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XV

IN THIS ISSUE

SO

MAN AFTER WORK

PE

CMEA TODAY

PH

PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIOLOGY

PE

PLANNING OF MANPOWER IN THE SOVIET UNION

and 6 more · introductions by Dmitry Chasovennikov

Volume IV, Number 3

SO	MAN AFTER WORK L. Gordon and Eduard Viktorovich Klopov	3
PE	CMEA TODAY Ninel Vladimirovna Bautina	6
PH	PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIOLOGY Georgi Pavlovich Frantsov	9
PE	PLANNING OF MANPOWER IN THE SOVIET UNION Y. Dubrovsky and others	14
IM	PRESENT-DAY CHINA M. I. Sladkovsky and others	18
IM	THE “CULTURAL REVOLUTION” Aleksei Nikolaevich Zhelokhovtsev	22
SO	THE PEOPLES OF THE NORTH AND THEIR ROAD TO SOCIALISM Vladimir Uvachan	25
SO	WOMEN TODAY Nikolai Aleksandrovich Kovalsky	30
IM	CONTEMPORARY ANTI-COMMUNISM G. Parkhomenko	34
FI	ABAI (ABRIDGED) Mukhtar Auezov	37

SOVIET SOCIETY

Man after Work

Nine hundred Soviet factory workers kept time diaries between 1965 and 1968; two sociologists counted the hours. Real empirical research, openly hedged - and it publishes the figures on women's double shift rather than hiding them.

L. Gordon and Eduard Viktorovich Klopov

Introduction to the 1975 Edition

Nine hundred workers in seven factories were asked to keep a diary. Between 1965 and 1968, at the Petrovsky iron and steel works and the Krasny Profintern machine-building plant in Dnepropetrovsk, the Dneprovsk aluminium plant in Zaporozhie, the Lenin flax works and the Iskra Oktyabrya factory in Kostroma, and the jute works in Odessa, 550 women and 350 men wrote down what they did with their hours. Leonid Gordon and Eduard Klopov then counted. *Man After Work* is what the counting produced, and it is one of the few books in this series whose argument can be checked.

Begin with the date, because the spine misleads. Progress issued this English translation, by John and Kristine Bushnell, in 1975. The Russian text is older. Its fieldwork ran 1965–68; the Taganrog survey it draws on was carried out "in 1967–69 in Taganrog by several institutes of the USSR Academy of Sciences"; the Pskov material comes from the international comparative time-budget study of 1965–66. More decisively, the book speaks of the Ninth Five-Year Plan of 1971–75 wholly in the future tense — "In 1975, social consumption funds will provide 30 per cent of the total volume of allowances and services" — and its latest source of any kind is a statistical handbook published in 1973. This is an early-1970s book describing the late 1960s, appearing in English in the middle of the decade it predicts. That gap matters, because the authors are careful to flag it themselves: "it is necessary to take into account that our data were obtained from studies undertaken from 1965 through 1968. At the present time, the level of the workers' income has risen substantially." A propagandist would have quietly refreshed the numbers.

That instinct runs through the methodology, which is stated openly and can be criticised. The sample was drawn in two stages — typical shops chosen with help from management and "social organizations", then every tenth worker taken from a list — and the authors concede the first stage is not random

while defending the second. They give a confidence statement: "with a probability of $P = 0.9$ that the relative magnitude (weight) of the basic social, demographic, educational, etc., groups differs from the corresponding indices of the hypothetical total group by no more than 5 per cent in each case." They restrict their claim accordingly: "quantitative results are limited to the cities studied." They belong to a real discipline with real ancestors, and they name them in the first footnote — Strumilin, whose time-budget work goes back to the 1920s, Prudensky, Patrushev, Grushin, Kharchev. Soviet sociology of everyday life was not invented for export. It had been running for a decade before this book, and it had a habit of finding things.

The decisive test for a book of this kind, published by this publisher, in this year, is the double burden. Progress issued *Women Today* in 1975 as well. That volume knows the concept perfectly — "twofold burden", "double burden" — and uses it only about Italy, England, West Germany and Spain. In its chapter on socialist society the double shift does not exist. The word "abortion" appears nowhere in it; neither does the Politburo; and the 1936 recriminalisation of abortion is unmentioned though 1936 is praised for its constitution. It is a book that quarantines the truth geographically.

Man After Work does not. It publishes the numbers.

"Working women devote from 2 to 2.5 times more of their time to housework than do the men, therefore they have less opportunity for rest, raising their professional skills, and cultural levels — in general, less opportunity for their own development." The gap "is approximately 12 hours a week among unmarried youth and young childless families, but reaches 18–20 hours a week in families with minor children." Table 1, the summary table of the whole study, is stark: housework, women 27 hours 20 minutes a week against men's 11 hours 40; and — the column the state would have preferred left out — "Daily cultural activity", women 11 hours 50, men 19 hours 50. The men have eight hours a week more life.

Broken down by task it is worse. On cooking: "there is no equality—nor even a hint of equality!—between women and men in this activity", and "the mean duration of food preparation and related activities for working women in major cities is 9 times(!) greater than for working men: 10–11 hours per week as opposed to 1–1.5 hours." On laundry: "in this area of housework, almost all the work is done by women". Among workers with the least education, mothers of small children spent 41 hours a week on housework — a second full-time job — against 13 hours 10 for the equivalent men. And the authors name it in exactly the words Women Today reserved for the capitalist world: "women's" activities "consume an especially large amount of non-working time and form a sort of second shift for working women."

They also isolate the variable. Young men and women in factory dormitories live in the same rooms, eat the same food, have the same laundry to do and no family to serve. "The average duration of housework among men living in dormitories was about 5–6 hours per week, while for women it was three times greater (about 18 hours), the difference between them being more than 12 hours per week (!)." No shortage of nurseries explains that. It is a finding about men.

And there is one sentence that no Soviet book of the period had any obligation to print. Comparing mothers in two-parent households with single, widowed and divorced mothers, they find the latter do less housework — three to eight hours a week less, despite having fewer adults to help. Their conclusion: "Obviously, waiting on the husband is an important part of the domestic obligations of married working women."

Read that beside Trotsky. The Revolution Betrayed, written in 1936, argued in its seventh chapter that the collapse of the socialised household had thrown women back on "home cooking and the home washtub ... that is, to the old slavery", and used, of the collective-farm woman, the very phrase Progress would spend the next forty years confining to the capitalist chapter: the private plots, he wrote, "lay a double burden upon woman." His picture of the working woman's day — "compelled to run to the shops, prepare dinner herself, and carry her children on foot from the kindergarten" — is, thirty years later, Gordon and Klopov's shopping, kitchen-work and childcare columns. Where the two books differ is in what follows. Trotsky treated the double burden as an indictment of the bureaucracy; the sociologists treat it as a planning problem with two levers, "reduce the necessary volume of housework" and "create conditions for at least a partial substitution of men's labor for women's". But on the fact itself they agree, and

the fact was published in Moscow.

The honesty extends to what the authors expect. They do not promise that services will abolish housework: "the sphere of social services will not, over the next few decades, fully replace the family production of services." They report that when Taganrog workers were asked what they would do with more free time, "almost two-thirds of the female and one-fourth of the male workers surveyed felt a lack of time for domestic affairs" — that is, the shortfall was so severe that most women's first wish for leisure was more housework. And they do the comparison that could only embarrass them. From the 1965–66 multinational study: "Time expenditures in the household economy by working women in the USSR and in the developed capitalist countries—the United States, West Germany, France—were almost identical." Half a century after October, the Soviet working woman's domestic day was the same length as the American's. The authors print it, then change the subject to the structure of those hours rather than their total. But they print it.

That is a real achievement and this introduction will not grudge it. Where the discipline had data, it published, and it outran the propaganda of its own publishing house by a distance that can be measured in a single year: 1975, one imprint, two books, one of which could not say in a hundred pages on socialist society what the other says in its third chapter.

Now the limits, which are of two kinds: subjects handled at arm's length, and subjects excluded by definition.

Drunkenness is discussed — repeatedly, and more frankly than most Progress titles allow — but never measured. It appears as a consequence: of "male companionship", which is "at present excessively widespread"; of the monotony of fathers' lives — "In the working milieu, fathers seek an outlet from the monotony and humdrum of domestic life in drink" — and of half-urbanised peasants whose expectations have outrun their conditions. The best the book can manage quantitatively is a proxy — the male-female gap in "walks without children", which "can serve as an indirect indicator of the relative level of drunkenness" — and a Taganrog finding that among men with elementary education "25–30 per cent mentioned drinking" as customary when visiting, against 10–15 per cent of those with complete secondary education. There is no consumption figure, no clinical figure, no mention that the state held the monopoly on spirits and drew a large revenue from it. Alcohol is treated as a residue of the village, curable by education; not as a fact about the Soviet economy.

Housing is handled the same way. The book knows it matters — "even today the housing problem is connected with the most pressing problems of the daily routine" — and shows its effects precisely: workers in flats with full communal conveniences spend 25–35 per cent less time on kitchen work than those without. But every housing figure it gives is an input, never an outcome: millions of people rehoused, 580 million square metres to be built, 60 per cent of investment directed to services. Square metres per person — the number every Soviet citizen actually knew — does not appear. Divorce appears six times, always as a symptom of domestic imbalance, never as a rate. Religion appears only as something nineteenth-century workers did.

The income data are the most instructive limit, because the limit is built into the sample. Mean per capita income in the families studied was "somewhat over 60 rubles per month"; the top category is "more than 75 rubles per month per capita"; and the authors present the narrow spread as a result: "Our research also reflected the characteristically small differentiation, under socialism, of the levels of industrial workers' per capita income." That is true of urban industrial workers in seven plants. It is a finding about the sample, offered as a finding about socialism. Trotsky's complaint in chapter six of *The Revolution Betrayed* was that "The budget of the worker's family in the Soviet Union, unbelievable as this may be, is a magnitude incomparably more enigmatical for the investigator than in any capitalist country"; a chapter later, of another suppressed statistic, he added that "The modest bureaucracy orders the statistician to remain silent." Gordon and Klopov are the partial answer to the first half of that charge: here, at last, are the budgets. They are no answer at all to the second. The stratum whose consumption Trotsky was asking about — the officials with the apartments, the cars, the closed shops and, in his phrase, the domestic servants filed in the statistics as "working woman" — is not in this book, because it was never in the shop lists from which the sample was drawn. The one comparison that would have tested the claim of small differentiation is the one comparison a study of factory workers cannot make.

The sharpest silence, though, is announced rather than concealed, and a reader can find it in a footnote on page one of the classification scheme. The authors list the elements of the mode of life. Item III is "Participation in civic and political activity and management". Then: "The given forms of activity (I, II, III) and the corresponding time expenditures are not given in detail, since they are not a part of the daily routine". Politics is defined out of the subject. This is a 93,000-word study of what Soviet workers do after work which measures

dominoes, television, lotto, gardening, visiting, walks, reading, evening classes, amateur choirs and the hours men spend not cooking, and does not measure one hour of political life — not a meeting, not a trade-union branch, not a Party cell, not a soviet. The book quotes Lenin on exactly this: "An illiterate person stands outside politics." It never asks whether the literate ones were inside it.

That is the boundary of the discipline, and it was not drawn by these two men. The reply to it is older than the book and, in its most exact form, is Soviet. In 1923 Trotsky ran precisely this kind of enquiry, publishing a questionnaire in an appendix to *Problems of Everyday Life*. It asked whether workers were showing an interest in the minor problems of daily life — politeness, propriety, elementary hygiene — whether "the unions play an important role in everyday life", "What do the workers do on Sunday and on holidays in general?", and whether the revolution had brought about "transformations in the family life of the workers as well as in their way of looking at the family". Intercontinental Press reprinted it, in Russell Block's translation from the 1976 French edition, on 9 October 1978, alongside Marx's workers' inquiry. The genre Gordon and Klopov were working in had been founded in the Soviet Union by a man whose name they could not print, and it had been founded with the political question inside it rather than fenced off from it. For the later argument, see the Fourth International's 1979 world congress "Resolution on Women's Liberation", published as a special supplement to Intercontinental Press/Inprecor in January 1980, which put the Soviet woman's day at four to seven hours of housework on top of an eight-hour job — a range that brackets this book's own averages, and was arrived at independently of it.

So: read *Man After Work* as the best kind of evidence, which is evidence its producers did not fully control. It is genuine social science, competently done, honestly bounded, and it contains the single fact that the Soviet state's own propaganda for women could not utter in the same year from the same address. It shows a discipline that had learned to count, working inside a system that had decided in advance which columns would be added up. The women who wrote down ten and eleven hours a week at the stove were telling the truth, and somebody in Moscow printed it. What nobody printed was the arithmetic that would have followed from asking the next question — who decided, and how the hours were distributed above the shop floor. The book stops where the sample stops, and the sample stops exactly where the bureaucracy begins.

