which this triumphal narrative says nothing. The second is the one the book cannot keep entirely off the page, because by 1971 the Party's own line required a minimal admission: the Terror.

Here is the whole of what a 207,000-word official history of the Comintern will say about the fact that the Soviet state murdered more Comintern cadres in Moscow than every bourgeois government on earth combined. Stalin, the book allows, "had great services to his credit," but "the cult of Stalin's personality" led "to the violation of Lenin's principles of collective leadership and of socialist legality, and to repressions against people who were dedicated to the cause of the Party and the people." Its effects "told also on the Communist International": leaders "were accused in 1937 and 1938 of Trotskyism, of plotting and spying for the imperialist powers, and were subjected to repressions." The one concrete

case it names is the dissolution of the Communist Party of Poland, "unjustly accused of letting its leadership pass into the hands of the class enemies," which the ECCI Presidium ordered disbanded in August 1938 — and which the book can admit was a crime only because a joint statement of five parties had rehabilitated it in 1956, a footnote the Outline History duly cites to Pravda.

Read that against what actually happened and the euphemism becomes an indictment. The entire leadership of the Polish party was summoned to Moscow and shot; the party was not merely "dissolved" but decapitated. The German and Hungarian émigré Communists who had fled to the "homeland of socialism" were liquidated there in numbers Hitler could not reach. The book supplies none of this: no figure, no name of a single executed cadre, and — most precisely — not the word. Search the Outline History and you will find "executions" and "mass executions" used freely and correctly, for the crimes of the ruling classes, of the White terror, of the men who killed Sacco and Vanzetti. For Stalin's victims the book has only "repressions," "unjustly accused," "negative features." The vocabulary of murder is reserved for the class enemy and withheld from the apparatus. And even the pale admission is fenced with justification: "Obviously, the plottings of international imperialism, the existence of a hostile capitalist encirclement and the counter-revolutionary attacks of the Trotskyites created within the country an atmosphere of tension which called for greater cohesion within the Party." The victims are conceded to have been "honest"; the machine that killed them is left standing, its logic half-endorsed. It is worth adding, since this series holds itself to its own standard, that the book's own vocabulary is exact when it wants to be: it calls Mao Tse-tung's purges of the 1940s "unwarranted repressions" without hesitation. The euphemism, in other words, is not a limit of the Russian language. It is a choice, applied to Moscow's crimes and lifted for Peking's.

1943: a sovereign decision, or a gift?

The Comintern was dissolved in the spring of 1943, at the height of the wartime alliance, weeks after Stalingrad. The book presents this as the organisation's mature and voluntary self-liquidation: the sections had grown strong, "leadership from a single centre" had become "an obstacle," and the Presidium of the ECCI, "on the basis of a thorough analysis of the political situation," proposed dissolution to parties which approved it all but unanimously. "The subsequent course of events," the book concludes, "confirmed the correctness and timeliness of the decision." Of the reason the timing was what

it was — that Stalin dissolved the International as a reassurance to Churchill and Roosevelt, a demonstration that Moscow had no designs on the internal affairs of its allies — the book says only, obliquely, that the Comintern's existence was being used by "reactionaries" and "Nazi propaganda" to frighten the bourgeoisie of the coalition, and that removing the pretext served the anti-fascist cause. The subordination of the world revolutionary organisation to the diplomatic convenience of the Soviet state, which is what the dissolution was, is thus rendered as the organisation's own gift to the struggle. And the book cannot resist the era's polemic even here: it notes that the "only exception" to the unanimous approval was the Chinese Communist Party, which stressed that it "considered itself free from obligations towards the world communist movement" — a 1971 thrust at Peking, planted in the record of 1943.

The reply, and the test that survives it

The reply to this book is unusually complete, because its subject is the exact subject on which the anti-Stalinist left wrote most and best. On the fight the book calls "the defeat of Trotskyism," the answer is Trotsky's own *The Third International After Lenin* (1928), the direct counter-history of the very degeneration the Outline History narrates as an ascent. On the method — the mined quarrel, the suppressed record, the leader unpersoned — it is *The Stalin School of Falsification* (1937), which describes this book's procedure more precisely than any critique written since. On Germany, the reply is a shelf: *The Turn in the Communist International and the Situation in Germany* (1930), the German writings of 1931–33 gathered in *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, and the moment of rupture itself, "It Is Impossible to Remain in the Same International with the Stalins, Manuïlskys, Lozovskys & Co." (June 1933). For the Terror as it fell, there is the Left Opposition's own *Biulleten' Oppozitsii*, reporting the frame-ups as they happened. The reader who wants the men and women this book cannot mention will find them named, and their ends recorded, in those pages.

But the final test to apply to the Outline History is not one of citation or of vocabulary alone, both of which our own tradition has at times failed too. It is the test of reflexivity: can the categories the book wields ever be turned on the speaker? The book is built so that they cannot. Opportunism, sectarianism, splitting, adventurism, great-power chauvinism — every one of these is a charge the CPSU levels and never answers; the Party is always the subject combating the disease, never a possible carrier of it. The line was never wrong, only

the deviations from it; the leadership never failed, only the leaders who were expelled from it; the dead were "unjustly accused," but by no one the book will name, of crimes it will not describe, in a Terror it calls a "cult." A history that can convict Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Kun and Mao, and can find no fault in the institution that shot four of them and split with the fifth, has told you its real subject. It is not the history of the Communist International. It is the case for the prosecution that outlived the accused, written by the office that filed the charges.

MARXISM

Development of revolutionary theory by the CPSU

Twelve senior Soviet theorists, one to a chapter, summing up what the CPSU had added to revolutionary theory since Lenin's death - assembled for the Twenty-Fourth Congress in 1971, and the last serious attempt by the Soviet academy to present itself as a living tradition.

Pyotr Nikolayevich Pospelov

Introduction to the 1971 Edition

Most Progress volumes hide their authors behind an institute. This one puts them on the contents page, twelve of them, one to a chapter, and the list is the most interesting document in the book. It opens with P. N. Pospelov on "Leninism and the Building of Communism in the USSR" and follows immediately with F. V. Konstantinov on "Development of Philosophical Thought in the USSR." Then A. I. Pashkov on the political economy of socialism, L. A. Leontyev on modern imperialism, N. V. Tropkin on the theory of socialist revolution, S. L. Titarenko on the party, D. I. Chesnokov on the socialist state, V. G. Afanasyev on scientific management, G. Kharakhashyan on the world socialist system, M. V. Iskrov on the international working-class movement, M. I. Kulichenko on the national question, and E. A. Arab-Ogly on the scientific and technological revolution.

The unsigned Introduction states the commission plainly: "This volume is an attempt to sum up the contribution that has been made by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union towards developing revolutionary theory on a number of major problems after Lenin's death." After Lenin's death. The period the book undertakes to cover is 1924 to 1971, and the last chapter reports that its subject "occupies a prominent place in the preparations for the Twenty-Fourth Congress of the CPSU" — which met on 30 March 1971. So the volume was assembled in the run-up to that congress and exported in its aftermath: a stocktaking of Soviet theory, in English, for the Western communist parties and their students, at the moment Brezhnev's leadership was consolidating.

Now the count. In roughly 130,000 words about the development of revolutionary theory over half a century, Lenin's name appears about six hundred times. Brezhnev's appears seventeen times. Stalin's appears four times, in three sentences, and never as the subject of a sentence: twice as "the personality cult of Stalin," once as "the Stalin personality cult," and once in the phrase "During the last years of Stalin's life."

He is not a theorist here, nor an author of anything, nor even a politician. He is a weather condition.

That is a striking way to write the theoretical history of the Soviet Union between 1924 and 1953. It is a still more striking way for Pyotr Nikolayevich Pospelov to write it. Pospelov was one of the two principal drafters of the 1938 History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course, the most widely printed political text of the century and the volume that opens this series. He edited Pravda through the war and after — the Fourth International was quoting him in that capacity in 1949 — and he directed the Institute of Marxism-Leninism into the 1960s. He also chaired the commission that in 1955–56 assembled the material on the destruction of the Central Committee which Khrushchev used in the secret speech. There is no one alive in 1971 better placed to write the honest version of this chapter, and no one with more reason not to.

His chapter narrates Lenin's plan, industrialisation, collectivisation, the cultural revolution, and then arrives at the following sentence: "As a result of the consistent fulfilment of Lenin's plan, the building of socialism was, in the main, completed in the Soviet Union by 1937. This achievement was legislatively recorded in the new Constitution of the USSR." That is the whole of 1937 in this book, apart from two statistical citations and a note about the school year. The paragraph that follows is the closest Pospelov comes to acknowledging that there is anything else to say, and it is a complaint:

In dealing with the post-war period the Soviet press has not always clearly established the continuity with the processes that had taken place before the war. Sometimes, in connection with the criticism of the personality cult of Stalin, the colossal work accomplished by the Party and the Soviet people in building the material and technical basis of socialism, raising the standard of living and the people's cultural level, and in strengthening the country's defence capability has been indiscriminately run down.

The grievance is that the Twentieth Congress went too far. It is registered in 1971 by the man who supplied the Twentieth Congress with its evidence.

The other characteristic silence is the Short Course itself. A volume surveying the CPSU's theoretical production after Lenin's death does not mention the single most disseminated theoretical text that production ever generated — not to praise it, not to repudiate it, not at all. The back matter advertises its replacement, *A Short History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, "written by Soviet historians under the editorship of Academician Ponomarev." Trotsky, meanwhile, receives an editorial footnote that ends: "In 1929 Trotsky was exiled." The parenthesis after his name reads "(1879–1940)." What happened in 1940 is left to the dates.

Konstantinov's philosophy chapter is the volume's second exhibit, and it repays the same treatment. Konstantinov was a genuine professional — an Academician, director of the Institute of Philosophy through the 1960s, editor-in-chief of the five-volume Soviet Philosophical Encyclopaedia — and a year after this book he served as responsible editor of *A Critique of Mao Tse-tung's Theoretical Conceptions*, also in this series, whose charge against Mao was that one leader's will had been substituted for material conditions and one man's thought made the measure of theory.

Here he narrates the philosophical 1920s at real length: the fight against mechanistic materialism, Lyubov Axelrod, Skvortsov-Stepanov, Bukharin's theory of equilibrium, the journal *Pod znamenem marksizma*, "crowded meetings at which heated debates took place" in Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov and Kiev. Then the mode changes. "But towards the beginning of the 1930s (in some cases even earlier) serious errors and distortions came to light in the work of the journal and in the school of A. M. Deborin, who headed the journal." Came to light: no agent, no decree, no date. What actually happened is that in January 1931 a Central Committee resolution branded Deborin's group "Menshevizing idealism" and installed Mark Mitin in charge of Soviet philosophy — an event without which nothing in the rest of the chapter is intelligible. Deborin survived. Jan Sten, who had tutored Stalin in Hegel, was shot in 1937. Mitin's name does not appear in this book.

Nor does the text that followed. Between 1938 and 1953, Soviet philosophy meant, in practice, the second section of the fourth chapter of the Short Course — "Dialectical and Historical Materialism," reprinted under Stalin's name in tens of millions of copies and treated from Prague to Peking as

simply what Marxism was. A chapter titled "Development of Philosophical Thought in the USSR" does not cite it, discuss it or mention it. The whole period between the Deborin campaign and the 1960s is disposed of in three sentences: "After Lenin's death some mistakes were made in the course of socialist construction. The personality cult damaged the development of Marxist theory and philosophy. It fettered theoretical thinking, pushing it into dogmatism and reducing it to commentary." The diagnosis is exactly right. It is offered without a single example.

The one that would have cost most is handled in a parenthesis. "At one time some philosophers committed the serious error of oversimplifying the approach to special problems of natural science (the theory of relativity, genetics and cybernetics) and thereby undermined the alliance between Marxist philosophers and materialistic natural scientists. This error has been rectified." Inside that bracket is the destruction of Soviet genetics: Lysenko's triumph at the August 1948 session of the Lenin All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences, the sacking of the geneticists, the imprisonment and death of Nikolai Vavilov in 1943. "Some philosophers" is a considerable understatement of the responsible parties, and the passive "has been rectified" spares the reader any account of how.

And yet Konstantinov also writes this, and it should be quoted because it is unlike anything else in the volume: "Perhaps, there was a better way of achieving this, with fewer sacrifices. But we were the pioneers and had no models, no historical examples to draw on." That is a man conceding, in a book that concedes nothing, that the sacrifices were real and might not have been necessary. He does not say what they were. He does say they happened.

So much for the prosecution. Two chapters here are serious work and a reader would be badly served by a blanket verdict.

Pashkov's chapter on the political economy of socialism is genuine intellectual history, and it is the only place in the book where doctrine visibly changes its mind. He traces the long argument over whether the law of value operates under socialism: the 1920s consensus that it would wither with the market; the "Leftist prattle" of the turn of the 1930s about abolishing money; the 1941 Central Committee discussion of the draft political economy textbook, at which the denial of the law of value was ruled wrong because it "clashed with the existence in the USSR of trade, money, prices, wages, profit, rent and cost accounting"; the discussion of 1951; the textbook of 1954; and the reform launched by the March and September

1965 plenums, whose aim he states without euphemism as being "to give priority to economic methods of management over administrative methods, enhance the role of the market in the mechanism of economic management and provide greater economic incentives for factories and for individual workers." He then lists what the discipline has not solved — "the planning of prices, the purchasing power of the population, the market situation and long-term forecasting" — a candid inventory in a book otherwise composed of achievements.

Pashkov also does something no one else here does: he quotes the Stalin period against itself, by page and issue. The doctrine that economic laws under socialism are made by the state he sources to the journal *Bolshevik*, 1937, no. 1, p. 24 — "These laws are created and modified by the socialist state headed by the Communist Party" — and calls it the basis of "subjectivistic decisions and voluntarism in the management of the national economy under the personality cult." That is a real citation of a real error. But note where the correction comes from. The proposition that the economic laws of socialism are objective and not created by the state, together with the recognition that the law of value operates, is the central argument of Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, written out of that very discussion of November 1951 and published in 1952. Pashkov credits the discussion. He does not credit the pamphlet, which is nowhere in this volume. The one doctrinal advance he can point to in twenty-five years is attributed to a meeting so that it need not be attributed to a man.

Leontyev on modern imperialism is the other chapter that holds. It is empirical, footnoted to sources the reader can check — East German Marxist economists on the West German state's share of national income, an Italian bourgeois economist on state holding companies, US federal research expenditure by year — and it is arguing about something real: whether the post-war expansion of the capitalist state's economic role changes the character of capitalism. His answer, that state-monopoly capitalism concentrates public resources in private hands without altering class relations, is defended rather than asserted, and one of his borrowed formulations has outlived him. Quoting E. Rossi's study of the Italian state sector, he describes an arrangement that gives the finance magnates "the possibility of socialising losses and privatising profits." Anyone who lived through 2008 has heard that sentence. It was in a Progress Publishers export title in 1971.

Elsewhere the volume's silences pass from the past into the present, and there they are harder to forgive. Chesnokov's chapter on the socialist state contains the sentence: "In

1938–1940, in line with the new historical conditions and the new theoretical conclusions, the Party reorganised the work of all local government, Party and public organisations on the basis of extended socialist democracy." Chesnokov, a philosopher raised to the enlarged Party Presidium by Stalin at the Nineteenth Congress in October 1952 and removed from it within months of his death, then explains that wartime centralism and the cult "did not impair the foundations of socialist democracy and had no tangible effect on the development of the initiative and activity of the people."

Kharakhashyan's chapter on the world socialist system, written three years after the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, records that economic co-ordination among the socialist states "fully conforms to the national sovereignty and economic and political independence of each socialist country" and that the Warsaw Treaty Organisation "is a major factor of peace in Europe and the rest of the world." Iskrov, on the international movement, writes that revolution "is accomplished by the proletariat and other working strata of the given country. It cannot be imposed from without." August 1968 appears nowhere in these 130,000 words. The single mention of Czechoslovakia in the book concerns the wartime Resistance. Hungary is discussed only in 1919.

What the volume could not say was being said elsewhere, including by people inside the country. In the weeks before the Twenty-Fourth Congress, the historian Pyotr Yakir — son of the general Iona Yakir, shot in 1937 — circulated an open letter to the delegates warning that "a dangerous tendency toward the rebirth of Stalinist methods of government has become apparent," and insisting on his standing to say so: "I am a historian and citizen of my country, not just the illegally persecuted son of Yakir who perished under Stalin." Two months earlier, Intercontinental Press had reported the rumour, sourced to the Soviet ambassador in Prague, that the congress would formally rescind the Twentieth Congress's denunciation — the ambassador reportedly arguing that "the past fourteen years have proved the rightness of Stalin's thesis on the aggravation of the class struggle in conditions of socialism" ("Soviet CP Congress to 'Rehabilitate' Stalin?", vol. 9, no. 4, 1 February 1971). It did not happen. Allen Myers, reporting the congress itself, noted the outcome that best explains this book: "The late dictator's name was not mentioned even once during the congress." Myers also recorded that the delegates approved an exchange of party cards, "the method used in Czechoslovakia following August 1968 to eliminate members considered unreliable," and quoted Brezhnev's warning against "some people" who "sought to reduce the diversity of present-day Soviet reality to problems that have irreversibly

receded into the past" (Intercontinental Press, vol. 9, no. 16, 26 April 1971). The volume in your hands is that instruction carried out in the field of theory: not rehabilitation, not reckoning, but a past that has irreversibly receded.

The anti-Stalinist left had been reading these authors for a generation by then. In April 1949, Michel Pablo devoted an article in *Fourth International* (vol. X, no. 4) to the Kremlin's sudden discovery that the people's democracies had been dictatorships of the proletariat all along, and quoted, as the authoritative statement of the new line, "Pospelov, editor-in-chief of *Pravda*, speaking at a Lenin memorial meeting held in Moscow on January 21." Ernest Mandel, writing as Ernest Germain, answered the Short Course's official successor point by point in "Thirty Questions and Thirty Answers about the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," *Fourth International* nos. 10 and 11, and his method — refuting the official history out of the official archive — is the one to use on this book too. For the underlying analysis, Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) remains the text that explains why a bureaucracy needs a theoretical history with holes in it. And on the specific question Pashkov could not raise, Georg Lukács had already said the necessary thing in an interview reported in *Intercontinental Press* (vol. 8, no. 2, 19 January 1970): economic reforms cannot succeed "unless they proceed to a renewal of socialist democracy." The 1965 reform that Pashkov and Pospelov both celebrate was substantially dead within five years, for reasons the volume's own list of unsolved problems circles without naming.

Read it, then, for what it is: the last serious attempt by the Soviet academy to present itself to the world as a living theoretical tradition, made by men who knew exactly which page was missing. Pospelov wrote the Short Course in 1938. He prepared the indictment of it in 1956. In 1971 he opened a survey of Soviet revolutionary theory that mentions neither. Three documents, one hand, and the third is the only one in which nothing at all is admitted.

Socialism and Capitalism: Scores and Prospects

The Soviet-American balance sheet, compiled by twelve economists of IMEMO - the Academy institute whose job was to understand Western economies accurately rather than denounce them. Comparative data on output, trade and living standards not easily found elsewhere in English.

Yuri Sdobnikov

Introduction to the 1971 Edition

This is a book that keeps score. Its title promises a reckoning — Socialism and Capitalism: Score and Prospects — and its dust jacket explains the commission: among the letters reaching Progress Publishers, "one recurring request" was for a book that would set out "the present balance of power in the world," "the sense and direction behind" the economic competition of the two systems, and "what has the future in store for mankind." This volume was "intended to fill that need." It is, in other words, a balance-sheet: a tally of the contest that Khrushchev had staked the Soviet future on when he told the West that the USSR would bury it — not in war but in output — and that the Party Programme of 1961 had pledged to win by overtaking the United States in production per head of population within two decades, by 1980. The question to put to a book that keeps score is not whether it scores points. It is whether it keeps honest score: whether the metrics it turns on capitalism are ever turned on itself, and whether the prospects it projects are stated as claims that could later be shown false.

First, what the book is. It carries no separate author on its title page — only "Edited by Yuri Sdobnikov," who edited the English translation, rendered by Jim Riordan. The authorship is disclosed at the back: the book "was compiled by the following staff members of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R." — Aboltin (named senior contributor), Pevsner, Salkovsky, Barabanov, Gantman, Zagladina, Lavrishchev, Orlik, Razmerov, Tomashevsky, Shapiro and Burdzhhalov. This is IMEMO, the Academy's flagship institute for the study of the capitalist world and the great rival of the more dogmatic Party institutes — a collective of professional economists, not a single apparatus functionary. One name is worth flagging: D. Tomashevsky, who three years later would publish *Lenin's Ideas and Modern International Relations* (1974), a book whose handling of the "peaceful coexistence" doctrine this series has examined before. He is in this room too, and the

same habit is present, as we shall see.

The date of the text is, unusually for this series, the date on the spine. There is no translation lag to unearth and no earlier edition hiding in the preface. The book argues from the 24th Congress of the CPSU, held in March–April 1971; it sets out the targets of the Ninth Five-Year Plan for 1971–75; its freshest citation is *Pravda* of April 1971, quoting Georges Marchais at that Congress. This is a book of 1971, written in the year it was published — which places it at a precise and revealing moment. The Kosygin economic reform of 1965 had been quietly gutted after 1968. The extraordinary post-war growth rates were beginning their long deceleration. And the 1961 Programme's promise to overtake the United States by 1980 was, at exactly this Congress, being allowed to lapse in favour of a vaguer formula. The book stands on that hinge, and its most telling decisions are the ones it makes about the deadline.

The projection it declines to make

Begin with the falsifiable claim, because the genre is famous for it and because this book's treatment of it is the sharpest thing about it. The 1961 Programme had made a dated, checkable prediction: Soviet output per head would surpass the United States by 1980. A propagandist keeping honest score would either repeat that pledge (and be judged by it) or explain why it was being dropped. This book does neither. It simply does not make the claim. The word "overtake" occurs exactly once in ninety-nine thousand words, and it is inside a quotation from Lenin — "either perish or overtake and outstrip the advanced countries economically as well" — a general exhortation from 1917, not a Soviet forecast with a year attached. The 1961 Programme itself is cited in the book, but not for its economics: it is quoted once, to supply the doctrine of "fraternal unity" that justifies the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The economic timetable has been left behind.

What the book offers in place of the deadline is instructive. In

its own voice it states only that "the socialist countries have now set themselves the task of outstripping the capitalist system in the share of world production, and the most advanced capitalist countries in industrial and agricultural output per head and in productivity of social labour." A task, not a date. Elsewhere it gives the near-term, genuinely checkable targets of the 1971–75 plan — national income up 37–40 per cent, consumer goods up 44–48 per cent — the kind of five-year figure that is falsifiable but forgettable, and cannot become a historic embarrassment the way "by 1980" had. And it introduces, once, the phrase that would replace the promise: the socialist states are said to be "building a developed socialist society before starting on a gradual transition to communism." "Developed socialism" — the formula the Brezhnev leadership adopted precisely because it named an indefinite present rather than a dated future — appears here at its birth.

This is a real finding and it should be credited as caution rather than convicted as a lie. IMEMO's economists, in 1971, could see the growth curve bending. They declined to restate a prediction they had reason to doubt. But the discretion is itself the evidence: the one dated, falsifiable claim the whole "economic competition" project rested on is the one this book pointedly will not print. It keeps the direction — socialism advancing, capitalism in "general crisis" — and drops the milestone by which the direction could have been tested. History supplied the test anyway. The USSR never overtook the United States in output per head. Within a year of this book's appearance it became a systematic net importer of American grain. The deadline it declines to name was missed by a margin that would eventually help discredit the whole enterprise.

The one-sided ledger

Now the scorekeeping proper, and here the book is far more one-sided than it is on the deadline. The vocabulary of economic failure — crisis, unemployment, inflation, shortage, poverty — is a vocabulary the book reserves entirely for the West. It quotes Brezhnev's report to the 24th Congress with evident approval: "The simultaneous growth of inflation and unemployment has become a permanent feature. There are now almost eight million unemployed in the developed capitalist countries." It tabulates Western cost-of-living increases country by country, tracks the "recurring economic crises" of the capitalist cycle through the 1950s and 1960s, and names the "chronic shortage of means for securing a living wage" under monopoly capitalism. The words shortage, queue

and rationing never once attach to the Soviet economy. In a book published in the country of the food queue, "shortage" appears only as the West's "dollar shortage" and the West's shortage of a living wage.

The same asymmetry governs what is counted. On the socialist side the book counts the things the USSR was good at: shares of world output of steel, cement, coal, grain; tractors (more than 1,821,000), harvester-combines, chemical fertiliser by the ton; electric power per head of the Central Asian republics against their neighbours. These are real and in many cases impressive. What it does not count, except as a rising abstraction, is consumer supply. Soviet consumer goods appear only as a plan target and as the flat assurance that "the output of consumer goods has been greatly increased." There is no figure for meat, no figure for housing space per person set against a Western one, nothing on quality, nothing on availability. The ledger is kept in the columns where socialism led and left blank in the columns where it lagged.

To its credit — and the credit matters — the book is not the crude triumphalist tract the genre can produce. It is honest that the USSR still trailed. It states plainly that Soviet per-head social product had risen only "from 42 per cent to 52 per cent of the U.S. levels" between 1957 and 1967, and that "the level of Soviet farm output in 1966–67 was 85 per cent of the U.S. level, and 70 per cent per head." A book intent on deception would not print the fraction. It concedes the gap and casts the story as one of catching up. But the concession is confined to the aggregate indices — national income, gross farm output — and never reaches the shopper. The book will tell you the USSR produced 70 per cent as much food per head as America; it will not tell you what that felt like at the counter.

Correcting the record: Czechoslovakia

The book was written three years after Soviet tanks entered Prague, and its account of that event is the clearest place to correct its record. The Prague Spring is not described; it is erased and replaced. The reform is rendered as subversion: "hostile forces exploited the complex domestic political situation in Czechoslovakia and tried to take the country out of the socialist community." The invasion becomes rescue: the governments of the five Warsaw Pact states "took the necessary steps, including armed assistance to the Czechoslovak people, so as to safeguard the socialist gains." No reform leader is named — Dubček does not appear in the book, nor does Novotný; "socialism with a human face" and the Prague Spring are absent as phrases and as facts. In their place the book quotes a resolution of the Czechoslovak Central

Committee from November 1968 endorsing the Moscow agreement, and adds that the measures "were also supported within Czechoslovakia" — without noting that the committee doing the endorsing was the post-invasion body installed under occupation, not the reform leadership the invasion removed.