CMEA Today: From Economic Co-operation To Economic Integration

The prospectus for Comecon integration - the socialist answer to the Common Market - by a Moscow University economist. The fullest English account of how the bloc's planning and price-setting were meant to work, written just before the oil shock broke it.

Ninel Vladimirovna Bautina

Introduction to the 1975 Edition

The English title promises more than the Russian one delivers. On the cover this is CMEA Today: From Economic Co-operation to Economic Integration — a forward march, a threshold crossed. The Russian title page underneath translates as something flatter and more honest: The Improvement of the Economic Interrelations of the CMEA Member-Countries. Progress Publishers, whose imprint this genuinely is, gave the export edition the triumphal arc; the author, N. V. Bautina — described on the book's own jacket as a Doctor of Economic Sciences and a professor at Moscow University — had written the more cautious book about adjusting a machine that was not yet running smoothly. The gap between the two titles is the gap this introduction is about.

The date matters, and it is not the date on the spine. The imprint code reads 1975, and that is when the English translation was issued, but the manuscript is older. Its latest political landmarks are the 24th Congress of the CPSU and the 25th Session of CMEA, both of 1971 — the session that adopted the Comprehensive Programme of socialist economic integration, which is the event the whole book exists to celebrate. The current five-year plan, 1971–1975, is discussed as a thing still unfolding: production "is expected to total," Bulgaria "plans to commission," output will "go up by 80 per cent by the end of 1975." Most tellingly for an economist, her account of how CMEA sets its prices stops at the review of 1965–66, which took world-capitalist prices of the late 1950s as its base. She says nothing of the price upheaval that broke over CMEA as her English edition went to press: the 1973 explosion in world oil prices, and the emergency reform of January 1975 that abandoned the fixed base for a rolling five-year average precisely to cope with it. A book on the CMEA market that does not know the oil shock happened was closed, in Russian, around 1972–73. Read it as an early-détente text in a mid-decade jacket, and the silences

below are the silences of 1972, not of 1975.

What was it for? CMEA — Comecon, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance — bound the USSR, the East European states, Mongolia and Cuba into a trading and planning bloc, and in 1971 it had just set itself the goal of "integration": coordinating investment, specialising production across borders, running fifteen or twenty years of development to a shared design. This was the socialist answer to the Common Market, and Bautina's book is the answer's prospectus, written for a reader of English who needed persuading that a planned bloc could be something better than a cartel of command economies. Her recurring contrast is the one the genre lives on. Under capitalism "the reproduction cycle is geared to further private economic interests and as such cannot be a uniform structure"; the society "is disunited and does not have any common socio-economic interest." Under socialism, common ownership yields a "common economic interest" and the possibility of a single plan. That is the frame, and it is worth taking seriously before taking it apart, because Bautina is a real economist and parts of this book are real economics.

She should be given her due first, because the series' criticism is worth nothing if it cannot. The aspiration itself — to develop the economies of a dozen countries by conscious agreement rather than leaving their fates to the world market — is a serious idea, not a slogan, and Bautina argues it as an economist rather than chanting it. Her chapters document integration that actually happened: the pooling of raw-material, fuel and energy resources across states none of which could stand alone (Czechoslovakia importing all its oil, the GDR all its oil and iron ore, Poland ninety per cent of its iron ore); the joint investment projects and coordinated five-year plans of 1971–75; the machinery of collective credit through the International Bank for Economic Co-operation. Her long central discussion of value and price is genuine theoretical work: she takes up the Marxian problem of comparing labour embodied in the products of countries at different productivity

levels, defends the use of averaged world-market prices as a base while trying to strip out their "distortions," and reasons carefully about international value as "the centre around which national values fluctuate." A reader who wants to understand how CMEA priced a tonne of Soviet oil against a Hungarian bus will learn something here that the polemics on either side rarely bother to explain.

She is also, to her credit, not a purveyor of fairy tales about harmony. In a passage that does the book more honour than its title does, she warns against exactly the picture her publisher is selling: "It would be wrong to look upon the socialist countries' community of economic interests as a kind of 'idyllic harmony' since it contains inherent contradictions." She names the sources of friction — "discrepancies in their levels of economic development, elements of state and economic isolation, the varying maturity of production relations" — and concedes that "certain divergencies between the national and overall international interests" are "inevitable." This is the reflexivity test's opening move, and Bautina passes the easy version of it: error is admitted, contradiction is admitted, the bloc is not painted as a seamless whole.

And then the category is withheld. This is where the book turns, and it turns on the discriminator this series has learned to apply: a Soviet volume will grant that its own side made mistakes, but it will never let the classification it reserves for the enemy point homeward. Bautina has built, over her fourth chapter, a full apparatus for analysing exploitation between nations. "International economic relations among the capitalist countries are based on exploitation and domination of the strong over the weak." The imperialist powers extract wealth "out of the economically backward countries through non-equivalent exchange and the export of capital"; value "acts in the world capitalist economy as a law of exploitation, of the plunder of developing countries." She defines non-equivalent exchange precisely — the power "to impose terms of exchange which are advantageous to it alone. This is the essence of non-equivalent exchange" — and she knows the mechanism that produces it, observing that "countries with a high labour productivity gain more from an equivalent commodity exchange" than their poorer partners.

Every one of these tools is the tool needed to ask the live question about CMEA itself: in an exchange of Soviet oil and ore for East European machinery, priced off a lagging world-market base, who gained? The debate over whether the USSR subsidised or milked its partners was real, and it was being conducted in the West and quietly within the bloc as Bautina wrote. She has the concepts. She does not turn them

inward. The one time she brings equivalence to bear "with economic relations between socialist countries," it is to dissolve the question: "the importance of equivalent exchange is often exaggerated and is sometimes even identified with mutual benefit." Non-equivalent exchange, exploitation, the domination of the weak by the strong — these are predicated, across the whole book, only of capitalism and of imperialism's relation to the Third World. Between socialist states, common ownership is taken to guarantee that whatever the price ratios, the outcome is "mutual benefit." Error is admissible; the category is not. A socialist country may develop unevenly, may be "isolated," may diverge — but it cannot, by construction, be on either end of an unequal exchange with its neighbours.

The book's most eloquent evidence, though, is what it will not name, and here the reader has to know the history the text is quietly editing. The Comprehensive Programme of 1971 was not the natural fruit of harmony; it was a compromise forced by a decade of open conflict over precisely the "socialist division of labour" that gives Bautina her central category (she uses the phrase more than a hundred and forty times). In the early 1960s the USSR had pushed for supranational planning — a central CMEA organ that would assign each country its role. Romania refused, declining to be fixed as an agrarian supplier of the industrial north, and in 1964 came close to walking out. The Fourth International saw this clearly at the time. Its Eighth World Congress documents, printed in the *International Socialist Review* (vol. 27 no. 2, Spring 1966), describe the Soviet leaders scrambling to keep "a minimum of cohesion with Rumania, which was ready to break with the COMECON if this meant modifying development plans that stressed industrializing the country." The 1971 Programme is the settlement of that fight: it enshrined unanimity, voluntary participation and "no supranationality" as the price of Romanian assent.

Bautina's book is a monument to that defeat presented as a victory — and it registers the defeat only in its nervous tic. Again and again it insists on "respect for state sovereignty, independence and national interest, non-interference"; it defines CMEA as "an alliance of sovereign states, who are the rightful owners of their own means of production." Why the drumbeat of sovereignty in a hymn to integration? Because sovereignty was the flag under which integration had been fought to a standstill. The one member that made the book's whole argument a contest appears in these pages only as columns of trade figures — "Rumania (petroleum products)," "5,000 million roubles" of turnover — never as the state that nearly broke the bloc over the very principle Bautina is

expounding. She names the country nineteen times and the conflict not once.

Czechoslovakia is the sharper case, because there the erasure is doubled. The country appears twenty-five times — importing oil, mining coking coal, projecting nuclear capacity "by 1990" — and never once as the country invaded by its allies in August 1968. The year 1968 occurs six times in the book; every instance is a statistic. The Prague Spring had an economic heart: Ota Šik's market reforms, an attempt to loosen the command system and, in part, to renegotiate Czechoslovakia's terms within CMEA. The tanks that ended it reasserted the discipline Bautina calls integration. She does mention "economic reform in the European socialist countries" — and neutralises it in a sentence, allowing the reforms only a "unique character" that "does nothing to erode the unity of its principal trends." The reforms become minor local colour on a single design; the man who led the boldest of them, Šik, is absent, as are Dubček, Prague, and the invasion itself. Intercontinental Press, reporting from the wreckage in February 1971, let a Czech dissident say what the book cannot: "Ota Šik was striving for — decentralized leadership, which is impossible in the present situation" (IP0906, 15 February 1971). Bautina's silence on 1968, in a book on how the bloc is bound together, is the silence of a book that cannot say what the binding cost. Yugoslavia, the market-socialist heretic just outside CMEA, and Albania, which quit it, are absent altogether — the two live alternatives to her model, unmentionable because to mention them would be to concede there was a choice.

The reply to a book like this is not a rival set of statistics but a different account of what the bloc was. Trotsky supplied it in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), the standard against which every Soviet self-portrait in this series should be read. His claim was that the USSR was not the harmonious community of its own propaganda but a workers' state deformed by a privileged bureaucracy — that "Soviet society is already divided into a secure and privileged minority, and a majority getting along in want" (ch. 6). Extend that stratum's logic across borders and Bautina's alliance of sovereign states furthering a common interest reads differently: a set of bureaucratic command economies whose planners answered first to their own national apparatuses, whose "integration" was negotiated between those apparatuses under the shadow of Soviet power, and whose harmony was maintained, when persuasion failed, by the means used at Prague. Ernest Mandel, the Fourth International's ablest economist, argued the general case at length — that the bureaucratic plan does not abolish the law of value or the pull of national interest but suppresses their

expression, so that the "disproportions" and antagonisms Bautina ascribes to capitalist anarchy reappear inside the bloc as shortage, hoarding, and the endless haggling over prices and specialisation that CMEA's own history records. Where Bautina sees common ownership guaranteeing mutual benefit, this tradition sees the unresolved question of who plans, for whom — the question her category of non-equivalent exchange was built to ask and was forbidden to ask at home.

So read CMEA Today for the half of it that is honest work: the pricing theory, the documentation of real joint projects, the flat admission that the community "contains inherent contradictions." That admission is the crack through which everything else should be read. Bautina knew the bloc was not an idyll; she had the tools to measure exactly how it was not; and she was permitted to point every one of them outward and none of them inward. The two questions this series puts to such a book are whether its accusations are cashed into acts that could be shown not to have happened, and whether the category it wields against the enemy could ever, in principle, apply to the author's own side. On the first Bautina is careful and often persuasive about capitalism. On the second the answer is the one that dates and convicts the book: Romania had nearly left over this, Czechoslovakia had been invaded over it, and in the economics of socialist integration, the word for what the strong may do to the weak was available in every chapter — and reserved, always, for the other side of the wall.

Philosophy and Sociology

The history of social thought from antiquity to Talcott Parsons, by the man who ran the Academy of Social Sciences, the Foreign Ministry press desk and World Marxist Review - published when Soviet sociology was still recovering from having been abolished.

Georgi Pavlovich Frantsov

Introduction to the 1975 Edition

The author of this book had been dead for six years when it appeared in English. The preface says so on its first line: "Georgy Frantsov (1903–1969) was a leading scientist who specialised in philosophy, history, scientific communism and sociology." It also says what the book is made of: "The bulk of the book consists of his work, *The Historical Path of Social Thought*, which was first published in 1965", plus articles "mostly written in the last few years of his life", some of them "presented in abridged form".

So the date on the spine is the least informative fact about this volume, and the internal evidence is consistent. The latest Party congress it can cite is the twenty-second, and it cites it through a newspaper: "the eve of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU on October 15, 1961". The twenty-third congress of 1966 and the twenty-fourth of 1971 are absent. The one contemporary event that breaks the 1965 ceiling is Czechoslovakia, which enters through the late articles and only in the official formula — "The attacks by the reactionary forces on Czechoslovakia's socialist gains" — so the newest thought in the book is from 1968 or 1969. Every citation dated after 1969 is a Moscow or Berlin reprint of Marx, Engels, Lenin or Gramsci, swapped in by the translator to whatever English edition Progress had in stock; the freshest is a 1974 *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*. The extracted front matter carries no copyright year at all, only a Soviet printing code whose final digits read "-77", which does not agree with the catalogue either. Read this as a mid-sixties book with a tail of late-sixties articles, issued in English in the middle of the following decade. Nothing in it was written by a living man after 1969.

Who was he? The preface is unusually candid, and it is worth reading as a job description rather than a eulogy. Frantsov was "Director of the Institute of International Relations, head of the Press Department of the USSR Foreign Ministry, Rector of the Academy of Social Sciences under the CPSU Central

Committee, Editor-in-Chief of *World Marxist Review*, and Deputy Director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the CPSU Central Committee." A footnote adds that "Many of his works were published under various pseudonyms, including Y. P. Frantsov and Yu. Frantsev." This is not a scholar working under constraint. This is a man who trained the trainers, ran the Foreign Ministry's press desk, and edited the world movement's theoretical monthly — one of the small number of people who decided what the constraint was. The book was commissioned as what it looks like: an authoritative survey, for export, of the entire history of social thought from Antiquity to Talcott Parsons, by the man who had run the Academy that taught it.