And the book states the Brezhnev Doctrine openly, which at least has the merit of candour. Citing the Party Programme, it holds that "the independence of a socialist state does not imply any lack of responsibility for the fate of the whole socialist community": each governing party is "responsible for its policy not only to its own people, but to the world communist movement as a whole." This is the doctrine of limited sovereignty in as many words. The 1961 Programme, whose economic pledge the book will not repeat, is dusted off for exactly this purpose — to lend the invasion the authority of doctrine. The score, on Czechoslovakia, is not kept honestly at all; it is rewritten.

A second, quieter operation runs alongside. The book leans heavily on "the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence," invoking the phrase some three dozen times and tracing it to Lenin himself. Yet the one Lenin quotation it supplies in support says something narrower: that Soviet endeavours "were aimed at switching from our relations of war with the capitalist countries to relations of peace and trade." Peace and trade — not "peaceful coexistence." The doctrine is Lenin's by assertion; the words in the quotation marks are not the doctrine. This is the identical manoeuvre that this series has documented in Tomashevsky's own 1974 book and in the 1981 collection he co-edited — the pedigree asserted in the authors' voice and the actual phrase left unquoted — and here it recurs in a volume Tomashevsky helped write. It is a house habit, and he carried it into three books.

What holds up

None of this means the book is worthless, and a serious reader is owed the parts that stand. IMEMO was a real research institute, and much of the analysis of Western capitalism is competent economics rather than incantation. The account of the 1970–71 American recession is accurate; that recession happened. The cost-of-living tables, the data on the rising rate of surplus value, the discussion of state-monopoly capitalism and of the strains inside the Common Market are the work of economists who read the Western sources and understood them. The critique of capitalist waste, cyclical crisis and inequality was not baseless, and the Western Marxist tradition made overlapping arguments in the same years.

More than that: on some of the metrics the book invokes, the socialist side had genuinely delivered. The mass unemployment the book throws at the West was real, and the USSR had in fact abolished it; when the book contrasts Soviet full employment with the interwar dole queues, it is not inventing the contrast. Free healthcare and education, rapid industrialisation from a desperately low base, the transformation of Central Asia — these were achievements, and the book is entitled to enter them in the ledger. Even the Fourth International's founder granted the core of it. Trotsky, no friend of the regime that had exiled and would murder him, wrote in 1936 that "socialism has demonstrated its right to victory, not on the pages of *Das Kapital*, but in an industrial arena comprising a sixth part of the earth's surface — not in the language of dialectics, but in the language of steel, cement and electricity." The industrial achievement is not in dispute between the book and its critics. What is in dispute is how you keep score.

The honest scorecard

And here the reply was already written, thirty-five years before this book, by the same Trotsky — in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), which remains the standard against which Soviet accounts of Soviet society must be read. Trotsky's quarrel was never with the fact of industrialisation. It was with the metric. A socialist economy, he argued, cannot be scored on gross tonnage, because "the strength of the Soviet structure is measured in the last analysis by the productivity of labor" — and on that measure "capitalism is still far ahead in the matter of technique, organization and labor skill." The right column of the ledger is output per worker and consumption per head, honestly stated; and there, Trotsky showed with the figures of his day, the Soviet masses stood "below the capitalist level." That is precisely the column this book fills in for capitalism and leaves blank for itself.

Trotsky also named the thing the book's silence on shortages is designed to hide. "The basis of bureaucratic rule," he wrote, "is the poverty of society in objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all. When there is enough goods in a store, the purchasers can come whenever they want to. When there is little goods, the purchasers are compelled to stand in line. When the lines are very long, it is necessary to appoint a policeman to keep order. Such is the starting point of the power of the Soviet bureaucracy." A book that counts tractors and cannot see the queue is not merely omitting an inconvenient fact; it is omitting the fact from which the whole apparatus that commissioned it drew its power. And Trotsky's

verdict on the scorekeeping is one this book, with its dropped deadline, half-confirms in spite of itself: "socialism has not yet triumphed. It has shown that it can and should triumph. But it has not yet triumphed. All assertions to the contrary are the fruit of ignorance and charlatanism."

The Fourth International kept up the argument into the years this book was written. Ernest Mandel's "Peaceful Coexistence and World Revolution" (International Socialist Review, March–April 1970) is the full-length treatment, from the anti-Stalinist left, of exactly the coexistence doctrine the book's closing chapter rests on — the doctrine the book derives from a Lenin who is made to say "peace and trade." The reply to the balance-sheet, in other words, is not that socialism kept no score worth keeping. It is that the honest scorecard — productivity of labour, consumption per head, the length of the queue — had been drawn up long before, by a Marxist the book's authors were not permitted to cite, and that on that scorecard the contest was still open and, on the terms the 1961 Programme had set, already being lost.

That is the book's real subject, visible in what it will not say. It keeps meticulous score against capitalism and a generous, selective score for itself; it defends an invasion by rewriting it; it borrows Lenin's authority for a phrase Lenin is not shown using. But its most honest page is the one it never wrote — the page that would have restated the promise to overtake the United States by 1980. The economists of IMEMO left that page blank, and in doing so told the truth the rest of the book was commissioned to conceal.

Finance and Credit in the USSR

How Soviet money, budgets, credit and the state bank actually worked, set out plainly - and pitched not at Western readers but at newly independent states considering the Soviet financial system as a model. Written during the Kosygin reforms, at the height of confidence in them.

V. N. Pereslegin

Introduction to the 1971 Edition

V. Pereslegin's *Finance and Credit in the USSR* is a primer on how socialist money was supposed to work, written at the one moment when its authors had most reason to be confident and least reason to be so. The spine says 1971, and for once the date on the spine is close to the date of the text: the latest events in the book are the Twenty-Third Congress of the CPSU of March–April 1966 and its Directives for the 1966–70 Five-Year Plan, and the budget tables run in one series from 1960 to 1971. This is not a lagged reprint of the kind that recurs elsewhere in this series. It is a genuine early-1970s book, and its subject is the reform then in progress — the 1965 measures associated with Kosygin, which promised to run Soviet enterprises on profit, profitability and *khozraschot* (cost accounting, the practice of measuring an enterprise's outlays against its receipts in money terms). The book teaches the financial machinery of that reform in the confident register of a system that has just modernised itself and expects the results to vindicate it. Within fifteen years the same machinery would be the object of an official diagnosis of stagnation, and within twenty the currency it describes as the soundest in the world would have collapsed. The book cannot know this. What it can do — and what makes it worth reprinting — is state, cleanly and in textbook form, the doctrine that made the coming trouble unnameable.

Its structure tells you who it was for. Every major topic is expounded three times over — under capitalism, under socialism, and "in developing countries." Public finance, state financial systems, credit and credit institutions each get their capitalist, socialist and developing-country section in turn. This is not the shape of a book written to persuade a London reader or to arm a Western Communist Party in the factional wars of the day. It is a comparative manual pitched at the newly independent states of Africa and Asia — the ones the book repeatedly calls the countries "steering a socialist course" — offering the Soviet financial system as the model a decolonising government might adopt in place of the one its

former masters left behind. Progress printed a great deal of this kind of thing in the early 1970s, and the developing-country reader is written into every chapter. Pereslegin himself is not a famous name; the book carries the anonymous authority of the Soviet finance establishment rather than a scholar's signature, and it should be read as an official statement rather than an individual argument.

Money and credit of a new type

The doctrine at the centre of the book is that under socialism the categories inherited from capitalism — money, credit, profit, the budget — survive in name but change their nature. They are the same instruments, cleansed of the class content that made them dangerous. This is the same move the sibling volumes in this series make, and it is worth registering that they make it in concert. A Dictionary of Political Economy (Progress, 1985) defines Soviet money as something that "embodies social labour united through socialist ownership, and so cannot become a tool of exploitation"; Fundamentals of Political Economy (Progress, 1980) closes its balance sheet of the two systems with the flat boast of "no inflation." Pereslegin's finance manual is the same doctrine worked out at the level of mechanism — not what socialist money is in the abstract, but what the State Bank, the budget and the credit plan actually do with it.

On credit, the claim is put plainly. Under socialism, Pereslegin writes, credit "is not born of relations of exploitation and does not produce or deepen contradictions in society, but promotes its progressive advance." On profit — the category the Kosygin reform had just promoted to the centre of enterprise management, and therefore the one most in need of defending — the book is at pains to distinguish the socialist article from its capitalist namesake. It even names the accuser: "The statement made by the Mao Tse-tung group that 'capitalism is being restored' in the Soviet Union is equally slanderous," it says, before drawing the line that answers the charge. Socialist profit "is not the result of exploitation but of the efficient

economic activity of enterprises." (The Sino-Soviet split is doing quiet work here; a Soviet finance textbook in 1971 has to explain why paying enterprises by results is not a return to the market, because Beijing was saying exactly that it was.)

And on money itself, the load-bearing claim is stability. The socialist financial system, the book holds, rests on a material basis that is stable by construction, because it is planned. Budgets "are usually drawn up and executed with a credit balance (income exceeding expenditure)," and this, Pereslegin writes, "ensures the stability and soundness of the whole financial system and of currency circulation." The ruble is not capital and cannot become capital; it is an instrument of the plan, issued and regulated from a single centre. "The USSR State Bank is the only centre for the issue of currency," and it emits and withdraws cash "in accordance with Government instructions and the relevant cash plans." Money here is not a force the state must reckon with but a lever the state holds in its hand. The whole apparatus of the book is designed to show that the lever cannot slip.

The word the book will not print

The trouble with a doctrine of guaranteed stability is that it forbids the vocabulary you would need to describe instability, and this is where Pereslegin's book gives itself away most completely. In a full-length manual on Soviet finance and credit, running to some forty-four thousand words and narrating the entire monetary history of the Soviet state, the word inflation does not appear once. Not as a Soviet phenomenon, which the doctrine rules out — but not even as a capitalist one, though the book has ample occasion for it: it discusses the "currency-financial crisis" of the capitalist world, the depreciation of the pound and the franc, the "currency war," the printing of "large amounts of new paper money" to cover Western budget deficits. It describes inflation in the capitalist countries in every particular and never names it. The concept has been so thoroughly quarantined that the term itself has dropped out of the working vocabulary.

The companion word, deficit, survives — but only where the doctrine permits it. Budget deficits are "becoming habitual" in the capitalist countries; some thirty-five of forty surveyed developing countries run them; the young Soviet state ran one in the early 1920s until, by 1925, "the budget deficit had been wiped out." After that the Soviet budget is always in surplus, always "executed with a credit balance," a yearly increase of income over expense. This is the finance-manual version of the pattern the Dictionary draft found across the whole lexicon:

the words for economic malfunction exist, and are defined so that they can be predicated of everyone except the USSR. Shortage, deficit, depreciation, inflation — each is a capitalist disease, or a memory of the pre-socialist past, never a present fact of the system the book describes.

The suppression shows most sharply in what the book does with the currency reforms it is proud of. Pereslegin narrates three of them — 1924, 1947 and 1961 — as milestones of stabilisation. In the early period, he writes, "Emission of money had to be reduced and ultimately discontinued," and "the old depreciated paper money was replaced by new Soviet treasury notes." After the war, a reform in 1947 restored the real value of wages. And "on January 1, 1961, new money was issued, worth ten times as much as the old." Each of these is presented as an achievement, a straightening of the accounts. But a reform that replaces depreciated money, or reissues the currency at a tenth of the old face value, is a response to something — to a monetary overhang, to prices the ruble could not honour, to the accumulated pressure that a planned economy relieves not by open price rises but by shortage and periodic recalibration. The book shows the cures and never once names the disease. It describes the redenomination of 1961 as a simple ten-for-one exchange, an administrative convenience, when it was among other things an acknowledgement that the unit of account had drifted from what it could buy.

Every Soviet consumer knew what the manual could not say. The queue and the empty shelf were permanent features of the planned economy; deficits — the good that was chronically "in deficit," unobtainable at the official price — was a fixture of everyday Russian precisely because suppressed inflation and chronic shortage were structural, not accidental. The pressure the reforms kept mopping up was real enough that it would erupt into open, catastrophic inflation the moment price controls were lifted at the end of the 1980s. A finance manual adequate to its object would have had a theory of this. Pereslegin's does not lack it by oversight; the doctrine of guaranteed stability has defined the phenomenon out of existence before the description can begin.

There is one place where the book comes nearest to describing the real mechanism, and characteristically it does so without seeing what it has described. Pereslegin explains that most payments between enterprises pass through the State Bank "in the form of paper transfers and this considerably decreases cash requirements," while a separate "cash plan" and a "planned balance of the monetary incomes and expenditures of the whole population" govern the notes that reach workers'

hands. This is the famous two-circuit ruble — the wall the Soviet system built between non-cash money, which circulated among enterprises as a pure accounting entry, and cash money, which alone could buy consumer goods. That wall was the device that made the plan enforceable and, not incidentally, kept enterprise "money" from ever chasing goods in the shops. Pereslegin sets out the two circuits as an administrative fact of banking technique. He does not present them as what they were: the structural reason a Soviet ruble in an enterprise account and a Soviet ruble in a worker's pocket were not, in any economically meaningful sense, the same money.

The reply that was already in print

None of this had to wait for hindsight to be answered. In 1936, in *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky devoted the fourth chapter — "The Struggle for Productivity," with its sections "Money and Plan," "'Socialist' Inflation" and "The Rehabilitation of the Ruble" — to exactly the categories Pereslegin's manual would later render harmless, and reached the opposite conclusion on each. The chapter is the direct reply to this book, written thirty-five years before it, and the sibling introductions to the Dictionary and the Fundamentals rest on the same text; a reader who wants the argument in full will find it there and in chapters 5 and 6 on the Soviet Thermidor and the growth of inequality.

Trotsky's starting point is that socialist money is still money, and cannot be wished into a mere token by decree. "Money cannot be arbitrarily 'abolished,'" he wrote; its elementary functions "as measures of value, means of exchange and medium of payment, are not only preserved, but acquire a broader field of action than they had under capitalism." Far from being a docile instrument of the plan, money was the indispensable check on the plan — "a financial lever, in the form of a real testing out of a priori calculations with the help of a universal equivalent, a thing that is unthinkable without a stable money system." And a stable money system, he insisted, could not be conjured by administrative fiat: "the sole authentic money is that based upon gold. All other money is only a substitute." The ruble, cut off from that basis and printable at will, had "a shut-in character. For the world market the ruble does not exist" — a judgement Pereslegin's own book quietly confirms when it explains that the State Bank alone sets the ruble's foreign exchange rates and that a separate "transferable ruble" had to be invented for trade within the socialist bloc.

Against the very boast Pereslegin makes — stability guaranteed by the plan — Trotsky set the identical boast in the

mouths of the men who first made it, and showed what it concealed. "The stability of the Soviet valuta," Stalin had said in 1933, "is guaranteed primarily by the immense quantity of commodities in the hands of the state put in circulation at stable prices." This is Pereslegin's doctrine word for word, forty years early. Trotsky's answer was to trace the inflation of the first Five-Year Plan through the regime's own currency figures — the note issue swelling from 1.7 billion rubles in 1928 to 8.4 billion by 1933 — and to name the effect the official theory forbade: "currency inflation, inevitably producing a credit inflation, entails a substitution of fictitious for real magnitudes, and corrodes the planned economy from within." The Left Opposition had put the same point as a slogan it proposed the State Planning Commission hang on its wall: "Inflation is the syphilis of a planned economy." When the People's Commissar of Finance announced in 1936 that the Soviet ruble was more stable than any currency in the world, Trotsky did not call it a lie; he called it "an inflation of optimism," and set beside it the fact that the printed ruble was backed twelve and a half per cent in gold.

The precise thing Pereslegin's manual cannot do, Trotsky's chapter does on every page: it describes the actual behaviour of Soviet money — its issue, its depreciation, its recalibration, the gap between its face and its purchasing power — and it identifies the beneficiary of the confusion. By manipulating the ruble's real value across different sectors and strata, Trotsky wrote, "the bureaucracy deprived itself of the necessary instrument for objectively measuring its own successes and failures." The category the finance manual has no room for — a bureaucratic stratum with interests of its own, standing between the plan and the people — is the one that makes the monetary history legible.

What the book is good for

That the doctrine is unfalsifiable does not make the book useless, and a reader told that everything in it is worthless would learn nothing true. Stripped of its guarantees, Pereslegin's manual is a lucid and, so far as it goes, accurate description of how the Soviet monetary system was actually plumbed — and that description is not easy to find stated so plainly elsewhere in English. The account of Gosbank (the State Bank) as a monobank is genuinely informative: a single institution that issued the currency, held the accounts of every enterprise, cleared all inter-enterprise payments by debiting one account and crediting another, supplied the cash to pay wages and execute the budget, and through all of this exercised what the Soviets called control by the ruble — using the flow

of payments through its own ledgers as a continuous audit of whether enterprises were meeting their plans. The book explains why a system with no capital market needs its bank to do the disciplining that markets do elsewhere, and it explains it clearly.

So too with the budget. Pereslegin lays out the two pillars on which Soviet state revenue rested after the 1930 tax reform — the turnover tax, a levy built into the price of consumer goods, and deductions from enterprise profits — and shows the budget doing the work the book's doctrine most wants credited to it: redistributing the surplus product of the whole economy, financing capital investment, education, health and defence out of a centrally pooled fund rather than out of borrowing. The mechanics of the 1930–31 credit reform, which abolished the commercial credit enterprises had extended to one another and replaced it with direct, planned, secured bank credit routed through the State Bank, are set out with real clarity; so is the logic of the Kosygin reform's new financial levers — the charge for productive assets, the material incentive funds, the reworked wholesale prices meant to reflect "socially necessary costs of production." As an exposition of the levers, the accounts and the institutions, the book holds up. What it cannot do is describe how those levers behaved once the plan they served began to seize — and that limit is not a gap in Pereslegin's competence but a consequence of the doctrine he was commissioned to teach.

Read it, then, as the clearest available statement of a settled position: socialist money as a mastered instrument, socialist finance as a system without crises, the ruble as the soundest currency in the world. Then read the fourth chapter of *The Revolution Betrayed*, which had described the real thing — a currency the state kept printing and denying it printed, a plan corroded from within by the fictions its own money smuggled into the accounts — a full generation before this book assured its readers that none of it could happen.

HISTORY

Articles on Britain

Sixty-seven articles on Britain, from the Chartist reportage to the Fenian pieces, with no preface to tell the reader what to think. At its centre is Engels's discovery of the labour aristocracy - reformism explained as a material formation rather than a betrayal.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Introduction to This Edition

This volume has no preface. Where the companion Moscow anthologies open with a Publishers' Note that tells the reader what the texts are meant to prove, Articles on Britain offers only the texts themselves — sixty-seven pieces of journalism and occasional writing, from Engels's youthful essays for the Paris Vorwärts in 1844 to his last articles of the early 1890s — followed by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism's two hundred and twenty-two notes and its indexes. The absence is itself an editorial act. With no argument stated on its behalf, the selection is the argument; the case is made by what has been gathered and set in order. And what has been gathered, running quietly through the reportage on Chartism, the New-York Daily Tribune despatches on India and the clearances, the Fenian articles and the pieces on the trade unions, is a single dangerous idea — the one that would matter most to the state that reprinted the book.

Taken as journalism, the collection is Marxism at its most concrete and least systematic, and it is superb. This is Marx as a working reporter, filing to deadline: on the Sutherland clearances, where he lets the fact do the indicting — "The enemy of British Wages-Slavery has a right to condemn Negro-Slavery; a Duchess of Sutherland, a Duke of Atholl, a Manchester Cotton-lord — never!"; on the East India Company; on capital punishment; on the "model government" that, in Marx's savage phrase, could jail Irish Fenians in "a country of bourgeois freedom" and chain O'Donovan Rossa to a cart of stones. Nothing here is deduced from a system; everything is observed. The method is empirical craft, and it holds up where the grander prophecies do not — for the weakness of these pages is the recurrent over-prediction, the English crisis forever about to break, the "heel of Achilles" of capitalist production always one bad harvest from collapse. Written to the week, the articles contradict and correct one another; the reader must weigh them, not simply inherit them.

But at their centre stands one piece that is neither reportage nor prophecy but a genuine discovery, and it is the reason this book earns an introduction.

In "England in 1845 and in 1885" Engels asks why, after four decades of the world's most advanced capitalism, England has no socialist movement. His answer is unflinching. During "the period of England's industrial monopoly," he writes, "the English working class have to a certain extent shared in the benefits of the monopoly"; "the privileged minority pocketed most, but even the great mass had at least a temporary share." A layer of skilled workers — the great trade unions of the engineers and carpenters and bricklayers — had "succeeded in enforcing for themselves a relatively comfortable position," and, crucially, "they accept it as final." "They form an aristocracy among the working class." And "that is the reason why since the dying-out of Owenism there has been no Socialism in England." Here, decades before the word was coined, is the theory of the labour aristocracy: reformism explained not as a betrayal of ideas but as a material formation, a stratum bought a stake in the empire it should have opposed.

Was the state that canonised this insight faithful to it? The theory itself passed straight into the Bolshevik canon. Lenin built Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism (1916) and Imperialism and the Split in Socialism on exactly Engels's paragraph, generalising the English case into a law: monopoly super-profits allow the bourgeoisie of every great power to bribe an upper stratum of workers, and from that stratum come the reformist leaders, the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class. So far, an application. But in Moscow's hands the discovery curdled into an alibi. The labour aristocracy became the all-purpose explanation for every defeat the Communist International's own line had helped to produce: when British workers did not follow Moscow, when the 1926 General Strike was sold out, when the German and French parties were led into catastrophe by the ultra-left "Third Period" and then the Popular Front, the fault lay always with the bought-off stratum

and its "social-chauvinist" leaders — never with the strategy handed down from the Soviet capital. A theory that Engels forged to make reformism thinkable was turned into a device for making the Comintern's failures unexaminable. revolution while claiming its name.

And the concept has a sharper edge still, one the editors cannot have wished the reader to feel. Engels's labour aristocracy is a group set materially above its fellows by a monopoly it does not own but shares in; comfortable, protective of its position, no longer revolutionary because it has too much to lose. Turn that description a few degrees and it is the most exact available portrait of the Soviet bureaucracy itself — the privileged caste, lifted above the working class by its command of a state monopoly, defending its rations and its dachas, that Trotsky anatomised in *The Revolution Betrayed*. The book's governing idea, printed in Moscow in 1971, turns homeward on its publisher: the analysis of a stratum bribed into quiescence indicts the very apparatus that put the volume into print. The same reflex works on the Irish articles the collection so carefully includes — Marx and Engels for Fenian Ireland, against a "model government" that tortured national prisoners — reprinted by a state administering its own subject nations from Central Asia to the Baltic.

Read back from Moscow's use of it, this Marxism is very much alive. Its method — concrete analysis of concrete conditions, the refusal to read a class's politics off its economics by moral reflex, the insistence that reformism has roots that must be dug out rather than merely denounced — is a working tool, not a relic. The theory of the labour aristocracy, recovered from its Stalinist career as an excuse, is a summons: to name and fight the material bribes that still buy sections of the metropolitan working class out of solidarity, and to see, in the same mirror, how a privileged apparatus in a workers' state can turn against the workers in whose name it rules. This is where the Fourth International takes up the book. Marx and Engels on Ireland were the first to argue that the workers of an oppressor nation can never be free while they help hold another nation down — the germ of the theory of permanent revolution and of the colonial revolution that Trotsky and Ernest Mandel carried forward against both imperialism and its Stalinist mirror. The journalism collected here is not a monument to be admired at a safe distance. It is the living tissue of a method that cuts every great power, the publisher's included — and its central discovery, the aristocracy of labour, is at once the sharpest thing the nineteenth century learned about why revolutions stall, and, read honestly, a description of the caste that buried the

INTERNATIONALISM

Leninism and the World Revolutionary Working-Class Movement

The official Soviet map of the world communist movement, written for the Lenin centenary: four party leaders signing the front, and 360 pages of institute monograph behind them narrating the Comintern congress by congress. With a critical introduction that checks its citations.

Y. Kuskov and others

Introduction to the 1971 Edition

The spine says 1971, but this is a book written for a single day: 22 April 1970, the hundredth anniversary of Lenin's birth. Its own Foreword says so — "The Russian edition was published on the centenary of the birth of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin" — and the internal evidence agrees. In 173,779 words the latest event the volume can name is the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow in June 1969, which it invokes some sixty times and treats as the settled frame of everything that follows. There is no 1970 event in the book at all. The two later-looking year-tokens are a projection ("the level of scientific and technological development in 1980") and a wage agreement due to take effect by 1972. So the text is a 1969 text, the Russian edition is a centenary product of April 1970, and the English translation is a year behind it. By the time this English volume reached a bookshop it had already been overtaken by its own cast: Walter Ulbricht, whose chapter is signed "First Secretary, Central Committee, Socialist Unity Party of Germany", was removed from that post in May 1971.

The book says who asked for it, which spares us guessing. It is "a collective work by authors from different countries, who responded to the request of the Institute of the International Working-Class Movement, Academy of Sciences of the USSR", and it is announced as "the first monograph in this series", a series to be published under the general heading International Working Class. The front matter names three editors of the Russian text — Y. Kuskov, A. Rumyantsev and T. Timofeyev — and nobody else. That produces an unusual object: a book with two halves that do not belong to the same genre. Part One is some 110 pages of signed political statement by four men speaking in their official capacities — M. A. Suslov for the CPSU Politburo, Waldeck Rochet for the French Communist Party, Ulbricht for the SED, Gus Hall for the CPUSA. Part Two is around 360 pages of anonymous

institute monograph. The signatures are the warrant; the monograph is the book. Read them apart, because they work differently, and the second is much the more interesting of the two.

Two habits recur across the Progress foreign-policy list, and this volume is the ideal place to test them, because a book titled Leninism and the World Revolutionary Working-Class Movement has undertaken by its title to derive current doctrine from Lenin by quotation.

The first habit is that "peaceful coexistence" is never quoted from Lenin. In Tomashevsky's *Lenin's Ideas and Modern International Relations* (1974) the phrase appears in 92,395 words and not once inside a Lenin quotation; in *The Priorities of Soviet Foreign Policy Today* (1981) it appears ninety-four times with the same result. Here the phrase appears three times, and again not once inside quotation marks attributed to Lenin. The pattern holds — with an honest qualification, which is that the doctrine is not this book's subject and it does not lean on the phrase. But the one place it does lean is exactly the place the pattern predicts. Listing what Lenin settled, the Foreword's neighbouring chapter runs through "the questions of war and peace, peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, relations between socialist and capitalist countries, and the ways and means of building socialism and communism", and concludes that all of it "has been profoundly and comprehensively studied by Lenin." Studied, we are told; shown, we are not. Later, when the doctrine has to do political work — reconciling Communists and Socialists — it is stated flatly and sourced to nobody: "The policy of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems has produced a real possibility of excluding world war from the life of human society even before socialism finally triumphs throughout the world." That is a third independent instance, in a third book, by a third set of hands. The pedigree is asserted in the author's voice and never once put inside the quotation marks.