That matters because of the subject, which in 1975 was live and dangerous in a way an English reader would not guess from the placid title. Sociology in the Soviet Union had been abolished. Denounced as a bourgeois pseudo-science under Stalin, it was reconstituted only from the late 1950s, and reconstituted under a euphemism — "concrete social research" — a formula that let empirical work proceed on condition that it did not claim to be a discipline. To publish a book called *Philosophy and Sociology* in this decade was to stand on that fault line. The question to put to it is not whether it likes Comte. It is: what is sociology permitted to be here, who is allowed to have founded it, and what is it allowed to count?

The answers are consistent, and they are restrictive.

Sociology, in this book, is essentially a bourgeois word for a bourgeois need. The account of its origin is explicit: as the social sciences accumulated facts in the nineteenth century, "The bourgeoisie was in need of pseudo-scientific schemes, and these soon appeared in the form of 'sociological systems'"; "That is when the term 'sociology' appeared and Comte and Spencer propounded their sociological systems." Frantsov opens his chapter on twentieth-century theory by borrowing a line from Alfred Weber and endorsing it: "Sociology is the daughter of the greatest crisis in the life of the West. That was the view taken of bourgeois sociology by the late West

German Professor Alfred Weber. We must agree with him." The phrase "bourgeois sociology" occurs thirty-one times in the book. "Marxist sociology" occurs three times, only once in the body text, and even there it is a synonym rather than a discipline — "Such, in short, are the conclusions drawn by Marxist sociology about historical epochs".

What Marxism has instead is stated plainly, and it is a doctrine of subordination: "Generalisation of all the concrete social sciences is contained in historical materialism which means an application of the principles of dialectical materialism to social phenomena." The concrete social sciences produce material; historical materialism generalises it; and historical materialism is itself an application of a philosophy. On this scheme, sociology has no floor of its own to stand on. Frantsov endorses Gramsci to close the point — "without historical materialism sociology amounts to no more than an 'empirical compilation of practical observations'" — and then draws the moral against "the popularity of 'empirical sociology' among present-day Western scientists."

Who, then, is allowed to have founded the thing? Lenin, and nobody after him. The book's one sustained passage on method takes Lenin's *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* as the model of grouping and statistical analysis — the attack on peasant "averages" that "obscure the differentiation, and are therefore purely fictitious" is quoted at length and used well — and then turns to "A Great Beginning" of 1919, in which Lenin analysed "press reports from May 17 to June 8, 1919, about the communist subbotniks". That is the second and last canonical instance of Soviet empirical social research offered anywhere in four hundred pages: a study of newspaper coverage of voluntary Saturday work-parties, conducted fifty-six years before the English edition. From it Frantsov draws the general rule: "For every adherent of the scientific method in sociology, Lenin's writings are a model of in-depth research into concrete social phenomena, and the use of the latest mathematical method makes no difference."

That last clause is the hinge of the whole book, and it should be read slowly. It concedes that there are now mathematical methods. It declines to be interested in them. And the sentences that follow explain why nobody needs them: "The CPSU Programme and other Party documents contain an analysis of the most important social processes today. On the basis of a profound sociological analysis, propositions on building communist society in the USSR which are of exceptional practical and theoretical importance have been put forward." The sociology of Soviet society exists, and it is the Party Programme. No living Soviet sociologist is named in this

book. No institute, no survey, no sample, no table, no figure about the USSR appears in it. "Public opinion" is invoked eleven times and every single time it is public opinion in the capitalist countries or in the international arena.

Now the absences, which are where a book of this kind does most of its work.

Bukharin. *Historical Materialism: A System of Sociology* (1921) was the book that gave the discipline a Soviet name, was used as a textbook across the Comintern, and was the direct ancestor of exactly the enterprise this volume is titled after. It is not mentioned. Bukharin appears four times: three in a passage where Lenin corrects him on where revolution begins — "This idea of Lenin's was distorted by Bukharin, who declared in *The Economics of the Transition Period*..." — and once in the name index. He is present as an economist who erred and was refuted, and absent as the sociologist he actually was. Bukharin had been shot in 1938 and would not be rehabilitated until 1988; there was no lawful way to cite him. But it is worth noticing what the prohibition costs. A four-hundred-page history of social thought, published under the title *Philosophy and Sociology*, cannot mention the most widely read Marxist book ever written with the word sociology in its subtitle.

Plekhanov. Zero occurrences. Not one, in a book with a long, warm chapter on Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov as the Russian precursors of scientific social thought. Herzen "came right up to dialectical materialism, and halted — before historical materialism", Frantsov quotes Lenin as saying; and then the narrative walks straight from the revolutionary democrats to Marx, leaving out the man who carried historical materialism into Russian, whose *The Development of the Monist View of History* is the founding Russian text of this subject, and whom Progress itself was issuing in five volumes of *Selected Philosophical Works* over the years immediately either side of this one. There is no obvious political reason for the silence — Plekhanov was citable — which makes it a silence about intellectual paternity rather than about politics.

The purge itself. Deborin: zero. Mitin: zero. Zhdanov: zero. Stalin: zero — in a book about the history of social thought written by a man who was thirty when Hitler took power and forty-nine when Stalin died. There is no 1931, no 1947, no philosophical discussion of the twentieth congress; the congress is cited twice, both times only for the thesis that war is no longer fatally inevitable. The discipline this book is named for was destroyed and rebuilt inside the author's own

working lifetime, in institutions he later ran, and the book contains no trace of the event. That is the largest single fact about it.

Trotsky appears four times, three of them in one paragraph reciting Lenin's 1917 verdict — "Trotsky's major mistake is that he ignores the bourgeois character of the revolution and has no clear conception of the transition from this revolution to the socialist revolution" — and once in the index. The theory being attacked is never stated; the reader who wants it can find it in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930) and in *Results and Prospects* (1906).

None of that licenses dismissing the book, and section three of this series' brief is not a formality. Where Frantsov works on Western material he is well read, accurate and often generous, and the difference between his handling of the nineteenth century and his handling of Soviet reality is instructive in itself.

The treatment of Durkheim is the best thing in the volume. Frantsov has read *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893), *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895, which he calls *Method of Sociology*), *Suicide* (1897) and *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912), gets each of them substantially right, and credits them: Durkheim's insistence that the social fact is irreducible to biology or psychology "was the right way to attack"; on the religion book, "That was an achievement" and "Here he has many valuable observations". His criticism — that Durkheim made the division of labour the motor of moral and legal evolution while ignoring classes, so that "the problem of social relations... were problems he could not solve" — is a real criticism, not an incantation. Max Weber gets a serious, unhysterical reconstruction as a neo-Kantian, with the *Wissenschaftslehre* cited in German and the ideal type explained rather than sneered at. Ogburn's "cultural lag" is discussed as a proposition "which could become a scientific bridge". Even the industrial sociologists who "went off into the plants and factories to give the employers the benefit of their advice" are granted that "some of their specific observations are of some scientific interest." Karl Popper is engaged on social atomism and the reality of collectives — and engaged, as it happens, on very nearly the same ground the Trotskyist philosopher George Novack chose at almost the same moment, of which more below.

The seams show elsewhere. Talcott Parsons, the dominant sociologist alive when this was written, gets two paragraphs and one index entry; C. Wright Mills does not appear at all; the polemical energy goes instead to Toynbee (twenty-four

mentions), Rostow (ten) and the cyclical theories of civilisation, which is to say that "bourgeois sociology" here largely means Cold War philosophy of history rather than the sociology anyone was actually practising in 1965. And there is a small revealing slip. Introducing a quotation on the fate of the idea of progress, Frantsov writes "One Soviet scientist says" — and the footnote turns out to be R. Y. Vipper's *Social Doctrines and Historical Theories of the 18th and 19th Centuries*, Moscow, 1908. The Soviet scientist is a tsarist-era liberal historian quoted from a book published nine years before the revolution. The index names him; the text will not.

The strongest evidence against this book, though, does not come from outside the Soviet Union. It comes from the same publisher's own list, and it runs in two directions.

Backwards: in 1969, Progress published G. V. Osipov's *Sociology: Problems of Theory and Method*, whose Chapter 1 is titled — exactly — "Philosophy and Sociology". Osipov's book has a Part I headed "Marxist Sociology". It has chapters on "Theoretical and Applied Sociology", on "Social Facts", on "Social Group" and "Personality". It defines a subject matter: "sociologists study the social structure of society (interclass and intraclass relationships, the social institutions that regulate these relationships), the development and interaction of the systems and organisations within society." It builds out branches — the sociology of labour, in which the industrial enterprise is "a complex social system" to be studied by "empirical study" — and it proposes, without flinching, that "Social policy may also serve as the subject of independent social studies. The sociology of policy involves political and social forms and their influence on economic and social development." Where Frantsov cites Plekhanov never, Osipov rests his definition on him: "as Plekhanov wrote, 'sociology becomes a science only to the extent to which it succeeds in understanding the origin of aims of social man (social "teleology") as the necessary effect of the social process conditioned, in the end, by the course of economic development'." Osipov takes Parsons seriously enough to cite him fifteen times.

The two men were not strangers to each other's work. Osipov's bibliography carries an item in Cyrillic which the OCR has badly damaged but which reconstructs, without much doubt, as Fedoseyev and Frantsev, "Bourgeois Sociology at a Dead End", *Kommunist*, 1959, no. 17 — Frantsov himself, under the pseudonym the preface discloses, co-writing the article that helped set the terms. So the export list contains, six years apart, the man who declared bourgeois sociology bankrupt and the man who was building a Soviet one, and the later book is

the more restrictive of the two. A reader who takes the 1975 volume as the state of Soviet sociology in 1975 will have been misinformed by six years and by a whole conception of the subject.

Forwards, and more sharply: in 1975 itself, the same house issued Leonid Gordon and Eduard Klopov's *Man After Work*, a genuine time-budget study of nine hundred workers in seven factories. It is real social science, and it counts. Its summary table gives housework at 27 hours 20 minutes a week for women against 11 hours 40 for men, and — the row that matters most here — "Daily cultural activity" at 11 hours 50 for women against 19 hours 50 for men. It reports that "Working women devote from 2 to 2.5 times more of their time to housework than do the men"; that for food preparation the disparity is "9 times(!) greater than for working men: 10–11 hours per week as opposed to 1–1.5 hours"; that among young workers in factory dormitories, with no family to serve, women's housework was still "three times greater (about 18 hours)" than men's; and that all this constitutes "a sort of second shift for working women". It even prints the comparison that could only embarrass it, that Soviet and American working women's domestic hours were "almost identical". This is exactly the "latest mathematical method" Frantsov said made no difference, and it made a great deal of difference: it produced facts the state's own propaganda for women could not utter in the same year from the same address.

And yet the two books draw the same line in the same place. Gordon and Klopov's classification lists "Participation in civic and political activity and management" as item III of the mode of life, and then disposes of it in a footnote: those forms of activity and their time expenditures "are not given in detail, since they are not a part of the daily routine". A study of what Soviet workers do after work counts dominoes, lotto, television and amateur choirs, and does not count one hour of a trade-union branch, a Party cell or a soviet. Frantsov draws the identical boundary from the other side. He is perfectly willing to accept figures on political participation — provided they are Western figures about Westerners: "Bourgeois sociologists have written a great many books about the 'depolitisation' of present-day capitalist society, especially in the USA. They give figures to show that citizens stay away from the polling booths, while the public opinion polls show a decline of interest in political affairs. What they fail to say is why this is so." His complaint is not that the figures are false; it is that they are unexplained. Turn to the Soviet side of the ledger and the figures vanish, replaced by assertion: "In the USSR the working man is a good worker in production and is at the same time a public figure, who has a say in society"; "Nor is

socio-political activity separated from production or farmed out to a privileged minority: it belongs to the whole people, to the state of the whole people, and to the Communist Party."

One publisher, one year, two books, one boundary — measured on one side of the world, asserted on the other. Neither volume says why.

Frantsov states the underlying premise more baldly than a survey researcher ever could: "There are no privileged social groups in the country."

Against that sentence stands the classic counter-sociology of Soviet society, written in exile in 1936 by a man this book mentions only to record Lenin's disagreement with him in 1917. In chapter 9 of *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky reached the opposite conclusion about the same object: the bureaucracy "is in the full sense of the word the sole privileged and commanding stratum in the Soviet society." He was equally interested in why the question could not be settled by counting. In chapter 6 he wrote that "It is absolutely impossible to describe the Soviet bureaucracy in accurate figures" — partly because in a state that is the only employer the administrative apparatus has no visible edge, and partly because "upon this question the Soviet statisticians, economists and publicists preserve, as we have said, an especially concentrated silence." In chapter 9 he examined the census categories and found them designed: "the list is constructed with the direct intention of concealing the privileged upper strata, and the more deprived lower depths." And in chapter 10 he isolated the syllogism that Frantsov's book still runs on forty years later, in Stalin's own version of it: "For where there are no classes, there is in general no place for politics." That is precisely the logic by which political life becomes unmeasurable — not secret, but definitionally uninteresting, because the answer is known in advance.