The second habit fails here, and the failure is worth more than a confirmation would have been. In Arbatov (1973), Tomashevsky (1974) and *Priorities* (1981), Trotsky is presented as typical of the revolutionary-war position at Brest-Litovsk. He was not: that was Bukharin's position and the Left Communists'; Trotsky's was "neither war nor peace". This book does not commit the amalgam, because Brest-Litovsk is not in it. The string "Brest" occurs exactly once in the whole volume, and it is the French port, in a list of towns where workers occupied factories in May 1968. A book that mentions the Comintern 250 times, that narrates the international movement congress by congress from 1919 to 1943, simply does not go back to 1918. So: hypothesis refuted, and the refutation leaves a hole behind it, which is the more useful finding.

The legend does not disappear, though. It migrates. Ernest Mandel, writing at precisely this moment — "Peaceful Coexistence and World Revolution", *International Socialist Review* vol. 31 no. 2 (whole no. 197), March–April 1970, published while this volume was in press — named both halves of the operation in one sentence: "Of late, an attempt has been made to present Lenin as the father of the 'theory of peaceful coexistence,' and a parallel legend has been developed about Trotsky advocating 'instantaneous revolution' in all countries through military interventions of the Soviet state. Neither myth has any foundation, either in the theories or in the practices of the founders of the Soviet system and the Communist International." This book does not perform the first legend on Brest; it performs the second, twice. Trotsky and his supporters, we read, "believed socialism could not triumph in one country taken separately and that the world revolution had to be 'pushed' with every possible means"; and of the Comintern's Seventh Congress, "The Congress condemned the Trotskyite view that war cleared the way to revolution." Mandel's own account of Brest, in the same article, identifies the opponents of the peace as "the left SRs" and others "inside the Bolshevik Party", and records that Lenin "strongly approved of Trotsky's revolutionary agitation at Brest-Litovsk". The correction is not this series' invention. It was in print, from the other side, in the same season.

Which brings us to the most checkable falsification in the book, and the reason this volume is worth the reader's suspicion in detail rather than in general. Attacking the Fourth International, the monograph writes that its 1961 Manifesto, "the Charter of the Milan 'Unity Congress' of the Fourth International (1963) and other documents of modern Trotskyism contain the unsubstantiated assertion that the 'main centre of the world revolution' has now 'shifted to the colonial

world'." From this it concludes that "his ideological successors maintain that at the present stage of social development the vanguard and main force of the world revolution are no longer the international working class ... but the colonial revolution."

The resolution of the 1963 reunification congress is "Dynamics of World Revolution Today", printed in full in the *International Socialist Review*, vol. 24 no. 4 (whole no. 165), Fall 1963. Its sentence reads: "the main center of world revolution shifted for a time to the colonial world." Two words have gone missing, and with them the tense: "shifted for a time" has become "has now shifted". The sentences immediately following say the opposite of what is imputed: "The view must be vigorously rejected that this development, unforeseen in the classics of Marxism, was more or less fatally determined by objective factors or by lack of revolutionary energy or will among the workers in the imperialist countries." The resolution then lists eleven occasions between 1918 and 1950 on which the working class of an imperialist country could have taken power, and attributes every failure not to backwardness or corruption in that class but "to the treacherous role of the official leadership". The book is refuting a position that its cited source explicitly and at length repudiates. This is not interpretation; it is an elision of two words, and either side can check it in an afternoon.

The rest of the record shows the same technique applied to people rather than documents. Trotsky appears nine times by surname and the adjectival forms another twenty-five. He is given a glossary entry — "The Trotskyites were opposed to Leninism as soon as Bolshevism emerged as an ideological trend. They rejected the dictatorship of the proletariat and held that socialism could not be built in the USSR" — followed by "In 1929 Trotsky was exiled", and a parenthetical "(1879–1940)" that gives the year of an assassination without mentioning that there was one. Zinoviev appears eleven times and Bukharin six, always and only as Comintern officials of 1921 to 1928, disputing the German united front or drafting a defective programme. Nowhere is it recorded that both were tried and shot. "Moscow Trials" returns zero. The word "purge" occurs four times, and not one of them refers to the 1930s. Stalin's name appears twice in 173,779 words, on both occasions as an authority approvingly cited inside 1920s material — "In Sun Yat-senism, which Stalin characterised as 'China's preparation for Marxism'" and "Comrade Stalin correctly pointed out that the Indian bourgeoisie wanted a compromise with British imperialism." He is never once present as the leader of the Soviet state or of the Communist International. Fourteen years after the Twentieth Congress, whose "main decisions" the book praises three times, the man

is a footnote citation and nothing else.

The largest single silence is chronological. The Comintern chapter is thorough and dated to the month from 1919 to 1938: Munich is reached, and the joint appeal against it by "the Communist Parties of ten European countries, the USA and Canada" is quoted. Then the narrative encounters something it cannot say, and this is the whole of what it says: "Some difficulties arose in the communist movement in connection with sectarian trends and accompanying negative phenomena in the Comintern as well" — footnoted, without explanation, to *Kommunist* no. 5, 1969. Two sentences later the war has started and the section ends. The story resumes on 22 June 1941 with the French Communist Party's appeal that "Every Frenchman worthy of the name must henceforth regard himself as an ally of the USSR." Between September 1938 and June 1941 there is nothing. The Nazi–Soviet Pact is absent from the book; "Ribbentrop", "Molotov" and "Soviet-German" all return zero; of the four occurrences of "1939", two are bibliographic, one is a table row and one is a CPUSA membership figure. A history of the Communist International that runs from 1919 to the dissolution of 1943 has excised the twenty-one months in which the Comintern reclassified the war as imperialist on both sides and the French party — whose appeal of June 1941 it quotes — had spent the preceding period arguing precisely that. The dissolution itself is then rendered in the passive institutional voice: "the Presidium of the Comintern Executive, supported by all the Communist Parties, in May 1943 passed a decision to disband the Communist International. The Comintern's disbandment did not signify any weakening of the international communist movement." Mandel, in the same season, writes of "the decline and fall of the Comintern, and finally its dissolution by Stalin in 1943."

Spain gets forty-one mentions and no POUM, no May Days of 1937, no Nin. The blame for the Republic's internal difficulties falls on "the adventurism of the anarchist organisations, which concentrated chiefly on 'deepening the revolution', on immediate 'collectivisation' in the countryside and in the towns". China gets fifty-nine, and a sustained defence of the Comintern's Kuomintang policy, culminating in the claim that after Chiang Kai-shek's coup "the Comintern correctly explained that the success of that coup was due to the strength of the enemy and not to erroneous tactics by the Communist Party, as the opposition tried to make out." The reply to that was published in 1928 and is the third part of Trotsky's *The Third International After Lenin*, "Summary and Perspectives of the Chinese Revolution", which argues the case the book will not state: the demand was for Soviets and for the

Communist Party's withdrawal from the Kuomintang. "The center of gravity consequently lay not in bare organizational forms, but in the class line." The Anglo-Russian Committee of 1925, which this volume praises, is dismantled in the same book, chapter II.

Czechoslovakia is the one place where the volume speaks in the present tense about a use of force, and it does not flinch. It is worth quoting whole: the Soviet Union "resolutely declared its readiness to defend Czechoslovakian independence in 1938, when the US, France and Great Britain betrayed it. In 1945 the Soviet Union liberated Czechoslovakia from nazi occupation at the cost of 140,000 Soviet soldiers, who lie buried in Czechoslovakian soil. In 1968, together with other Warsaw Treaty nations, it went to the aid of socialist Czechoslovakia against the dangers of subversion by anti-socialist elements linked with world imperialism." Lenin is then recruited in the next sentence, against "those who view things only from the standpoint of one's own country without reckoning with the interests of socialism on a world-wide scale." Elsewhere, in a footnote and nowhere else, both 1956 and 1968 are conceded as "grave difficulties in the development of countries like Hungary (1956) and, later, Czechoslovakia" — attributed to a doctrinal error about the class nature of socialist statehood in the late 1940s. A tank invasion has been made a consequence of a definitional slip made twenty years earlier.

On the day the book was written for, Intercontinental Press printed the answer. Its centenary issue (vol. 8 no. 15, 20 April 1970) carried Mandel's "Lenin's Heritage", which sets out seven "main pillars" of Leninism against the four signed chapters of Part One. Two of them bear directly here. The fifth is "the necessity of the independence of the Communist International from the Soviet state: no maneuver of that state ... should imply any change of orientation by the Communist International from its line of preparing, favoring, and assuring the best possible conditions for victory of proletarian revolutionary struggles everywhere." The seventh is inner-party democracy, and Mandel applies it at once: the Czechoslovak leadership's "hesitant attempt ... to return in 1968 to some of these Leninist norms in a new draft statute for the Fourteenth Congress of the party was seized upon furiously as a sign of 'rightist antisocialist tendencies' inside that party by Brezhnev and company." The same issue, with more brutality than accuracy is usually allowed, called the centenary output of the pro-Moscow parties "the scores of dreary hagiographical works the Communist parties have turned out for Lenin's one hundredth birthday this April 22." Part One of this book is exactly that. Part Two is not, and the distinction matters.

Because Part Two contains real work, and a reader told that everything here is worthless will be misled. The Comintern chapter is archival history built from the Executive's own records: the ECCI meeting of 22 February 1921 at which Zinoviev and Bukharin attacked the German party's Open Letter; Bohumir Smeral at the founding congress of the Czechoslovak party in May 1921; the Rovnost appeal of the Brno Workers' Council of 20 November 1921; the Czechoslovak party conference of September 1922 on the workers'-government slogan; the CPSU(B) Central Committee decision of 7 May 1927 on Zinoviev's Chinese theses. Much of this is sourced to *Kommunistichesky Internatsional* and to Comintern verbatim reports that have never appeared in English, and it is not fabricated. The reconstruction of the united-front turn of 1921–22, and of the debate over what a "workers' government" was to mean, is a serious piece of exposition whoever is doing it.

More surprising, the book performs one genuine self-criticism. On the Third Period it states plainly that "the formula 'social-fascism' was a grave mistake for it ignored the anti-fascist trends in the Social-Democratic Parties", and quotes Suslov, from the conference marking the Comintern's fiftieth anniversary as reported in *Pravda* in March 1969: "There was no justification for the thesis that Social-Democracy was the greatest danger. As a result, the main blow was for some time aimed at it and this, in effect, led to sectarianism." That is a real admission about the policy that helped deliver Germany to Hitler, and it is more than most of this catalogue manages. Note, though, what it costs and what it does not. The mistake has no author. It is the Comintern that "did not immediately appreciate" and the Parties that "regarded"; nobody chose it, nobody is named. Trotsky, by contrast, is named as the author of every error the book assigns to him. The volume's grammar changes according to who is at fault.

The book is also honest about Lenin in one place where honesty is inconvenient. It records, correctly, that "In criticising Trotsky during the debate on the trade unions, Lenin was explicit on the point that the problem of labour discipline should be solved by economic stimulation and promoting consciousness and not by militarising production which could alienate the worker masses from the Party" — an accurate account of a dispute in which Trotsky was in fact wrong and Lenin in fact opposed him, reported without embroidery. And in the same passage it quotes the resolution Lenin drafted for the Eighth Congress of the RCP(B): "Representatives of Soviet power who permit themselves to employ not only direct but even indirect compulsion to bring peasants into communes ...

must be brought strictly to account and removed from work in the countryside." The book prints that. Two hundred pages away it also prints this: "The last exploiting class, the kulaks, was abolished on the basis of nation-wide collectivisation." It never notices that it has quoted Lenin's prohibition and celebrated the thing prohibited, on the largest scale in European history, in the same volume. The word "famine" occurs four times, all four about the relief campaign of 1921–22, when the Comintern appealed to the world proletariat to help Soviet Russia; the famine of 1932–33 does not exist here.

Finally, the long chapter on Herbert Marcuse — fifty-eight mentions, with *One-Dimensional Man* cited by edition, Alain Touraine engaged at length, and Marcuse's own disavowal fairly quoted ("It is the press and public opinion that have invested me with this title and have turned me into a best seller.... I am afraid that very few students have actually read my books") — is a serious attempt to argue with a live opponent rather than a caricature. It is also the book's tell, and the proportions say it better than any word-count could. Marcuse gets a chapter; Trotskyism gets a two-page detour. The volume's real anxiety, in 1970, is not the Fourth International or even Peking (mentioned once) but the student and New Left milieu of 1968 — a movement the book itself has to describe going past its own parties in the streets of Paris and Rome. The polemic against Trotskyism is a two-page detour with a doctored quotation in it. The polemic against Marcuse is a chapter, because Marcuse was the one taking the audience.

Read it, then, as what it is: a state institute's centenary offering, its political frame supplied by four party leaders and its substance by scholars who could do archival history well and were forbidden to reach three obvious conclusions — that Stalin existed, that the Pact happened, and that the Comintern was dissolved by a man rather than by a Presidium. Where its documents are quoted, they are usually quoted straight. Where its opponents are, they are not; and the 1963 resolution it misquotes has been in print in English since Fall 1963 for anyone who wants to check.