Trotsky's methodological remark in that same chapter is the more useful reply, because it is addressed to people doing the work rather than to the regime: "Sociological problems would certainly be simpler, if social phenomena had always a finished character. There is nothing more dangerous, however, than to throw out of reality, for the sake of logical completeness, elements which today violate your scheme and tomorrow may wholly overturn it."

The reply on the discipline itself is George Novack's, and it is the closest thing the anti-Stalinist tradition produced to a direct answer to this book. In "Sociology and Historical Materialism" and "Positivism and Marxism in Sociology" — chapters of *Understanding History* — Novack grants sociology exactly

what Frantsov withholds: a name, a subject and a place among the sciences. "Sociology is that branch of scientific knowledge which investigates the evolution of society in its entirety and the content of social life in its fullness." He does not treat the word as an enemy's property: "It was given its own name over 150 years ago by August Comte." And the formulation that Frantsov's scheme cannot produce: "Historical materialism is a particular type of sociological theory. It is the sociological method of Marxism. It investigates the same phenomena as rival schools of sociology but in a more probing, many-sided, rigorously scientific way." The authority he cites for it is the one Frantsov's book does not name once — "The Russian Marxist Plekhanov, more correctly stated that it had an all-embracing universal jurisdiction" — and the three-part division Novack takes from Plekhanov assigns each part a discipline: "dialectical materialism is a school of philosophy, logic and theory of knowledge; historical materialism, of sociology; and scientific socialism, of political economy and revolutionary practice." Historical materialism is a sociology, not the thing that replaces sociology. That single preposition is the whole difference between the two books.

Novack's companion chapter takes up Popper, as Frantsov does, and on the same charge — that Popper's insistence on unique, non-repetitive events dissolves social science altogether. It is worth reading the two demolitions side by side. They agree substantially. But Novack argues his case out of archaeology, technology and the history of monarchy, and Frantsov argues his out of the requirements of the Party's line, and the reader can tell which is which. Novack's nine 1942 lectures, revised and published as *An Introduction to the Logic of Marxism* (5th ed., Pathfinder, 1971), are the fuller statement of his method; in Lecture II he quotes Trotsky on the point at issue here, that "To determine at the right moment the critical point where quantity changes into quality is one of the most important and difficult tasks in all the spheres of knowledge including sociology" — a task, note, requiring measurement.

One more, from the tradition's own file on the misuse of the word. In chapter 8 of *The Third International After Lenin* (1928), Trotsky mocked a Comintern draft for demanding that the colonial bourgeoisie's capacity to fight be proved "in a rigorous 'sociological' manner, that is by a thousand and one scholastic schemes adapted to opportunist purposes." He was writing about Bukharin. The scare quotes had been earned early.

A last word about what could not be found. Frantsov and Osipov are absent — entirely absent — from every reply corpus available here: 763 issues of *Intercontinental Press*

searched page by page, the complete English Trotsky, the ETOL run of Fourth International, the English Biulleten' Oppozitsii, Novack's collected articles, the International Viewpoint and Inprecor scans. So does the phrase "Soviet sociology". The Fourth International tracked the Moscow Trials, Lysenko, the purge of Soviet culture and Zhdanov's 1947 intervention in philosophy, and it did not track this. The finding is worth stating rather than concealing: the tradition answered the doctrine and ignored the discipline, and a Western reader who wanted to know in 1975 what Soviet sociologists were finding out about Soviet life had to read Progress Publishers to learn it — which, in the case of *Man After Work*, actually worked.

Read *Philosophy and Sociology*, then, as the ceiling rather than the floor. It is a competent, sometimes distinguished history of European social thought written by a very senior official who had spent his career deciding what could be said, published after his death, in a decade whose own sociologists had already gone further than he permitted. Its scholarship on Durkheim and Weber can be trusted. Its silence about Bukharin was compulsory; its silence about Plekhanov was not. And its central proposition about the society that produced it — that there are no privileged social groups in the country — is not a finding at all. It is the premise that made the finding unnecessary, and it is the reason that the one Soviet study of the period which did count the hours was careful, in a footnote, not to count the hours that would have tested it.

Planning of Manpower in the Soviet Union

How the Soviet Union planned the allocation of its workforce - labour balances, training, recruitment, the distribution of workers between sectors and regions - described by the planners themselves rather than by outside observers.

Y. Dubrovsky and others

Introduction to the 1975 Edition

A book about the planning of labour is bound to be, at some level, a book about compulsion — about who works, at what, and where, and about the force that stands behind the answer. Planning of Manpower in the Soviet Union is unusual among the volumes in this series in saying so out loud on its first page. "Social ownership of the means of production," writes L. Danilov in the third chapter, "excludes exploitation of the labour of others; it stipulates compulsory participation of all able-bodied members of the society in socially useful work." The Introduction is blunter still. Quoting the maxim the young Soviet government "immediately proclaimed" — "he who does not work, neither shall he eat" — it adds a single flat sentence: "This principle has been strictly observed ever since."

Everything that is interesting about this book, and everything it cannot say, lives in the gap between that admission and the picture of untroubled freedom the same pages insist upon.

What the book is, and when

The volume is a Progress Publishers export title of 1975, and unlike several books in this series the spine date is close to honest. It is a collective work: an Introduction and one chapter by Y. Dubrovsky, the other nine by named specialists in economic and labour planning — K. Aslanyan, L. Berry and G. Perov, Danilov, N. Zabelin, N. Ivanov, V. Bitunov, K. Remizov, M. Chistyakov and, on labour law, A. Pyatakov. These are not apparatus polemicists but planning professionals, and the book reads like the manual it is. Its latest signposts are the 24th Congress of the CPSU (1971) and the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1971–75), which it discusses as current business; its statistics run to 1971 and 1972, drawn from the handbook National Economy of the USSR in 1922–1972. Nothing later intrudes. This is a text of about 1973–74, published in 1975, and it argues from that moment.

It is worth asking who the book was written for, because it tells us. The Introduction explains that "in accordance with the request of the World Labour Organisation" — the International Labour Organisation — "the Soviet Union arranges seminars on this subject for representatives of Asian, African and Latin American countries," and that the authors hope "the developing countries which have decided to build and regulate their own independent economies" can learn from Soviet method. This is a détente-era book of technical assistance, offering the machinery of Gosplan (the State Planning Committee) as a model for newly independent states. That commission shapes everything. The tone is administrative and confident, the audience is assumed to be a foreign planner rather than a hostile critic, and the ideological claims are pitched as the settled findings of a science.

The doctrine, stated precisely

Strip away the organisational detail — the four groups of planning organs, the balances, the indicators — and the argument has a clean shape, and it is a serious one.

Capitalism, the book holds, structurally requires unemployment. "Capitalism without a reserve army of labour would cease to be capitalism," runs the Introduction, invoking Marx's phrase; the capitalist system "is not and cannot be interested in the planned and full employment of society's labour resources." Socialism, having socialised the means of production and abolished the market in labour, removes the mechanism that produces joblessness. Hence Danilov's central contrast: "In the capitalist countries full employment is only possible for certain periods, but in the Soviet Union it is general and constant." Pyatakov dates the achievement exactly — "Unemployment in the USSR was completely eliminated in 1930" — and grounds it in law: Article 118 of the 1936 Constitution guarantees "the right to work, i.e., the right for guaranteed work paid according to its quantity and quality," a right secured precisely "by eliminating the possibility of economic crises."

The right to work has a twin, and the book states it without embarrassment: the duty to work. Article 12 of the same Constitution makes labour "the sacred duty of every citizen," and Danilov names the mechanism in one striking sentence: "This compulsion is combined with the society's duty to provide jobs in the national economy for all able-bodied people." The instrument that reconciles the two is the balance of labour resources — the summary reckoning, drawn up sector by sector and region by region, of how many hands the economy will have and where the plan will place them.

Put fairly, this is the strongest card socialism could play in 1975, and no honest critic should pretend otherwise. A worker in Detroit or Turin who lost his job in the recession of 1974–75 had no guaranteed alternative; a Soviet worker, in principle and largely in practice, did. The elimination of mass open unemployment was real, and it was a thing the capitalist economies of that decade conspicuously could not promise.

What a manpower plan cannot describe

The trouble is that the book, having named compulsion once, spends the rest of its length denying that it exists. The Introduction insists that planned employment "entails no restrictions whatever of the freedom of the individual in choosing an occupation," and that "any claims of such 'restrictions' made by bourgeois critics of the socialist system are completely false." Danilov assures the reader that "the migration of workers in the Soviet Union is a matter of voluntary choice on the basis of personal material interests." Pyatakov, cataloguing the legal forms by which manpower is moved about the country, writes that transfer, recruitment and mobilisation campaigns "are all based on the principle of free choice."

A manpower plan that assigns labour, and simultaneously insists labour is never assigned, has committed itself to a set of silences. They are the substance of the book, and they are large.

The first is the internal passport. The book describes the movement of workers between town and country, between republics, and into the "virgin lands," always as voluntary migration — and never once mentions the propiska, the residence permit stamped in the internal passport, without which a Soviet citizen could not lawfully live where he chose. The system is not a marginal detail: it is the actual mechanism by which the state governed the distribution of population that this book claims to plan. More pointedly still, at the very moment the book was being written, collective farmers did not

hold internal passports at all — a fact that tied them to the kolkhoz (collective farm) as surely as any older bondage — and were only granted them by a decree of 28 August 1974, phased in over the following years. A book of 1973–75 on the planned distribution of manpower, silent on the single largest reform of the passport regime in a generation, taking place as it wrote, has not simply omitted a fact. It has removed the subject.

The second silence is the criminal law of labour. The book quotes "he who does not work, neither shall he eat" as a benign folk principle, "strictly observed ever since." It does not mention how the principle was enforced. It says nothing of the anti-"parasite" legislation — the RSFSR decree of 4 May 1961 directed against those who avoided socially useful work and lived, in its phrase, a parasitic way of life, which made not holding a state job a punishable status, sanctioned by exile and corrective labour. It says nothing of the wartime and post-war labour code: the decree of 26 June 1940 that criminalised absenteeism and unauthorised quitting of one's job, or the labour-reserve decree of 2 October 1940 that conscripted teenagers into vocational training and directed them to work — the very "labour reserves" whose descendant vocational-school system the book celebrates. Pyatakov's own chapter half-lets the mechanism show: a graduate who "fails to report or refuses to start work without valid reasons... is dismissed for breach of discipline," and one who "decides to quit of his own accord... is obliged to pay back the travelling expenses." This is the assignment of specialists — *raspredelenie*, the compulsory posting of graduates — described in the language of a guarantee.

The third silence is the largest, and it is historical. The book's Chapter One narrates the history of Soviet planning from the Supreme Council of National Economy of 1917, through GOELRO in 1920 and the First Five-Year Plan of 1928, to the Great Patriotic War, when "planning was completely subordinated to the need for re-organising the economy." In this entire account of how the Soviet economy was built, there is not one word about the labour that built much of it. The historical record is not in serious dispute: a vast forced-labour economy, administered through the camp system, supplied the workforce for the White Sea–Baltic Canal, for mining at Norilsk and the gold of Kolyma, for timber, canals and construction across the 1930s and 1940s. Millions passed through it. A book whose subject is precisely the sources and distribution of Soviet manpower, and whose history reaches back to the years when that system was at its height, cannot mention it. The word "camp" appears in these pages only in "campaign."

And there is a quieter, technical silence that a planner especially should notice. "Full employment... general and constant" was in practice sustained partly by overstaffing — enterprises hoarding labour against the next plan target, padding their rolls, carrying more workers than the work required. The book gestures at the edge of this when it concedes that "the problem of full employment can never be solved completely" and mentions the planned retraining of a "redundant labour force," but it never names disguised unemployment for what it was. Full employment guaranteed by a soft budget and an insatiable demand for bodies is a genuine social good and a genuine economic problem at once; the book keeps only the first half.

The answer that was already in print

The Soviet worker's condition under the plan had been described, decades before this book, by the tradition from which this introduction is written — and described in the exact terms the book converts into propaganda.

In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), written as the 1936 Constitution the book leans on was being promulgated, Trotsky took up the very maxim of the Introduction and gave it its real Soviet form. Describing how expelled Oppositionists were denied work — Stalin, "through Pravda, openly advised the local organs not to give them work," and "in a country where the sole employer is the state, this means death by slow starvation" — he drew the conclusion this book's serene sentence cannot: "The old principle: who does not work shall not eat, has been replaced with a new one: who does not obey shall not eat." That is the answer to "strictly observed ever since." When the state is the only employer, the duty to work and the right to work fuse into a single instrument of control, and the same guarantee that shelters the loyal worker starves the disobedient one.