MARXISM

Lenin and Books

Lenin as a reader: forty-six of his own pieces on books and libraries, and thirteen memoirs by those who knew him - including his Kremlin librarian, and the man who counted that seventy-one of the seventy-four political books Lenin marked in 1919 were by his enemies.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

Introduction to the 1971 Edition

The last page of this book carries a line of Russian that most readers will skip: podpisano k pechati 13/XI-1970. Signed to press, 13 November 1970. That single line does more dating work than the spine. It places the volume inside the Lenin centenary — Lenin was born 22 April 1870, and the Soviet publishing houses spent that year and the next pouring out commemorative editions in every language they could reach. Unlike several titles in this series, there is no concealed lag here. The latest source the volume cites is a Moscow edition of 1967; nothing in it postdates the manuscript; the English is not a reprint of an older translation but a fresh production for the anniversary. This is a 1971 book that was finished in late 1970, and it should be read as an anniversary object.

It is also, unusually, a book with a named compiler: the title page credits A. Z. Okorokov, Cand. Sc. (Hist.). The publishers' note sets out the plan plainly. The materials fall into two parts, "Lenin on Books" and "Books in Lenin's Life"; the first prints forty-six items by Lenin, the second thirteen memoirs by people who knew him. The translations, we are told, "are taken from the English edition of V. I. Lenin's Collected Works prepared by Progress Publishers, Moscow, unless otherwise stated". And the note opens with a claim that is worth taking seriously rather than dismissing: "The catalogue of Lenin's private library in the Kremlin lists more than 8,400 titles." A further "900 books, magazines and newspapers with Lenin's marks on them have been collected in the Institute of Marxism-Leninism."

Those are not decorative figures. They point at something real, and the honest place to begin with this volume is with what it gets right.

Lenin was a formidable reader, and the evidence for it in this book is first-hand and largely undamaged. Shushanik

Manucharyants, who was his librarian in the Kremlin from 1920 to 1924, contributes a memoir that is worth more than most of what has been written about Lenin's mind. She records the marks he wrote on books to route them through his own system — "Lenin", "Lenin's copy", "To Lenin's table", "Please return, Lenin's copy", "To my library", "Keep on the shelf", "Keep secret". She records that in May 1922 he asked her to gather the literature on the scientific management of labour, that he was plainly preparing to write on it, that he was struck down before he could, and that the books stayed where he had left them: "But Lenin never wrote this work." A working librarian's account of a working reader.

Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich supplies the single most interesting fact in the volume. In June 1919 he began bringing Lenin the Knizhnaya Letopis, the Book Chamber's register of everything published, and watched him work through it, underlining and numbering titles. Bonch-Bruyevich then counted:

Out of 74 books which he marked relating to the positions of the various parties on the most burning issues of the day (the remaining three were Bolshevik publications) 71 were written by authors of parties and groups hostile to us — the Plekhanovites, the Bogdanovites, the Popular Socialists and the Cadets among them.

Seventy-one out of seventy-four. In the middle of a civil war, the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars was reading his opponents, in bulk, in the original. That is the standard the Institute of Marxism-Leninism set for itself when it put his name on its building, and it is the standard by which the Institute's own later output — volumes that characterise Trotsky at length and cite no work of his — is most fairly judged. Lenin read his enemies. His editors did not.

The same is true of one of the most engaging items in Part One. In November 1921 Lenin reviewed A Dozen Knives in the Back of the Revolution by Arkady Averchenko, an émigré satirist writing from Paris in a state of frank hatred. Lenin calls it "this extremely capably written book", praises "Grass

Trampled by Jackboots" without qualification, notes drily that Averchenko's story about the domestic lives of the Bolshevik leaders is bad because he does not know his subject — "I assure you that Lenin and Trotsky have many faults in all respects, including their home life" — and ends: "In my opinion some of these stories are worth reprinting. Talent should be encouraged." That a Moscow house printed that sentence in 1971, Trotsky's name and all, is a small fact that deserves recording, since so much else in this catalogue could not manage it.

Beyond these there is real material throughout: Lenin's 1913 comparison of the New York Public Library with the Russian provision, with the branch statistics quoted; his four demands of November 1917 for the Petrograd Public Library, including opening hours "from 8.00 a.m. to 11.00 p.m. daily, not excluding Sundays and holidays"; the 1896 letter from the remand prison working out how to get statistical yearbooks delivered to a cell; the request to the Director of the British Museum, signed with the alias Jacob Richter. Where this book prints Lenin, it prints him accurately. There is no sign anywhere in these fifty thousand words of a sentence altered or a word doctored.

The falsification, as so often in this series, is entirely a matter of what is cut.

Twenty-two of the forty-six Lenin items carry the marker "(Excerpt)". The volume deserves credit for how it handles them: it gives a Collected Works citation under every single item, and where the cut is internal it prints the discontinuity in the page numbers. The speech to the Third Komsomol Congress is sourced to "Vol. 31, pp. 283–96, 298–99" — a reader with the Collected Works to hand is being told, in the citation itself, that pages 296 to 298 have been removed. An editor concealing a cut does not do that.

Which makes it possible to check every one of them. And one of them is not like the others.

The volume prints "On the Significance of Militant Materialism", marked "(Excerpt from the Article)", and sources it to Collected Works, Vol. 33, pp. 229–34. The article occupies pp. 227–36. So two pages have been taken off the front and two off the back, and the citation says so.

Here is what is on the two pages at the front. The article's first sentence, in Lenin's original, is: "Comrade Trotsky has already said everything necessary, and said it very well, about the

general purposes of Pod Znamenem Marksizma in issue No. 1-2 of that journal." Then comes Lenin's statement that the journal must unite Communists and non-Communists in a common front against philosophical reaction; then his borrowing from Joseph Dietzgen of the phrase that "the professors of philosophy in modern society are in the majority of cases nothing but 'graduated flunkies of clericalism'"; and then a sentence about the atheist work of the state institutions, which is "being carried on with extreme apathy and very unsatisfactorily, and is apparently suffering from the general conditions of our truly Russian (even though Soviet) bureaucratic ways".

Three things go with those two pages. Trotsky's name goes. Lenin's admission that his own state's institutions were already sunk in bureaucracy goes. And the phrase "graduated flunkies of clericalism" survives in the text this volume prints — but stripped of Dietzgen and of the professors it was aimed at, so that the reader meets a quotation with no owner and no target.

The two pages at the back matter more. In the original, Lenin turns to a concrete case:

I was recently sent a copy of Ekonomist No. 1 (1922), published by the Eleventh Department of the Russian Technical Society. The young Communist who sent me this journal (he probably had no time to read it) rashly expressed considerable agreement with it. In reality the journal is — I do not know to what extent deliberately — an organ of the modern feudalists, disguised of course under a cloak of science, democracy and so forth.

He then names a contributor, quotes him, and demolishes him on the statistics of divorce in Petrograd. The contributor is P. A. Sorokin. And the article ends:

The working class of Russia proved able to win power; but it has not yet learned to utilise it, for otherwise it would have long ago very politely dispatched such teachers and members of learned societies to countries with a bourgeois "democracy". That is the proper place for such feudalists. But it will learn, given the will to learn.

Lenin wrote that in March 1922. In September 1922 the Soviet state expelled some two hundred intellectuals — philosophers, economists, sociologists, theologians — most of them by steamer from Petrograd to Stettin, in the operation now generally called the philosophers' ships. Pitirim Sorokin was among those expelled that autumn. The article printed in this volume is the article that called for it, and the call is the part that has been removed.

This is the pattern that recurs across the Progress catalogue, and it recurs here in its purest form: the quotation is accurate, the source is given, and the cut is at the turn. A reader of Lenin and Books meets Lenin the friend of good popular science and honest translation. The Lenin who wanted the editors of a scientific journal put on a boat is on pages 234 to 236, and the citation admits their existence without disclosing their content.

There is a further coincidence, and it is inside this same book. Sixty-odd pages later, Manucharyants remembers a small embarrassment:

Once one of the comrades had brought in two magazines, The Economist and New Russia. Lenin showed them to me (I had just come into the conference room) and said: "And I haven't yet had these!"

The Economist here is Ekonomist — the journal in question, brought late to the man who was about to write that its contributors belonged abroad. The volume prints the librarian's anecdote about Lenin wanting the journal and cuts, from Lenin's own text, what he thought should be done with the people who wrote it. Neither the compiler nor the reader is meant to put the two together.

The other cuts are less dramatic and more revealing of method. The speech to the Third Komsomol Congress loses pages 296–98: a stretch of about nine hundred words in which Lenin comes down from the philosophy of "learn" to the practice of it — the literacy brigades going into the villages, the suburban vegetable gardens in a starving year, the house-to-house sanitary inspections, the League as "a shock force". "We shall unite and go into the rural districts to abolish illiteracy, so that there shall be no illiterates among our young people." In a book about books, the passage cut from the speech about learning is the passage about the campaign against illiteracy. The consistent casualty in these anthologies is Lenin the practical organiser, and this is a textbook instance.

Against that, two items are printed straight and should be recognised as such. "Party Organisation and Party Literature" (1905) appears complete and verbatim, including everything that later Soviet usage found awkward: "Everyone is free to write and say whatever he likes, without any restrictions", and "Freedom of speech and the press must be complete. But then freedom of association must be complete too." Lenin's argument there is narrow and defensible — a voluntary association may decide who writes in its name — and its context is a party newly emerging into legality under a

still-standing autocracy, "the captivity of the feudal censorship". The volume prints all of it. What the volume then does is frame it: the introduction to Part One presents the selection as giving "Lenin's ideas on partisanship of literature". A 1905 article about who may publish under a party's masthead is thereby offered as a doctrine about literature. That extension is not made in Lenin's text. It is made in the editorial sentence above it, and it is the extension on which forty years of Soviet literary administration rested.

Thesis 8 of the 1919 Comintern theses is likewise printed complete, and it is the volume's best moment of nerve. Lenin's case is that freedom of the press under capitalism is the freedom of those who own the presses: "In capitalist usage, freedom of the press means freedom of the rich to bribe the press, freedom to use their wealth to shape and fabricate so-called public opinion." He then promises what the new system will provide — no impediment to any working man or group of working men "for enjoying and practising equal rights in the use of public printing-presses and public stocks of paper". That promise is on the page. Whether it was kept is the question the whole book is arranged not to raise.

Which brings us to what is absent, and here one has to be careful, because a book has no obligation to be about a subject it did not choose.

But this book chose. It is an anthology about books, publishing, libraries and readers, drawn from a man who governed Russia for six years, and it runs chronologically to November 1922. Three things belong inside that frame and are not in it.

The first is a document. On 5 August 1921 Lenin wrote to Gavril Myasnikov, a Bolshevik metalworker from Perm who had circulated an article demanding "freedom of the press, from the monarchists to the anarchists, inclusively". Lenin's reply is in the Collected Works, vol. 32, it is entirely about the press, and it is the most direct thing he ever wrote on the subject after October:

Freedom of the press in the R.S.F.S.R., which is surrounded by the bourgeois enemies of the whole world, means freedom of political organisation for the bourgeoisie and its most loyal servants, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries. [...] We have no wish to commit suicide, and therefore, we will not do this.

The letter was available, catalogued, translated and on the

compiler's shelf. It is on the volume's declared subject more squarely than half of what it does print. It is not here. Myasnikov was expelled from the party in February 1922, six months after receiving it.

The second is an institution. Glavlit — the Main Administration for Literary Affairs and Publishing, the body that ran preliminary censorship of everything printed in the Soviet Union for the next sixty-nine years — was created by decree of the Council of People's Commissars on 6 June 1922. Lenin was chairman of that Council. The word "Glavlit" occurs zero times in these 50,282 words. So does the word "purge". The volume prints Lenin's instructions on how the State Publishing House should register the names of responsible editors, and prints his 1919 reprimand to Vorovsky for a slovenly Comintern pamphlet, and stops there. This is not chronology: the body existed, in Lenin's lifetime, under his own Council, five months before the volume's last dated item.

The third is a person, and she is the presiding voice of Part Two. Nadezhda Krupskaya supplies four of the thirteen memoirs — on Chernyshevsky, on Marx, on libraries, on Lenin's favourite books. She is the volume's authority on what Lenin read and loved, including the volume's three separate essays on Tolstoi. On 9 April 1924 she published an article in Pravda, in her own name, that begins:

One was last spring. I signed a circular excluding unnecessary and harmful books from the people's libraries.

The article defends the circular — "The circular itself was not in error" — and criticises the list of prohibited books that was appended to it, which she says was compiled by the Commission for Book Revision and attached without her having seen it. Her objections to the list are instructive. Excluding Plato, Kant and Mach from village libraries was pointless rather than wrong, because "the masses do not read Kant". And: "The prohibition of certain works of Tolstoi and Kropotkin was a mistake" — not because withdrawing books is wrong, but because the reader of 1924 is "already sufficiently saturated with collectivistic psychology" to be safe from them. (I quote from the English translation printed in *The Living Age* in 1924.)

So the woman who tells us in this book which books Lenin loved had, within a year of his death, signed the order withdrawing books from the libraries he had wanted opened; and among the authors withdrawn was Tolstoi, on whom this volume prints three of Lenin's essays. None of that is here. Note that it need not have been printed as an indictment — the

Institute could have printed it as a correction, since it is a document in which Krupskaya publicly repudiates a list. It is simply not printed.

That is also where the sharpest test of these volumes applies. It is not that Soviet editions never admit error; this one does, repeatedly and without embarrassment. The biographical note on Lunacharsky states that after 1907 "he followed the path of revisionism, joining the Machists and organising the Vperyod anti-party group together with A. A. Bogdanov". Krupskaya's own Pravda article opens by conceding that "some errors have been made". Error is admissible. What is never admissible is the category. No one who stayed inside is ever the object of the charge; the circular is never wrong, only its appendix; the practice of removing books from libraries is never the thing under examination, only the choice of which books. That distinction — error yes, classification never — is what separates these volumes from the tradition that produced them, and it survives contact with a candid book in a way that cruder tests do not.

One smaller thing is worth flagging in fairness. The decree on Academician Pavlov of 24 January 1921 appears as an "(Excerpt)" consisting of point 2 alone, the clause authorising a de luxe edition of Pavlov's work and leaving him the property right in it at home and abroad. The omitted points set up a commission under Gorky and granted Pavlov and his wife a special ration and the lifetime use of their flat. For an anthology about books, printing the publishing clause is a defensible choice. It does, however, remove the reason the decree is remembered: in the famine winter of 1921 the Soviet government was feeding a non-Bolshevik scientist at double the academic rate.

The reply to this book existed, and some of it was in print in the same year.

Intercontinental Press, the weekly of the Fourth International, devoted its issue of 20 April 1970 (vol. 8, no. 15) to the centenary, two days before the anniversary itself. It carried Ernest Mandel on "Lenin's Heritage" and, alongside it, a report on the Frankfurt book fair. The occasion was the appearance of Trotsky's *Der junge Lenin* in German, and the response to it in the January 1970 issue of the *World Marxist Review*, the international journal of the pro-Moscow parties, where Friedrich Hitzer and Oscar Neumann wrote that "the card played against Lenin in this, Lenin centenary, year is called Trotsky". Intercontinental Press set that beside "the scores of

dreary hagiographical works the Communist parties have turned out for Lenin's one hundredth birthday this April 22". The present volume is one of those works, and it is a better one than most; but the frame is accurate. It went to press in the year in which the official movement understood its own Lenin publishing as an operation against a name.

On the substance, the answer had been given in August 1938, by Trotsky, in an article on freedom of the press written for a Mexican audience and against a Stalinist trade-union campaign to ban the reactionary papers. He concedes the whole of Lenin's Thesis 8 and more: a victorious proletariat may find itself forced to take exceptional measures against a bourgeoisie in open revolt, and in a civil war it will not tolerate the enemy's propaganda centres inside its own camp. And then:

Nevertheless, even in this case, if exceptional measures are prolonged long enough to create a permanent situation, then they carry the danger of going out of control and, giving a political monopoly to the workers' bureaucracy, becoming a source of its degeneration.

What follows is the positive doctrine this book leaves out — not policing opinion but socialising the means of forming it: "It is the duty of the workers' state to put in their hands, to all according to their numeric importance, the technical means necessary for this, printing presses, paper, means of transportation." That is Lenin's 1919 promise of "public printing-presses and public stocks of paper", restated in 1938 by a man who had watched what happened to it. Read alongside Thesis 8 as this volume prints it, the two texts make one argument with nineteen years and a bureaucracy between them.

Read this book, then, for the librarian and the register. Manucharyants's shelf, Bonch-Bruyevich's count of seventy-one books out of seventy-four, the letters ordering zemstvo (local-council) statistics into a Siberian village — these are real evidence about a real reader, and they are the reason the volume is worth reprinting. Its subject was a good idea for a book.

But the volume was compiled by an institution that had made an accommodation with its own subject, and the accommodation shows in one place above all. Between pages 234 and 236 of volume 33 of the Collected Works stands the sentence in which Lenin proposes that a group of Russian scholars be sent abroad, and within six months some two hundred of them were. That is a fact about Lenin and books. It

is the hardest fact about Lenin and books. The compilers knew where it was — they printed the page numbers on either side of it — and they left it out.

Re-reading Dostoyevsky

Genetic criticism of Crime and Punishment by a reform-communist critic who had been in trouble with the Party three years earlier: the abandoned endings, the notebooks, Bakhtin named, and The Possessed met head-on rather than avoided.

Yuri Karyakin

Introduction to the 1971 Edition

This is a good book, and the interesting question about it is not whether the criticism holds up — it does — but what the author could not say and how far he got by saying something else.

Re-reading Dostoyevsky is a single-author monograph by Yuri Karyakin, translated by S. Chulaki, issued by Progress Publishers in Moscow and marked, on its title page, "To Commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Birth of Dostoyevsky." That is the commission. Dostoyevsky was born in November 1821; the Soviet state marked the jubilee with editions, conferences and export titles, and this is one of them. The Russian original, *Perechityvaya Dostoevskogo*, sold at 48 kopecks.

The structure is worth describing because it is unusual for the series. There are thirty-odd short chapters, each titled with a phrase lifted from the novel or from Dostoyevsky's working notebooks — "There Appeared a New Strain of Trichinae...", "I Am an Aesthetic Louse!", "Remember That He Is Twenty-Three". The book is centred almost entirely on *Crime and Punishment* and, crucially, on the notebooks and rejected drafts for it. Karyakin says so at the outset: "The purpose of this book is to consider how Dostoyevsky as an artist interprets the motives behind man's actions. The discussion is centred around *Crime and Punishment* and Dostoyevsky's notes for the novel." This is genetic criticism — reading a novel against its own discarded versions — and it is done with real skill. The finest sustained passage in the book reconstructs why Dostoyevsky abandoned three separate endings: a suicide, a rescue-from-a-fire followed by repentance, and an explicitly religious close whose planned last line survives in the notes as "Inscrutable are the ways in which God comes to man." Karyakin's comment on the rejection is the sentence a Marxist critic ought to be able to write and mostly cannot: "Here we have an excellent example of how an artist can win over his own preconceived notions."

That is the register throughout. The prose is not committee prose. Read the tally: across some 63,000 words, the word "Soviet" appears twice, "Party" twice, "class" twice; "socialist realism" does not appear at all. This is not a book assembled by an institute. Karyakin (1930–2011) belonged to the reform-communist intelligentsia formed around the Prague journal *Problems of Peace and Socialism* in the early 1960s, and in 1968 he made a public speech in Moscow, at an evening for Andrei Platonov, that got him into serious party trouble. Readers should hold that fact in mind when they reach his closing pages on Dostoyevsky and the censor: "'The censors will not let anything through?' That is only your excuse for having nothing to say." Karyakin is quoting Dostoyevsky. He is also, unmistakably, talking about himself.

Bakhtin is named. On the analysis of the crowd's laughter at Raskolnikov kneeling on Sennaya Square, Karyakin writes: "The Soviet literary critic M. Bakhtin has noted that Raskolnikov's dream is 'an image of public ridicule poured on an impostor-king.'" It is a single citation in a long book, and Karyakin does not take up polyphony or dialogism as such — the debt is to the carnival material Bakhtin added in the 1963 second edition of *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, not to the theory of the novel that has since made him famous. But in 1971, with Bakhtin alive and only recently recovered from decades of obscurity, naming him plainly and calling him a Soviet critic was the correct thing to do, and Karyakin did it.

Now the harder test. Does the book engage *The Possessed*?

It does, and directly, which is more than the frame required of it. Karyakin quotes an extended stretch of Pyotr Verkhovensky's programme — "We shall nip genius in the bud... Everything will be reduced to one common denominator... Everyone will be a slave and in their slavery they will be equal... Our Ciceros shall have their tongues cut out, any new Copernicus shall be blinded, any future Shakespeare stoned" — and he states the historical basis without evasion: "His Pyotr Verkhovensky (*The Possessed*) was based on Nechayev." He gives Nechayev's own formula,

"Poison, the dagger, the noose — the revolution sanctifies them all." He concedes the point Dostoyevsky was entitled to: the novelist "was quite right in exposing those among them whom Marx called 'drill-ground' socialists." He then names the falsification he thinks Dostoyevsky committed — "Dostoyevsky was grossly mistaken when he ascribed to all revolutionaries the views and motives, the aims and tactics of these quasi-socialists, when he identified social protest with crime" — and, tellingly, calls Saltykov-Shchedrin as a contemporary witness against him: "Mr. Dostoyevsky, without the slightest qualms, is hacking away at his own cause."

Karyakin's answer to *The Possessed* is not a refutation but a counterfactual, and it is the best thing in the book. Dostoyevsky died planning a sequel in which Alyosha Karamazov would leave the monastery for politics and revolution. "Alyosha and Verkhovensky are incompatible. This means that there can be a socialism without the Verkhovensky's, in fact a socialism opposed to them. This is what Dostoyevsky wanted, but feared to believe."

Which raises the question this edition exists to raise. In Moscow in 1971, who were the Verkhovensky's?

Karyakin answers explicitly, and the answer is where the book breaks. The closing chapter turns from Dostoyevsky to contemporary politics and identifies the danger as, first, Mao's China — "The works of both have been banned, condemned as 'bourgeois' and 'reactionary'" — and second, the Western New Left: "certain French (and other Western) students today seek inspiration in present-day China, and in left extremism in general." He warns of leaders "flirting with the youth, flattering the latter out of selfish motives," of a courage that "blunts and kills the desire for truth." He then declares his purpose without embarrassment: "the author of this book cannot conceal, nor does he wish to conceal, the fact that in writing it he was pursuing a definite ideological and political aim."

This is 1971, the Sino-Soviet split at full volume, and the target had been set for him. Progress was running an entire line on it — *Maoism Through the Eyes of Communists* (1970), *A Critique of Mao Tse-Tung's Theoretical Conceptions* (1972), *The Cultural Revolution: A Close-Up* (1975) — with a parallel line aimed at the students of 1968: Boris Leibson's *Petty-Bourgeois Revolutionism* (1970), E. Batalov's *The Philosophy of Revolt* (1975). Karyakin's last chapter slots into that shelf exactly. The gain is that it licensed him to discuss Verkhovensky at all. The cost is stated by the analysis itself. A Soviet reader in 1971 who had followed Karyakin through

"Everyone will be a slave and in their slavery they will be equal," through "The Inquisitor who acts in the name of Christ has long stopped believing in Christ," through "To call a crime by its real name is unbearable, but calling it something else is a tempting and even inspiring proposition" — that reader did not need to be pointed at Peking. Karyakin is careful to remain unspecific at the one moment it matters: "one cannot but wonder what Dostoyevsky would say about the crimes committed in our time, crimes which have surpassed in cruelty the worst of his forebodings." He does not say whose crimes. He could not.

So the frame does the damage, and it does it by displacement rather than by lying. Only twice does the book itself fall short of what it knows. First, Karyakin invokes Lenin's late warnings — Lenin copying out Marx on Nechayev, Lenin "shortly before his death" urging the selection of cadres who would not "take the word for the deed" — as though the problem had been noticed and closed. He does not say what happened between that warning and 1971, and the silence is the finding. Second, the book is wholly silent on Dostoyevsky's antisemitism. The words "Jew" and "Jewish" do not occur in it. That is not a small omission in a study of a writer whose *Diary of a Writer* Karyakin cites elsewhere, and it is the one place where his handling of Dostoyevsky's reaction is simply incomplete. On the rest of the politics he is franker than expected: a long footnote sets out Dostoyevsky's defence of Russia's wars, quotes his 1854 patriotic ode and his 1856 verses on the coronation of Alexander II, and notes drily that "For this poem Dostoyevsky was given an officer's rank." On religion he neither apologises nor sneers, arguing from the manuscripts that the novel's construction defeated the Orthodox reading Dostoyevsky intended for it.

The tradition from which this series is introduced answered the underlying question long before, and on ground Karyakin would have recognised. Trotsky's essay on Tolstoy, written for the novelist's eightieth birthday in 1908 and reprinted in the *American Fourth International* in May–June 1951 (vol. XII, no. 3), treats Dostoyevsky in passing as "this voluptuous poet of cruelty and commiseration" — a judgement made without the slightest need to establish the writer's progressive credentials first, because the method assumed a great reactionary artist requires explanation, not permission. That is the freedom Karyakin lacked. He had to open by assuring the reader that "Marxism upholds all that is progressive in world culture, and is alien to all that is reactionary in it" before he could get to work. The work, once he gets to it, is the best Dostoyevsky criticism Progress ever exported, and readers should take it seriously as criticism. It is also a document of a

man arguing for a socialism without Verkhovenskys inside a state that had already been remade by them, and forced to point at China while doing it.

SOVIET SOCIETY

Socialist Society: Scientific Principles of Development

The philosophical case that socialism is the first society that can be consciously directed - written in 1967 by one of the senior professional philosophers of Soviet historical materialism, into the Kosygin reform and the aftermath of Khrushchev's fall.

Grigorii Eroshimovich Glezerman

Introduction to the 1971 Edition

The central claim of this book is stated on a single line, and everything else in its six chapters is an elaboration of it: "Socialism for the first time in history creates conditions for the scientific guidance of society's development." G. Glezerman means this literally. Where earlier societies grew the way weather happens — through the blind collision of private interests, the market settling by trial and catastrophe what no one had decided — socialism, he argues, is the first social order that can be run the way an engineer runs a process: studied, forecast, planned, and consciously directed toward a chosen end. "Communism," he writes, "is the first society in history which is being built consciously." The book's task is to supply the philosophical warrant for that sentence, and to name the agent that does the directing.