Trotsky also named the very institution this book erases. Listing the measures by which collectivisation "revived throughout the country the atmosphere of the seemingly so long ended civil war," he included "a restoration of the passport system" — the internal passport, identified in 1936 as an instrument of coercion, and unmentionable in 1975.

The deepest reply, though, is to the book's governing conceit: that the allocation of a nation's labour is a matter of scientific "balances" drawn up by expert commissions. In *The Soviet Economy in Danger* (1932), Trotsky anatomised exactly this pretension. "If a universal mind existed," he wrote — the omniscient intelligence imagined by Laplace — "such a mind,

of course, could a priori draw up a faultless and exhaustive economic plan, beginning with the number of acres of wheat down to the last button for a vest. 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." His alternative was not the market alone but a system of three checks — plan commissions, trade, and "Soviet democracy, as a system for the living regulation by the masses of the structure of the economy" — because "the plan is checked and, to a considerable degree, realized through the market," and by the direct pressure of "the innumerable living participants in the economy." Planning of Manpower is a monument to the universal mind Trotsky described: the balance of labour resources is the plan for the last worker down to the last vest-button, drawn by officials who have "fenced off" the workers whose lives they allocate. Its authors would have been genuinely puzzled by the charge, which is the point. The instrument feels to its wielders like science, precisely because the people it moves have no way to answer back.

What is worth keeping

None of this makes the book worthless, and the series does not pretend it does. Two of its achievements were real, and the volume documents them in concrete and usable detail.

The first is mass technical training. The chapters on vocational schools, apprenticeship, day-release courses, correspondence and evening study, paid examination leave and the retraining of redundant workers describe a genuine and enormous machine for lifting a peasant society to industrial skill. Paid leave for study, wages retained in full during retraining, free vocational instruction guaranteed in law — these were substantive provisions, and many workers in the capitalist economies of 1975 had nothing comparable. Whatever the coercions surrounding it, the Soviet Union did teach tens of millions of people a trade, and this book shows the apparatus that did it.

The second is the transformation of women's work. The book records, plainly, that the share of women among workers and office employees rose from 24 per cent in 1928 to 39 per cent in 1940 to 51 per cent in 1970, and it links this to the expansion of crèches, kindergartens and canteens that made it possible. That women should carry the "double burden" of paid work and unshared housework is a criticism this tradition has always pressed; but the movement of women into paid, skilled, independent employment on this scale was one of the

real social revolutions of the century, and the book credits it accurately.

So the reader is left with a document of a particular and revealing kind: an honest technical description of half a system, written by people who could see the machinery of allocation clearly because they built it, and who could not see — or could not print — the compulsion that made it run. The right to work was real. The reserve army was really abolished. And the price, which Trotsky had named forty years before, was a state that owned every job and therefore held every worker, in a country where the passport that governed where you lived, and the law that punished the man who would not work, were the two things a book on the planning of manpower could not describe.

Present-Day China

Soviet, Hungarian and East German specialists report on the Chinese economy and social system, each from his own country's research - with Sladkovsky, the senior Soviet sinologist, opening on what the People's Republic inherited.

M. I. Sladkovsky and others

Introduction to the 1975 Edition

This is the volume in which Soviet-bloc criticism of China had to stop being an argument and become a measurement. The four other China titles in this series are polemics, memoirs or philosophical indictments; *Present-Day China: Socio-Economic Problems* is a working conference of economists, demographers and agrarian sociologists, and it can be judged by the standard such people accept — whether the numbers are honestly got and what is done with them. On that standard it is a much better book than its neighbours on the shelf, and it fails at exactly one place, which happens to be the largest event it describes.

Begin with what it is. Thirteen papers, from seven countries: five Soviet contributors (M. I. Sladkovsky, E. A. Konovalov, G. V. Astafyev, G. D. Sukharchuk, V. I. Akimov, L. A. Volkova), two from the German Democratic Republic, and one each from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland and Mongolia. Every author's country is printed after their name, which tells you the multilateral character of the enterprise was the point. This is not a Moscow book with foreign decoration; it is the collective product of the China institutes of the Warsaw Pact, and the same roster of ruling parties that the companion volume *Maoism Through the Eyes of Communists* assembled in 1970 is here assembled again — and again with Romania, Yugoslavia, Cuba, Vietnam and Korea absent. But there the resemblance ends, because these people are not journalists. Sladkovsky, who opens the book with a fifty-page survey, is the senior figure here, and the volume's apparatus shows what stood behind him: sustained reading of the Chinese press, wage tables from named enterprises, and contributors who cite Chinese-language sources directly rather than at second hand. The Hungarian contributor G. Gidaszi does not write a paper on China at all but a paper on Hungarian studies of China — a research-programme report, complete with an admission that the whole field is "complicated by many factors, like the lack of any reliable statistical data". That is a scholarly volume's opening move.

The date on the spine is 1975. The date of the text is 1972. The latest evidence anywhere in eighty-two thousand words is a set of "figures carried by the Chinese press in early 1972"; the year 1972 occurs once, 1973 and 1974 not at all. Two chapters announce their vintage in their titles — J. Herbert's "The Chinese Working Class: Its Role and Condition in 1964 and 1965," J. Rowinski's "On the Question of China's Internal Development in the 1970s," the latter a forecast that had already been overtaken by Nixon in Peking before Galina Sdobnikova's translation reached the printers. Read it as a book of 1972 with a 1975 jacket, which also means reading it as a book written before the Tenth Congress of the CPC, before Lin Biao's death was public knowledge in the form the authors would have wanted, and before the reopening of China to Western economists.

The evidentiary problem these authors faced was real and is worth stating plainly, because everything else follows from it. The People's Republic published a full statistical apparatus through the First Five-Year Plan and then, from about 1960, essentially stopped. There was a census in 1964, but its results were not released for eighteen years. So an economist writing in 1972 about the Chinese economy had three things and no more: the official series up to 1959, the Chinese press, and arithmetic. This volume uses all three, and it is candid about the third. Konovalov, the demographer, writes "According to my estimates" and "the author's estimate" where he means it; the population chapter is openly a reconstruction. The press base is thin but real — *Jenmin jihpao* is cited fifteen times, along with *Hungchi*, the trade-union daily *Kungjen jihpao*, provincial papers like *Liaoning jihpao*, and Chinese-language economic literature in Russian translation. What the book conspicuously does not do is what Western Kremlinology of the period did, which is to build its picture out of refugee interviews and Hong Kong rumour. There is exactly one mention of Hong Kong in the whole volume.

Given that, a good deal of the empirical work holds up, and some of it is better than anything then available in English. The strongest single chapter is T. Feferkon's "On the Two

Spheres of the Chinese Economy," a short piece of institutional economics that models the PRC as two interlocking systems: a centrally controlled sphere of large industry, arms, railways, banking, foreign trade and grain procurement, and a locally controlled sphere of agriculture, small industry, handicrafts and retail employing "more than 85 per cent of the total population" — whose function is to finance the first. Feferkon then does the arithmetic, estimating the agricultural surplus product at about 15 per cent of gross agricultural output, direct taxes at 7 per cent, and identifying the price spread between industrial and agricultural goods as the real extraction mechanism. He adds that the local sphere must absorb "the urban dwellers who are forced to move into the countryside," which is the rustication of educated youth correctly identified as an employment policy rather than a moral crusade. This is a serious model, and it anticipates by some years the Western consensus that Chinese industrialisation was financed by a price scissors against the peasantry. It is also, and the authors never say so, a straight description of the mechanism that Evgeny Preobrazhensky theorised for the Soviet Union in *The New Economics* (1926) under the name of primitive socialist accumulation — an argument for which he was expelled with the Left Opposition and shot in 1937. The concept is used here; the man is not mentioned.

L. A. Volkova's chapter on the countryside is the second genuine contribution. It is precise where precision is available: mutual-aid groups covering more than half of peasant households by 1954, the abandonment of the gradual timetable in the second half of 1955, 92 per cent of households in producer co-operatives by mid-1956, and then the communisation of August–September 1958 — "In only one month, by late September 1958, most of the co-operatives were united in 26,600 communes, whose membership totalled 98 per cent of all peasant households." Her verdict is a strictly Marxist one and it is correct: "The state of the productive forces in the Chinese countryside on the eve of the massive co-operation campaign showed that there was no objective need to rush into co-operation." The retreat to the brigade and then the team is traced accurately, and she draws the right conclusion — "The changes in the 'people's commune' system were indisputable proof that their establishment was premature."

Herbert's chapter on the working class is the third, and here the volume prints hard data of a kind that simply was not otherwise obtainable: a table of average wages and bonus schemes at named enterprises — the Second Textile Mill in Shanghai, a Shanghai grinding-tool factory — for 1963–66,

sourced to the Chinese press, and the finding that skilled workers' monthly wages averaged 60–65 yuan in 1965. Sladkovsky's own chapter puts the same fact in a sentence with the household budget attached: "A wage of 50–60 yuans a month for a family of five or six persons went to pay only for the rationed foodstuffs and consumer goods, namely, three metres of cotton print and a few pieces of knitted goods a year."

And the book is right, as this series has now said three times about three different Soviet volumes, on what happened to Chinese workers' organisations. Sladkovsky sets it out without ornament: the campaign against "'bourgeois economism', that is, against the requirement of material incentives in production, was dubbed a class struggle, with the Maoists seeking to stamp out the working people's 'economism'"; the trade unions were disbanded and by 1972 had not been restored; on the new revolutionary committees "the working class has virtually no organised representation of any kind." Every clause of that is true. The anti-economism campaign of 1967 did criminalise the wage demand; the All-China Federation of Trade Unions was destroyed and not rebuilt for a decade; the Shanghai stoppages were suppressed. Livio Maitan, writing for the Fourth International from the same Chinese press, reached the same conclusions from the opposite direction and stated the principle the Soviet authors leave implicit: "Rejection of material incentives as the supreme criterion is justified but it would be absolutely wrong to reject not only all kinds of material incentives but also all wage and income increases for the masses" ("Report on the 'Cultural Revolution' in China," *Intercontinental Press*, vol. 7 no. 26, 14 July 1969). Maitan also noted, from outside, the thing this book's authors could establish only by inference: that "for all practical purposes, it seems that no more general increases were given after 1959."

Now the test. This is the socio-economic volume — the one with the demographer, the agrarian sociologist, and a whole chapter titled "The Mao Group's Economic Policy During the 'Great Leap Forward' and Its Effects." The Great Leap famine of 1959–61 is the largest event in the economic history of the People's Republic and one of the largest famines in recorded history. Modern estimates of excess deaths are genuinely contested and the range is wide: Frank Dikötter has argued for at least 45 million, Yang Jisheng for around 36 million, and a revisionist literature puts the figure closer to 15 million. Nobody serious puts it below that. This book does not put a figure on it, which in 1972 would have been forgivable. What it does instead is not.

The word "famine" appears twice in eighty-two thousand

words. Neither instance refers to the Great Leap. One is Konovalov's hypothetical list of the conditions under which people postpone marriage — "war, forced labour, chronic famine or lack of sources of livelihood." The other is a quotation of the Maoist slogan about preparing the people for "war and famine." The word "starvation" does not appear. Nobody in this book dies.

M. Kubeshova's chapter on the Great Leap is fourteen pages of intelligent economics and contains no deaths. It has the shape of the catastrophe exactly right — the depletion of food stocks in the winter of 1957/58, the exhaustion of the manpower reserve by the summer of 1958, the harvest that could not be brought in, the supply crisis of the winter of 1958/59, the fall in farm output in 1959 and in consumer goods in 1960, foreign trade "largely switched to food imports." It even has the mechanism: the communes "sought to channel into accumulation too great a share of their income, even at the expense of the farmers' individual consumption," and consumption in China was already "somewhere round the bare subsistence minimum required to restore labour power. This level cannot be lowered, however selfless the people, for that would inevitably impair their capacity for work." An economist who writes that sentence knows what is on the other side of it. The chapter's actual vocabulary for the other side is "supply crisis," "supply difficulties," "the consumption barrier," and, of peasants sent back from the towns, that they were "regarded mostly as so many more mouths to feed." A companion volume in this series, *Maoism Unmasked*, went as far as "the verge of famine"; this one, written by economists with a chapter to themselves, does not go that far.

The demography is worse, because Konovalov looks straight at the evidence and reads it the other way. He records that Chinese population growth "has dropped to one of the world's lowest," that "In some years the population increased by no more than 0.5 per cent, whereas in some provinces it has even dropped in absolute terms," and that growth in the second decade was 70 million against 130 million in the first. Those numbers are the demographic shadow of the famine. He attributes them entirely to fertility: the raised marriage age, the two-child limit, the rationing system. Hunger enters his analysis once, and on the wrong side of the ledger — "Chronic malnutrition among the bulk of the population at the time also served to reduce the birth-rate." His mortality analysis stops at 1959 and does not resume. The one Soviet-bloc author who owned the tools to estimate excess deaths in China used them to estimate deferred marriages.