Read the copyright page and the book's own first pages before dating the argument. The English *Socialist Society: The Scientific Principles of Development* carries Progress Publishers' 1971 imprint, but Glezerman tells you plainly where it comes from: "This book was published in Russian in 1967 under the title *Historical Materialism and the Development of Socialist Society*." The retitling is worth pausing over. A treatise in historical materialism — a philosophy book — was reissued in English under a title promising "scientific principles," in the register of management and control. That is not an accident of translation; it is the register of the moment. The Russian text is a book of 1967, and 1967 in Soviet doctrine has a very specific temperature.

Three things were happening at once. The Kosygin economic reform of September 1965 — the "new economic management system" that Glezerman salutes repeatedly — had just introduced profit indicators, enterprise autonomy and cost accounting, and with it a wave of official enthusiasm for

nauchnoe upravlenie obshchestvom, the scientific management of society. The 23rd Congress of the CPSU (spring 1966), which Glezerman cites as his authority, had declared the social sciences "no less important than the use of the achievements of the natural sciences." And Nikita Khrushchev had been removed from power in October 1964, denounced in the internal language of the apparatus for "subjectivism and voluntarism" — for hare-brained schemes launched against the advice of the specialists. All three currents run through this book. It is at once a manifesto for scientific direction and a disciplinary tract against the recent leader who had directed unscientifically; the word "subjectivism" appears in it two dozen times, and each appearance is a coded verdict on the man the book will not name. Glezerman himself was no outsider to this: he was one of the senior professional philosophers of Soviet historical materialism, a co-author of its standard textbooks and a fixture of the Party's own teaching apparatus. The theory of scientific direction is being written, that is, by one of the directors.

One clarification, because the book invites a misreading. This is not a cybernetics book. The word "cybernetics" does not occur in it, and the reader who comes expecting flow-charts, input-output tables and the systems-theory vocabulary that filled Soviet management journals of the period will not find them. Glezerman's companion in Progress's list, V. Afanasyev — whose *Scientific Communism* (1967) this series also reissues, and who would go on to write *The Scientific Management of Society* outright — worked that technical seam. Glezerman supplies the philosophy underneath it: the historical-materialist argument that society is the kind of object that can be scientifically directed at all. That is the more fundamental claim, and the more revealing one.

State the doctrine precisely, because it is a serious position and deserves to be met at its strongest. Glezerman's argument runs like this. Every society is governed by objective laws that "do not depend on the will and consciousness of people." In all

previous societies those laws operated behind people's backs, "spontaneously" — the market, in particular, is the great engine of spontaneity, coordinating millions of separate decisions after the fact and at ruinous cost. Socialism does not abolish objective laws; it does something subtler. By placing the means of production in common hands, it makes it possible for society, "cognising the laws of its development and mastering the necessary instruments for their conscious use," to act on those laws deliberately instead of suffering them. "Socialist society," he writes, "based on social property and a high degree of socialisation of the productive forces, cannot develop spontaneously; it demands the planned administration of social affairs." At that point the human "subjective factor" — "the conscious activity of people, classes and parties" — takes the wheel. "Society is freed from spontaneous forces and begins to guide the processes of its life and development in a conscious way."

And who, concretely, is this "society" that guides? Glezerman is not coy. "Unity of action of the overwhelming majority of society's members," he writes, "and the scientifically based tasks set by the Party which they work to accomplish create the objective possibility for the coincidence of the aims and intentions of people with the results obtained." The Party sets the tasks; the people accomplish them; and the closing sentence of the book's first chapter states the identification without residue: "The leadership of the Communist Party imparts to the entire work of building communism an organised, planned and scientifically-based character." The subject of the science is the Party. Communist society, he adds, "will be the most highly organised society in man's history."

The doctrine reaches into the human material as well as the economy. A full chapter is given to "the new man" — to "the role of objective conditions and the subjective factor in changing human consciousness," to converting "the rules of communist behaviour into a habit." Here the directional logic is unmistakable: consciousness is an object to be moulded, and the moulding is a task of guidance like any other. It is telling that when a hostile Western reviewer — Glezerman quotes the Labour weekly *New Statesman* — objected that under the new Party programme "all the apparatus of the Soviet system is to be used to educate its citizens to live by a new code," Glezerman treats the phrase as slander rather than as description. But the structure of his own argument concedes the point: consciousness figures throughout as something the directing centre acts upon, never as the independent tribunal that might act upon the centre. The population is the clay of the science; it is not among its authors.

It would be easy, and wrong, to treat all this as mere apologetics. A responsible reader should first say what is genuinely good in the book, because there is a good deal, and because the credibility of the criticism to follow depends on the honesty of the credit. Glezerman is, first, a real materialist against the voluntarism he was commissioned to bury, and he means it. His insistence that "the subjective factor can gain decisive importance not of itself but only on the basis of the existing objective conditions," that plans which ignore real possibilities are punished — "the laws always take 'revenge', dooming subjectivist actions to failure" — is sober Marxism, and it is a genuine repudiation of the adventurism that had marked both the Stalin and Khrushchev periods, even if it can only name the latter and cannot name the former at all. His treatment of the difference between socialism and communism — the "birthmarks" of capitalism that the first phase cannot shed, the necessity of distribution according to work, the persistence of commodity and money relations under socialism against those who would abolish them "by decree" — is orthodox, careful, and correct against the utopian egalitarianism it criticises. When he quotes Marx to the effect that under associated production economic law appears "not as a blind law which is imposed on the people taking part in production, but as a 'law which, being understood and hence controlled by their common mind, brings the productive process under their joint control'," he quotes accurately and to the point. The underlying idea — that humanity can cease to be the plaything of its own social products and take conscious, collective mastery of its development — is not Glezerman's invention and not a fraud. It is Marx's and Engels's: the ascent, in Engels's image, from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom. It is the beating heart of the whole socialist project, and this book states it clearly. The question the book raises is not whether the idea is real. It is who does the mastering, and whether anyone may check them.

Which brings us to the tell — and it is a structural one, visible in the architecture of the book rather than in any single false sentence. Glezerman's science takes as its objects everything in Soviet society except the thing that directs it. It studies classes, interests, the economy, social consciousness, "the new man," the withering of the state. It never once takes as its object the directing apparatus itself. The Party is always the subject that studies and never the object studied; it is the eye that surveys society, and an eye cannot see itself. Apply to the book the test this series applies to all of them: can the central category — here, the charge of "spontaneity" or "subjectivism," of drifting instead of consciously directing — ever be turned back on the directors? The book's whole structure makes it impossible. When ordinary Soviet life goes wrong it is "spontaneity," a

survival of capitalism to be mastered. When the leadership goes wrong it is "subjectivism," the error of individuals, curable by "collective leadership." Never is unaccountable direction itself named as a structural cause of anything.

Glezerman comes within one paragraph of naming it, and the paragraph is the most honest and the most evasive in the book. Discussing the state, he concedes: "since the civil servants engaged in the work of administration also have their own interests, instances are possible when some of them may place their own interests above those of the entire people." He goes further: "it is impossible to rule out the possibility of their becoming divorced from the people, especially when socialist democracy is violated or is not adequately developed." For one sentence the suppressed truth of the entire doctrine is on the page — that the managers of the managed society might be a distinct social interest, unaccountable to those they manage. And then it is buried, at once, under a formula: "a possibility is not an inevitability. The tendency toward a divorce from the masses is not inherent in the socialist state." The safeguards he offers are that "government officials are accountable to the people and can be replaced" and that there is a "systematic struggle against bureaucracy." He does not ask the only question that matters: who holds the officials accountable, who replaces them, who conducts the struggle against bureaucracy — when the same apparatus, as this series' companion volumes document, nominates the candidates, owns the press, appoints the judges and defines the permissible limits of "socialist democracy." The science that could dissect every stratum of Soviet society declares its own directing stratum exempt by definition. The "scientific" claim does not merely describe the managers; it immunises them.

Then read the book for what it cannot say, because the silences are as exact as a fingerprint. This is a treatise on the planned, conscious, scientific direction of Soviet society, and Stalin's name appears in it zero times. The single greatest fact about the actual direction of Soviet society within its author's own adult memory — that in 1937–38 the directing apparatus arrested and shot its own citizens by the hundreds of thousands — is present only as a euphemism, "wherever... socialist legality is ignored," the official post-1956 code, offered in the same breath as ordinary managerial error. The book about how society is scientifically guided cannot report the largest thing the guides ever did. Nor can it report the debate that actually founded Soviet planning. The whole question of planned industrialisation was fought out in the Soviet 1920s, and the champions of rapid planned industrialisation were the Left Opposition — Trotsky, and the economist Preobrazhensky, whose analysis of "primitive socialist accumulation" set the

terms of the argument the Kosygin reformers were still worrying at. "Left Opposition" appears zero times; "Preobrazhensky" zero times. Trotsky appears twice, both times as "the Trotskyites," named only to record an error Lenin corrected. A book on scientific planning that erases the men who first fought for planning, and reduces the most formidable of them to a footnote of deviation, is not conducting a science. It is administering a lineage. The same discretion governs the peasantry. Collectivisation is present only as an abstract triumph, the source of the "two forms of socialist property"; the forced collectivisation of 1929–33 and the famine that killed several million people appear nowhere — "famine" does not occur in the book — and the nearest the text comes to the violence done to the village is a delicate note that "attempts to reduce to nil the personal subsidiary farming of the collective farmers... were condemned in the Soviet Union," a sentence that files a catastrophe under the heading of an administrative excess later corrected.

The reply to Glezerman was written before Glezerman wrote, and it went straight to the mechanism. In *The Soviet Economy in Danger* (October 1932), Trotsky set out the three instruments through which "the correct direction of the economy of the transitional epoch" could actually be attained: "state planning, the market and Soviet democracy" — plan commissions to project, the market to test the projections against real supply and demand, and the democratic pressure of "the innumerable living participants in the economy" to correct both. The plan, he insisted, "is checked and, to a considerable degree, realized through the market" and through "the direct pressure of supply and demand." And he named precisely the illusion that Glezerman's book would later systematise into a doctrine:

If a universal mind existed, of the kind that projected itself into the scientific fancy of Laplace — a mind that could register simultaneously all the processes of nature and society, that could measure the dynamics of their motion, that could forecast the results of their inter-reactions — such a mind, of course, could a priori draw up a faultless and exhaustive economic plan... The bureaucracy often imagines that just such a mind is at its disposal; that is why it so easily frees itself from the control of the market and of Soviet democracy.

That is the exact object Glezerman defends. "Scientific guidance of society's development," the belief that a cognising centre can direct a whole society a priori — this is the Laplacean fancy named as such, thirty-five years before the book that celebrates it. And Trotsky's point is not that planning

is impossible; it is that a plan which frees itself from the two correctives — the market's verdict and the population's — is not more scientific but less, because its author, the apparatus, "has fenced itself off from intervention by concerned millions" and so must plan blind. Glezerman's answer to bureaucratic self-interest was "a possibility is not an inevitability." Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) had already recorded the possibility as an accomplished fact: the bureaucracy "has turned into an uncontrolled force dominating the masses" (ch. 3), and under the very Constitution Glezerman's generation praised, "politics is thus once for all declared the monopoly of an uncontrolled bureaucracy" (ch. 10). The word Glezerman could not apply to the directors — uncontrolled — is the word Trotsky fixed to them and could not be argued off.

There is a deep irony here that Glezerman half-registers and cannot follow through. He is, within the narrow band the times allowed, a reformer. He warns repeatedly against "excessive centralisation in planning, which aims to provide 'from above' for everything down to the minutest detail"; he grants that the socialist economy is deformed by "an unorganised market in which prices fluctuate," yet insists that "socialist planning excludes anarchy and spontaneity, but it does not at all rule out the use of the interests of people"; he defends the Kosygin reform's grant of "operational independence" to enterprises against the centralisers. In all this he is groping toward exactly the correctives Trotsky named — that a plan must be tested against the pressure of real interests and cannot be spun a priori from a directing centre. The 1965 reform he salutes was, in its modest way, a partial rehabilitation of the market-checking that Trotsky had demanded in 1932 and that the apparatus had liquidated along with him. But Glezerman can take the insight only as a matter of managerial technique — the right "measure for blending centralisation with independence" — never as a matter of power. The market may be readmitted as an instrument the directors wield; the second corrective, Soviet democracy, the pressure of the governed upon the governors, is precisely what cannot be readmitted, because it would make the directors accountable. He will restore one of Trotsky's two levers and must suppress the other, and the one he suppresses is the one that bears on himself.

This does not make Glezerman a liar. It makes him the theorist of a system that had solved, in its own favour, the problem he treats as still open. He is honest enough to admit that officials may develop their own interests, and doctrinally obliged to deny that they had. The gap between the admission and the denial is the whole distance between a science of society and

the ideology of an administration. Read this book, then, for what it is: the philosophical charter of the managed society — lucid, orthodox, at moments genuinely acute about the difference between conscious mastery and voluntarist bluff — written by one of the managers, and constitutionally unable to make the managers an object of the mastery it preaches. Its companions in this catalogue do the same work in the neighbouring rooms: Afanasyev's *Scientific Communism* maps the destination, Osipov's *Sociology* builds the survey instruments, *Fundamentals of Political Science* draws the constitutional diagram, the collective *Scientific and Technological Revolution* supplies the futurology — and in every one of them the apparatus that commissioned the volume is the single social fact the volume cannot study. The idea at the centre of Glezerman's book is true and worth defending: that human beings can consciously master their own social development instead of being mastered by it. What his book cannot concede, and what the tradition it erased insisted on, is that mastery without accountability is not science. It is only rule, wearing the white coat.