What the volume permits itself instead is euphemism, twice,

and both times in someone else's mouth. Sladkovsky reports that Peng Dehuai at the Lushan plenum of August 1959 called the Leap "petty-bourgeois day-dreaming for which the Chinese people were having to pay dearly" — Peng's judgement, delivered before the worst year had begun, and not the author's. And Herbert, describing why Chinese workers would not rally against the Maoists in 1964, writes of them having "the bitter experience of 1959–62 still fresh in their minds." That is the whole of it: a bitter experience, a dear price, four years given a date range and no content.

Why the wall stands there is not mysterious. Volkova's argument against the communes is that socialist forms of property were imposed "on top of the old backward material and technical basis," in a countryside where "there was no objective need to rush into co-operation," with the result that output fell and the state got less than it had counted on. That is, word for word, the case against Soviet collectivisation in 1929–33 — and the famine that followed it in Ukraine, the Volga and Kazakhstan killed several million people and could not be printed in the Soviet Union until 1987. An author who described mass death by forced collectivisation in China would have handed the reader a template. The silence in this book is not indifference to Chinese peasants. It is a load-bearing wall.

The same wall accounts for the historical chapters. Sladkovsky's account of the origins of Maoism runs through Sun Yat-sen, the Kuomintang manifesto of January 1924, and the argument that Mao's "New Democracy" was a nationalist regression from Sun. The defeat of 1927 appears once, as a subordinate clause: "Once the Right-wingers headed by Chiang Kai-shek took over upon the failure of the 1925–27 Revolution." The bare year 1927 appears nowhere in the book. The Communist International is named once in eighty-two thousand words, and only to note that its dissolution in 1943 helped Mao. That the Chinese Communist Party had been instructed by Moscow to enter the Kuomintang as a bloc within, that it was still inside it when Chiang's troops killed its members in the streets of Shanghai in April 1927, and that the Comintern leadership defended the policy afterwards — none of this is in a volume that devotes fifty pages to the pre-revolutionary background.

Which is what makes the book's one mention of Trotsky worth pausing on. Sladkovsky writes that "in proclaiming the neo-Trotskyite doctrine of 'permanent revolution', the Maoists were in fact giving up the task of socialist construction in China." That is the whole engagement: an epithet, in a subordinate clause, with the theory neither stated nor argued

against. Readers should know that the Chinese revolution of 1925–27 is the case from which Trotsky argued the theory, and that the argument is available and short. In *The Third International After Lenin* (1928), written the year after the defeat, he set out what the policy of the bloc within the Kuomintang had cost: the Kuomintang summit "wrote laws against strikes, throttled the uprisings of the peasants, shoved the communists into a dark corner, and, at best, allowed them to be only one-third of the party, exacted an oath from them that petty-bourgeois Sun Yat-senism takes precedence over Marxism" — this against Sladkovsky's fifty pages treating Sun Yat-senism as the proper framework for the Chinese revolution. The principle Trotsky drew from it is the one sentence Sladkovsky's epithet is meant to prevent the reader from looking up: "that is precisely why we are forbidden to subordinate the proletarian party to a bourgeois party, but on the contrary, must at every step, oppose the former to the latter." And in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930), sixth of the basic postulates: "Between Kerenskyism and the Bolshevik power, between the Kuomintang and the dictatorship of the proletariat, there is not and cannot be any intermediate stage." Agree or not, that is the doctrine; the reader of this book will never learn that it has any content at all.

One further silence belongs to the authors' own state. In 1960 the Soviet Union withdrew its technical specialists from China and cancelled its contracts, in the middle of the worst agricultural crisis in the country's history. This volume mentions Soviet assistance eight times — the 156 backbone enterprises of the First Five-Year Plan, the anti-epidemic service, the training of more than ten thousand Chinese engineers — and never once mentions the withdrawal. The Fourth International, no friend of Peking, called the rupture "a stab in the back of the Chinese revolution and the Chinese people, at the very moment when they were confronted with near-famine at home" in the resolution on the Cultural Revolution adopted at its Ninth World Congress and printed in *Intercontinental Press*, vol. 7 no. 26, 14 July 1969. "The historic responsibility for breaking up the Sino-Soviet alliance," it added, "and the advantages which imperialism could draw from this breakup, lie at the door of the Kremlin." Maitan, in the same issue, was more scrupulous than either party: he listed "the abrupt suspension of Soviet collaboration" among the non-economic factors that had aggravated the Chinese crisis, and did so in a report otherwise devoted to demolishing Maoist economics.

That comparison is the fair way to end. The anti-Stalinist left's own record on China in these years was sharp on structure and blind on mortality: *Intercontinental Press*, across eighteen

years and some seven hundred and sixty issues, never printed an estimate of its own for the deaths of 1959–62; its high-water mark was the resolution's phrase "the near-famine period at the beginning of the sixties," and the only figure it ever carried came in 1980, in a translated Chinese dissident text that spoke of "hundreds of thousands of lives" — low by two orders of magnitude. Nobody outside China knew the size of it until the 1982 census was published and the demographers went to work. So the charge against this book is not that it failed to know a number that nobody knew. It is that its authors, uniquely equipped to reason toward that number, reasoned away from it — and that they did so because the reasoning, applied at home, ran through Ukraine in 1933.

Take the volume for its measurements and read them against Maitan's *Party, Army and Masses in China* (New Left Books, 1976), which covers the same ground from the same Chinese sources and is not obliged to stop anywhere. Feferkon's two spheres, Volkova's chronology of communisation, Herbert's wage tables and the shared verdict on the destruction of Chinese trade unions are all worth having, and they were produced by people doing real work with almost nothing to work from. What the book cannot do is the one thing a socio-economic study of China after 1958 exists to do, which is to say what the policy cost in lives. The chapter is there, the expertise is there, the arithmetic is there. The permission is not.

The "Cultural Revolution": a Close-Up

An eyewitness memoir from inside a Peking university through the first six months of the Cultural Revolution, by a Soviet sinologist who copied down the wall posters as they appeared - much of which survives nowhere else in English.

Aleksei Nikolaevich Zhelokhovtsev

Introduction to the 1975 Edition

This is not the kind of book this series usually has to argue with. Most Progress titles are made objects: a committee's argument, assembled from approved sources, with the conclusion fixed before the research began. The Cultural Revolution: A Close-Up is a memoir. A. Zhelokhovtsev was a young Soviet Sinologist at the Institute of Sinology of the USSR Academy of Sciences, a specialist in the medieval urban story who had published a book on the huapen, and what he wanted from Peking was a reader's ticket. He left Moscow by train on 2 February 1966 under a student exchange between the Soviet and Chinese ministries of higher education, took up residence at the Peking Pedagogical University, and expected ten months among seventeenth-century woodblock prints. Four months later the university was closed, its Party committee had been overthrown, and he was watching professors dragged to a stadium in paper caps. He went home before the end of the year with a notebook.

The result is a genuine historical source, and the honest thing to say first is that most of it holds up. A foreign academic resident inside a Chinese university during the first six months of the Cultural Revolution is a rare vantage point, and Zhelokhovtsev used it in the way a trained scholar would: he read the tatzupao — the big-character wall posters — as documents, and copied them down. Those posters were ephemeral by design, pasted over within days, and much of what he transcribed survives nowhere else in English. When he describes the persecution of teachers, the struggle sessions, the ritual humiliations and the suicides, he is describing things that Chinese accounts published after 1978, and four decades of subsequent scholarship, have amply confirmed. This book was in print in Moscow, in English, more than a decade before most of that material became sayable in China.

Its best pages are the ones where he simply reports. A physicist at the Pedagogical University, denounced by his own laboratory assistants for being "wrapped up in physics", pins

his reply to the wall: "I believe in physics, a science of the future as well as of the present. China needs my knowledge today, but in another 25 years the country will need it even more, while people will very soon forget Mao Tse-tung's policy and thought." Zhelokhovtsev copied it into his notebook and never learned the man's name or his fate — "from then on the light in his laboratory was out." He walks past a work team of old people weeding a gutter with rakes, placards round their necks, and reads one: "Relative of a counter-revolutionary element." He asks a guard why the accused are paraded in fool's caps and gets an answer worth more than any analysis: "This is a class struggle, and they are our class enemies. How can a class enemy have any human dignity? It's ridiculous! We don't regard them as people at all."

He is a careful witness even about atrocity. On the suicides he separates what he heard from what he saw — "Rumour is one thing, however, but actually seeing this kind of thing happen is something else again" — and then gives a tally he can stand behind: "There were three suicides in two months at the Pedagogical University alone", with the circumstances of each, plus the people who "succumbed to strokes and heart failures after facing a disgrace rally for hours on end" and were recorded as having "died of various ailments". On the death of the novelist Lao She he does something better than assert. He reproduces the Red Guard leaflet announcing it, in its own vocabulary — the writer's "mean, black suicide", his library "stuffed with poisonous literature", his wife biting the raiders "like a mad dog" — and then, noting that Lao She was sixty-seven and in poor health and that the leaflet gave no details, says plainly that the boys may have killed him themselves. That is source criticism, done under pressure, in the street.

The single finest passage in the book is a long conversation with a frightened teacher who had joined the "Leftists" out of fear and now expects to be destroyed for it. It runs for pages, and Zhelokhovtsev lets the man talk: about the annual campaigns — "we have a new movement every year, and one's at one's wits' end about what to do to be left alone" — about

the 1957 anti-Rightist crackdown as a warning of what the current movement may become, and finally about the famine: "It's four years since the famine. Four years ago we had to eat grass, leaves and bark. That was the time of the 'great leap forward' and the 'people's communes'." Nothing in the polemical literature of the Sino-Soviet split comes close to it.

And that conversation is also where the book's limits become visible, because of what the Soviet participant in it is able to say and unable to say.

Consider the vocabulary. Zhelokhovtsev uses the phrase "personality cult" thirteen times in this book. Every one of them is about Mao. The word "Stalin" appears exactly once in ninety-five thousand words — and not in the author's own voice, but inside a Red Guard poster he is quoting, which complains that Liu Shao-chi's writings cite "Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin" ten times for every quotation of Mao. Khrushchev is never mentioned. The Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, which in 1956 put the phrase into international communist speech in the first place, is never mentioned. The instrument by which the author is permitted to describe China was manufactured to describe the Soviet Union, and by 1975, under Brezhnev, it had been quietly withdrawn from that use at home. Zhelokhovtsev inherits the tool without the history that made it.

The consequence is a book of systematic one-way recognitions. He records, without visible strain, that after the 1957 campaign "All my Chinese friends, whom I had met at the Moscow youth festival, disappeared after 1957" — a Soviet writer in 1975 could observe that a state makes people disappear, provided the state was China. He lets his interlocutors date the Great Leap famine, describe eating bark, and observe that "our leaders later blamed the Soviet Union for the famine of the following two years" — while the Soviet famine of 1932–33 is not in the book, and could not have been. He watches a summary trial at a stadium, mass denunciation meetings, children denouncing parents, confessions shouted in a falsetto to a drumbeat, and at no point does the year 1937 enter his mind on the page. The most he permits himself is a woman's murmur — "You've reminded me of the old days" — which is her memory, not his.

It would be cheap to call this hypocrisy. Zhelokhovtsev was thirty-odd years old, wanted to keep working as a Sinologist, and was writing for a publishing house of the Soviet state; the comparison could not be printed and probably could not be finished in his own head. The point is not about his character but about the form. This is what a witness is permitted to

notice, and the permission is the most historically revealing thing in the volume. A reader who wants to understand how Soviet intellectual life actually worked in the détente years will learn more from the shape of Zhelokhovtsev's blind spot than from a hundred pages of Maoism Through the Eyes of Communists.

There is one small, telling exception. Arguing with the frightened teacher about "uninterrupted revolution", Zhelokhovtsev remarks: "But the idea of permanent revolution is an old idea, it was Trotsky who first suggested it." No denunciation, no epithet — a flat statement of intellectual paternity, of the kind a scholar makes in conversation and an apparatus never makes in print. Elsewhere in the book, reviewing a French magazine's flattery of Mao, he treats a comparison with Trotsky as self-evidently damaging. Both reflexes are in the same man.

The second question is what this memoir was doing in Moscow's export list. The front matter places it in a series labelled "theories and critical studies", which it plainly is not; the back matter advertises it in the publisher's voice as an account of "the outrages and atrocities against the Chinese Communists and leading intellectuals" and notes that "The latest edition of his book gives a fuller account" — so the text grew between editions, in a direction. The chapter titles do the same work: "On the Eve of the Disaster" is a title written after the fact, by someone who needs the reader to know from page one that a verdict is coming. And the final chapter breaks register completely. The memoirist's first person disappears, and the book ends in the flat institutional prose of a Party report — the Ninth and Tenth Congresses of the CPC, the Lin Piao affair, "armed provocations along the Soviet-Chinese border" — closing on a long quotation from Brezhnev's report to the 24th Congress of the CPSU. A man's diary has been fitted with a policy conclusion.

That epilogue also shows the book's analytical weakness, which is real and separate from its honesty. Zhelokhovtsev explains the Cultural Revolution entirely as a design: Mao wanted absolute power, manufactured a movement of "deceived" young people, used them, then had the army suppress them and deported them to the countryside. Everything he saw is thereby reduced to fraud from above. This is not sufficient, and it was not the only account available at the time. Livio Maitan's report on the Cultural Revolution, summarised in *Intercontinental Press* of 14 July 1969, starts instead from China's economic base, the failure of the Great Leap and the crisis of 1961–62, and treats the upheaval as the eruption of unresolved contradictions within a bureaucratised

workers' state — an approach that can accommodate Zhelokhovtsev's own best material, the terrified conformism of the teacher, the careerism of the "Leftists", precisely because it does not require every participant to be a dupe. Readers who want that argument at length should go to Maitan's *Party, Army and Masses in China* (English edition, NLB, 1976).

There is one further silence, and it is the one that most sharply marks the difference between a witness and a state. Zhelokhovtsev catalogues the victims of Maoist repression with real sympathy: Lao She, Tien Han, the physicist, the deans in fool's caps, old Communists who had fought in the underground since the 1930s. There is a category he does not and could not include. On 16 April 1972 the United Secretariat of the Fourth International issued a statement, published in Intercontinental Press on 8 May, on the Chinese Trotskyists swept up by Mao's police in December 1952 and held for two decades without trial. Among them was Chen Chao-lin (Zheng Chaolin), a founding member of both the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese Trotskyist movement, who had worked in Paris with Chou En-lai; the statement's arithmetic is the whole point — he had by then "lived as a political prisoner for twenty-seven years — seven years under Chiang, twenty years under Mao." These were the one set of Chinese prisoners about whom Moscow had nothing to say, because the charge that put them in Chinese jails had been drafted in Moscow twenty years earlier and had already killed their Soviet counterparts.

Read it, then, for what it is. Strip the last chapter, discount the chapter titles, ignore the series label, and what remains is the notebook of an intelligent and decent young scholar who happened to be standing in the right courtyard in June 1966 and wrote down what he saw. That is worth a great deal. The frame around it is worth something too, though not in the way Progress Publishers intended: it is a precise measurement of how far a Soviet citizen could see in 1975, and exactly where the wall was.

The Peoples of the North and Their Road to Socialism

An Evenk historian, born in a hunter's tent on the Nizhnyaya Tunguska in 1917, on how the small peoples of the Soviet North were carried from clan society to socialism in a single lifetime - his own included.

Vladimir Uvachan

Introduction to the 1975 Edition

Most of the volumes in this series were written about the peoples they describe. This one was written by one of them. The Peoples of the North and Their Road to Socialism is the work of an Evenk — a man born in 1917 in a hunter's tent on the Nizhnyaya Tunguska, the son of a poor and illiterate reindeer-hunter, who was taken as a boy to Leningrad, schooled at the Institute of the Peoples of the North, fought at Stalingrad and across the Dnieper, and returned to become first secretary of the Evenk Area Committee of the CPSU, a candidate of historical sciences in 1961, a doctor in 1970, a deputy to the Supreme Soviet, a delegate to the Party's twenty-second, twenty-third and twenty-fourth Congresses, and a member of the Central Auditing Committee of the CPSU. The book is his account of how his own people, and the other "small peoples of the North" — Nenets, Chukchi, Khanty, Nganasan, Dolgan, Selkup, Ket — passed within a single lifetime from a clan-and-tribal hunting society to Soviet socialism, and it is offered by its own foreword as living proof of the policy it describes: "This son of an illiterate Evenk hunter became a college instructor!" That is a real story, and a moving one, and no honest reading of the book can begin by denying it. What the book cannot do — what it is built not to do — is tell the reader at what price the road was travelled, or turn upon its own state the category of national oppression it wields so freely against every other.

(A note on the name. The 1975 printing's own title page gives the author as Vladimir Uvachan, and that is the form our catalogue carried until it was corrected; the book's own foreword and running heads name him Vasily Nikolayevich Uvachan — V. N. Uvachan — and it is under those initials that his earlier bibliographies of the Yenisei North are cited within the text. The biographical facts above are drawn entirely from the book's foreword and are given as it gives them.)

Date the argument, not the spine. The English edition carries "© Progress Publishers 1975," but the book is a document of

the early 1970s. Its latest political marker is the twenty-fourth Congress of the CPSU of 1971, which it quotes repeatedly; its running statistics are given "as of January 1, 1970"; its climactic biographical fact is Uvachan's own doctorate of May 1970. It belongs to the high noon of détente, when the Soviet Union presented itself to the newly independent states of Asia and Africa as the one great power that had abolished national inequality on its own soil — and this book is one of the exhibits in that case. It is a domestic history doubling as an export advertisement: look what we did for our own most backward peoples; we can do the same for yours.

The doctrine, at its source

The organising idea is announced early and attributed, correctly, to Lenin: the peoples of the North "took the non-capitalist road of development which was indicated by Lenin." The claim is that a society still at "the clan order" could be carried directly to socialism "without passing through the stage of capitalism," provided a vanguard state undertook to carry it. Uvachan devotes his opening theoretical chapter to the pedigree of this idea — Marx and Engels on the Russian commune, Lenin on the "non-capitalist countries," the thesis endorsed as "a new historical law of social development."

A reader who has followed this series into its Third-World volumes will recognise the doctrine at once, because those books are its descendants. The "non-capitalist path of development," or "socialist orientation," is the theory on which Kaysone Phomvihane's Revolution in Laos (Progress, 1981) sets a peasant nation of three million on "the direct transition to socialism bypassing the capitalist stage of development"; on which the anniversary volume Ten Years of the Ethiopian Revolution (Progress, 1986) presents a junta of army officers "Bypassing capitalism and creating prerequisites for a socialist revolution"; and which Rostislav Ulyanovsky, Moscow's foremost theorist of the thing, states whole in Present-Day Problems in Asia and Africa (Progress, 1978). Uvachan's book is where that export theory comes home — or rather, where it started. The peoples of the North were the doctrine's first and

most complete test case: societies with, in some instances, no writing, no state and no market, lifted in a generation into collective farms and area soviets. If the leap over capitalism could be shown to have succeeded anywhere, it had to be shown here first. That is what gives this modest regional history its outsized place in the series: it is the internal proof on which the external promises were floated.

What is genuinely owed to the book

The tsarist record the book documents is not invented, and it was atrocious. Under the empire the northern peoples were *inorodtsy* — "aliens," a legal caste of subject peoples — and were treated as a fur-yielding resource. Uvachan sets out the *yasak*, the fur-tribute, collected under official instructions to take it "by kindness and not by coercion" — which, as he notes, meant only that "the natives were not to be beaten with sticks." He quotes Fridtjof Nansen, who travelled the Yenisei North in 1913 and found whole encampments dead of smallpox, "reindeer which had failed to break free, perished from starvation and lay around the *chooms*." He records that at the 1926–27 census "not more than 2.1 per cent of the population in the North was literate," and that among women the figure was under half of one per cent. These peoples were dying: a real demographic collapse, from disease, alcohol sold by traders, and dispossession, was under way when the revolution reached them.

Against that, the early Soviet achievement was real and deserves to be stated plainly. The Committee for the North, under P. G. Smidovich, was an instrument of genuine emancipatory intent, and Uvachan is right to honour it; its declared task was "assisting the small nationalities in the North to build socialism," not charity or administration. Written languages were created where none had existed — "Written languages with a Latin alphabet were created for Evenks, Khanty, Chukchi, Mansi, Nentsi, and other northern peoples in 1932" — and "The creation of written languages for the peoples of the North was an outstanding cultural accomplishment." So it was. Primers, textbooks and the first national literatures followed; smallpox and anthrax were fought with veterinary and medical services that had never before existed; the caste of *inorodtsy* was abolished at law. A people that had been 2 per cent literate became, within two decades, a people with schools, a written culture and an intelligentsia of its own — including the author of this book. A reader told that all of this is worthless, or a mere propaganda fiction, would be badly misled. It happened, and for the people to whom it happened it was liberation.

The credibility of everything that follows depends on granting that first. The quarrel with this book is not that it credits the Soviet North with achievements it did not have. It is that it presents the achievements as the whole of the story, and buries the coercion that was inseparable from them under a vocabulary designed to make it disappear.

What "their road to socialism" cost

Consider first how the book handles collectivisation — the forced reorganisation of hunting, fishing and above all reindeer-herding into cooperatives and *artels* at the turn of the 1930s. To its considerable credit, the book does not pretend the process was smooth. It concedes, in so many words, that "collectivisation was imposed by bureaucratic methods; the principle of voluntariness in the collectivisation of cows, reindeer and hunting gear (rifles, traps), dogs and even dwellings (*chooms*) was violated." That is a remarkable admission to find in a Progress volume, and it should be acknowledged as one. Herders were stripped of their animals, their tools and even their tents; the "voluntary" transition was, at the point of contact, not voluntary at all.

But watch what the book does with the admission. The coercion is instantly reassigned. It becomes a matter of "errors as well as distortions of Party policy" committed by over-zealous local officials — men who launched "cavalry charges" against a backwardness the wise centre had explicitly warned them to approach with "caution, tact and foresight." The Party "always warned local officials against 'cavalry charges' in the formerly backward districts"; the distortions are the officials', never the policy's. And the deeper causes of resistance are displaced onto a class enemy: the *kulak* — the wealthier reindeer-owner — and the shaman, who between them are made to account for every act of opposition to the new order. When a Nganasan man kills himself, the book reports that the *kulaks* "led a Nganasan to suicide only because he had been the first to join a collective farm" — the death laid at the enemy's door, never at the door of the campaign that broke his world. When a school is destroyed, we read that a former priest and "the rich and shamans set fire to a school in Baikit in 1936; 26 Evenk children perished in the flames." Twenty-six children burned: the book offers this as proof of the savagery of the resistance, and it may well be. But it does not, and cannot, register the depth of terror and refusal in a people among whom schools were being burned — it can only see enemies of the people, never a people at the end of its tether.

There is a second, quieter mechanism, and it turns on the

reindeer. The reindeer is the axis of the whole northern economy, and the book knows it: it gives careful figures for how the animals were distributed by class, and how their ownership shifted into the "socialist sector" — from 36.6 per cent in 1932 to 69 per cent by the mid-1940s. What it never once says is that reindeer were lost to collectivisation. Every collapse in reindeer numbers the book records is assigned to a pre-Soviet or natural cause: the ruin of the herds under Kolchak and the imperialist war; the anthrax epidemics of 1921–23, in which the Chapogir, Kurkogir and Pankagir clans "lost half of their reindeer." After collectivisation begins, the herds only grow, and grow into the socialist sector. Yet the mass slaughter of livestock by peasants who preferred to kill their animals rather than surrender them to the collective is one of the best-attested facts of Soviet collectivisation everywhere it was imposed — and the sibling volume on Laos, in this very series, records exactly this response to a collectivisation drive of the same northern type: livestock slaughtered rather than surrendered, and flight across the border. That the northern herders, facing the compulsory socialisation of the reindeer the book admits was carried out "by bureaucratic methods," made no such answer is not credible; that the book contains no trace of it is the more telling for the candour it shows elsewhere. The admission of coerced collectivisation and the silence on its cost sit on the same page, and the second is the price of the first.

Then there is sedentarisation. The nomadic life was not a defect to be corrected but the very form of these peoples' existence, adapted over millennia to the taiga and the tundra. The book treats its ending as an unambiguous triumph: "The transition of the majority of the peoples of the North from a nomadic to a settled way of life was the most important result of the victory of the collective-farm system." Settlement is described as gradual, natural, chosen — the fruit of new relations of production, never of a policy of fixing a mobile people to permanent points. That much of it was policy, and that the fixing of nomads is a coercion in its own right, the book does not entertain.

And then there are the boarding schools — the internaty — which are the reflexive heart of the matter. Because the northern peoples were dispersed and mobile, their children were educated in residential schools, boarded at state expense, often hundreds of kilometres from their families. The book presents this as pure benefaction: "A new type of an educational institution — the boarding school — was opened to correspond with national customs, particularly the nomadic way of life." By 1970, it reports with pride, some 24,000 indigenous children were living in such schools, "all the

expenses of which are covered by the state." The reader is shown the founding, benevolent face of the internat: at first, lessons were given in the native tongues, the term of study calibrated to local conditions. What that system became — the routine removal of children from parents and from the land for most of the year, the attrition of the native languages it was supposed to protect, the generational rupture that indigenous northerners themselves would later describe as the great wound of the Soviet century — is nowhere in view, because in the early 1970s the state that ran the internaty was not about to publish its cost, least of all through a native author.

The language question shows the same arc inside the book's own pages. The Latin alphabets of 1932 were, within a few years, abandoned for Cyrillic; the "artificial isolation" of the northern languages from Russian is pronounced "the greatest mistake"; the primacy of Russian — "the language of Lenin" — is settled, and the settlement is dressed in the language of free choice: "In such a delicate matter as learning a language, voluntariness and the absence of coercion are essential." The word coercion appears here precisely to be denied. A book that has just conceded coercion in the collectivisation of tents insists there was none in the substitution of one alphabet, and then one language, for another.

The category that never turns homeward

Every one of these evasions is an instance of a single, structural refusal, and it is worth naming as such, because it is the test this series applies to every volume it introduces. Ask not how often a book uses the vocabulary of oppression, nor even whom it deigns to quote, but this: can the category it wields against others ever, by its own logic, be turned on the speaker's own state? The Peoples of the North wields the category of national oppression with real force — against tsarism, against the inorodtsy regime, against the merchants and the empire. It never turns it homeward. And the home to which it declines to turn it had, within the living memory of every adult reader in 1975, done to other small peoples something for which "national oppression" is far too mild a word.

Between 1941 and 1944 the Soviet state deported whole nations. The Volga Germans, the Karachai, the Kalmyks, the Chechens, the Ingush, the Balkars, the Crimean Tatars, the Meskhetian Turks — loaded nation by nation into cattle-trucks and dumped in Central Asia and Siberia, their autonomous republics abolished and wiped from the map, a large fraction dead of cold and hunger and typhus in the first years. Some of

them were small peoples of exactly the order this book celebrates rescuing; some were sent to the very Siberia the book paints as a land of deliverance. In 1975 the Crimean Tatars were still forbidden to return home. This is not a marginal fact about the Soviet nationalities policy; for a great many of its subjects it was the policy. And a book whose entire subject is the fate of small peoples under that policy contains, on the deportations, a flat and total silence. The sibling volume *Races and Peoples* (Progress, 1974) performs the identical erasure with the identical peoples, and there the mechanism is caught in the act: the Ingush appear in that book only once, on a roll of grateful nations who "had no written languages at all" until "these were only devised in Soviet times" — listed as a trophy of Soviet enlightenment thirty years after the Soviet state packed them into trains. Uvachan's book runs the same move to its logical end. His climactic proof-text, a 1957 Central Committee decree, recites the northern peoples who once "led a nomadic way of life and they were doomed to extinction" and were saved; his book's own summary borrows the Party's phrase that such peoples were "saved from physical extinction." The rhetoric of rescue is real, and it is deployed to fill exactly the space where the rhetoric of the deportations would otherwise stand.

The reply

The answer to this book was written, from within the revolutionary-Marxist tradition, four decades before it. In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), in the section "Nationality and Culture," Trotsky drew the precise negative of Uvachan's picture. The much-advertised flowering of the national cultures under the bureaucracy is a hollow show: "The Ukrainian, White Russian, Georgian, or Turk newspapers and books are only translations of the bureaucratic imperative into the language of the corresponding nationality." There can be, he wrote, "no talk of uniqueness of national culture when one and the same conductor's baton, or rather one and the same police club, undertakes to regulate all the intellectual activities of all the peoples of the Soviet Union." And the drawing-together of peoples that this series' volumes celebrate as free convergence wears, in reality, a specific face: "bureaucratism inevitably takes the color of an autocratic Russification, leaving to the other nationalities the sole indubitable cultural right of celebrating the arbiter in their own language." Uvachan's book, in which the northern peoples are forever bound to "the destiny of the Russian people" as elder brother and pedagogue, in which the honour of translating Stalin's and Kalinin's constitutional reports into Evenk is offered as a summit of cultural achievement, is the confirming instance of Trotsky's

charge, written by one of the arbiter's own subjects.

Two honesties are owed. The first is that Trotsky wrote in 1936, before the deportations, and *The Revolution Betrayed* therefore cannot be cited as a witness to those; for the deportations the historical record itself, and the contemporary reply below, must carry the weight. The second cuts the other way and is more interesting: on the underlying science, Trotsky and this book largely agree. In the same section he mocked "the theory of unchanging racial types" and "the mysticism of the 'Slavic soul'"; he did not deny that Soviet nations could and would draw together. His quarrel — and this series' quarrel with Uvachan — is over the one question the book is built to suppress: whether the drawing-together was the free movement of emancipated peoples, or something done to them, at times at gunpoint, by a state that then recorded the vanished nations as evidence of fraternity. Trotsky's own formulation is the sharpest available: what the USSR practised was "not... the oppression of one nationality over another in the proper sense of the word, but of oppression by the centralized police apparatus over the cultural development of all the nations, starting with the Great Russian."

Nor did the reply depend on hindsight. The Fourth International's weekly, *Intercontinental Press*, covered the twenty-fourth Congress of the CPSU — the very Congress whose resolutions Uvachan quotes as proof of fraternal harmony — as it happened, and read it exactly against the grain of this book. The Congress, it reported, moved "in the direction of reestablishing the autocratic norms of party life of the Stalin era," among its marks "the conscious encouragement of Great Russian chauvinism." "The continued forced exile of the Crimean Tatars," the same report noted, "has been the cause of a series of protests. The reaction of the 5,000 congress delegates was to proclaim approval of a paternalistic Great Russian chauvinism obligatory for all party members" (*Intercontinental Press*, vol. 9, no. 16, 26 April 1971). While Uvachan was quoting Brezhnev at that Congress on the respect the Russian people had earned as elder brother of all the others, the press of the opposing tradition was reporting, from the same event, the elder-brother doctrine and the exiled nation this book will not name. The information was not unavailable in 1975. It was declined.

The verdict this book foretold, the export theory built on it would eventually meet in the field. The "non-capitalist path" that the northern peoples were said to have proven ended, in Laos, in a collectivisation drive abandoned within two years and a return to the market; in Ethiopia, in famine, resettlement and collapse. What was announced as a law of history turned

out to be, again and again, a bureaucratic party standing in for an absent working class and calling the result socialism.

The Peoples of the North and Their Road to Socialism should be read, then, for both of the things it is. It is a real record of a real emancipation: the end of the yasak and the smallpox and the illiteracy, the creation of writing and medicine and schools among peoples the empire had left to die. And it is a monument of the silence that the same state required — a whole book on the liberation of small peoples that cannot mention the small peoples that same state deported, that renders forced collectivisation as local over-zeal, coerced settlement as free choice, and the boarding schools that would hollow out the native languages as pure gift. The most poignant fact about it is that both halves are true at once, and that the author embodies both. Vasily Uvachan really was carried from an illiterate hunter's tent to a doctorate and the Supreme Soviet; his life is the achievement the book celebrates. That the native voice, once found, was permitted to tell only the flattering half of its own people's story — that is the achievement's shadow, and the measure of what the road to socialism, as this state built it, could not afford to say.

SOVIET SOCIETY

Women Today

The Soviet case on women, written for International Women's Year with a foreword by the first woman in space: the 1917 decrees, the 1975 figures on work, education and childcare, and a four-way comparison with the capitalist and developing world.

Nikolai Aleksandrovich Kovalsky

Introduction to the 1975 Edition

The foreword is signed by Valentina Nikolayeva-Tereshkova, Chairman of the Soviet Women's Committee and the first woman to go into space, and it states the commission plainly: "Women Today is an extremely topical work, appearing as it does in 1975, which has been declared by the UN General Assembly to be International Women's Year." A World Conference was to meet in Mexico City that summer and a rival congress in Berlin that October, organised by the Women's International Democratic Federation, the Soviet-aligned international whose activities occupy the volume's final hundred pages. Progress Publishers needed an English-language statement of the Soviet case, ready for delegates, and it got one.

The book is not the work of a single apparatus hack. Ten women are named on the title page — Balakhovskaya, Berezhnaya, Blinova, Gilevskaya, Khalfina, Novikova, Shibarina, Smirnova, Tatarinova, Yefimova — with N. A. Kovalsky as chief editor and Blinova as co-editor. The chapters on the capitalist and developing countries read like the work of people who had done the reading: ILO conventions cited correctly, wage differentials by country, nursery provision in Italy and West Germany, the difficulty of water-carrying for village women in Laos and Vietnam.

The structure is a four-part comparison: women in the USSR, in the other socialist countries, in the developed capitalist countries, in the developing world. The comparison is the argument, and it is worth taking seriously, because in 1975 much of it was true.

The account of the first Soviet decrees is accurate and should not be grudged. The book lists them: the eight-hour-day decree of 29 October (11 November) 1917 prohibiting night work for women; social security regulations of 14 (27) November providing maternity benefit for eight weeks before and after the birth; a decree on rates of pay upholding equal

remuneration for equal work; and, on "December 18 (31), 1917", "a decree on civil marriage giving men and women equal rights in marriage and in the family". The RSFSR Constitution of July 1918 wrote women's equality into fundamental law. Lenin's boast, which the book quotes, was justified: "not a single democratic party in the world, not even in the most advanced bourgeois republic, has done in decades so much as a hundredth part of what we did in our very first year in power."

The material record the book sets out for 1975 is also, in outline, real. Women were 51 per cent of workers and office employees in 1974, against 46 per cent in 1955, and 59 per cent of specialists with higher or specialised secondary education: "31 per cent of all Soviet engineers", "64 per cent of its economists", and — the figures that most struck Western readers — "70 per cent of its doctors" and "71 per cent of its teachers". Paid maternity leave ran to 112 calendar days with the job held open for a further unpaid year. Some 11 million children were in creches and nursery schools in 1974, at parental contributions capped at 12 roubles 50 kopeks a month and free for many large families. Medical care, including confinement, was free. Set against the pre-revolutionary baseline the book gives — "A mere 17 per cent of all women were literate", 43 per cent of children dead before five, "A woman's average life expectancy was 33 years (now 74)" — the transformation was among the largest improvements in the condition of women recorded anywhere in the twentieth century. A British or American woman reading this in 1975 had no equivalent to most of it. The Soviet claim to have delivered materially for women was not a lie, and an introduction that pretended otherwise would be worthless.

The book is also fairer to the Western women's movement than its own footnotes suggest. An early note defines feminism as "a bourgeois women's movement aiming to provide women with equal rights with men within the framework of a capitalist state" — the standard dismissal. Yet the survey chapter reports without sneering that "In 1968 the Women's Liberation Movement, representing a coalition of ideologically distinct

groups, came into existence in the USA", correctly identifies the National Organisation for Women, founded 1966, as its largest component, and records that it "initiated the mass strike by women across the country which took place on August 26, 1970". The date and character of the Women's Strike for Equality are right. Somebody in Moscow was reading the American press attentively and reporting it honestly.

Now the silences, which are neither accidental nor small.

The Bolshevik record on women between 1917 and the mid-1920s was the most advanced in the world, and went further than this book admits. In November 1920 Soviet Russia became the first state anywhere to legalise abortion on request, performed free in state hospitals. The word "abortion" does not appear in this book. Not once, in eighty thousand words on the status of women across four continents. Neither does "contraception", "birth control" or "family planning". In 1975 abortion was legal in the USSR — re-legalised in 1955 — and, in the near-total absence of modern contraceptives, was the principal method by which Soviet women limited their families, at rates among the highest ever recorded. The single most consequential fact about Soviet women's reproductive lives is absent from the Soviet book about Soviet women.

It is absent because saying it would require explaining the gap. Abortion was recriminalised by decree on 27 June 1936 and remained a crime for nineteen years. The same period saw divorce made progressively difficult and expensive, culminating in the family edict of July 1944, which stripped unregistered marriages of legal standing and abolished paternity suits. This was a deliberate reversal of the family policy of the revolution's first decade, and the single most important thing that happened to Soviet women between 1917 and 1975.

Watch how the book handles the year. The narrative runs from the women's sections of 1919, through the Central Asian khujum of the 1920s, through the women's press, and then: "In 1936, a new Constitution of the USSR was adopted, reflecting the victory of socialism in the country and confirming the fundamental rights of women." Article 122 is quoted entire, guaranteeing equal rights, maternity leave with full pay and a wide network of nurseries. The chapter moves straight on to the number of women engineers by 1941. Nineteen thirty-six is in the book. It is in the book as good news.

The only other appearance of the year is a jab at somebody else: Irène Joliot-Curie, offered a post in the French Popular Front government in 1936, "had to present a written consent from her husband in order to occupy it". The humiliation was

real. But a book that can find the family law of the Third Republic in 1936 and cannot find the family law of the USSR in 1936 is not reporting. It is selecting.

Divorce makes the pattern unmistakable. The word appears thirty-seven times in the chapter on the capitalist countries and twice in the chapter on the developing world. In the chapter on socialist society, which covers the USSR and eight other states across more than a hundred pages, it appears zero times. A book that opens by celebrating the Bolsheviks for making divorce freely available cannot bring itself to mention divorce in a socialist country — at a moment when the Soviet divorce rate was among the highest in the world. Other people's marriage law is a subject. Ours is not.

The book does discuss the Zhenotdel. It never uses the word. What it gives is "the sections for work among women (women's sections) that were set up in mid-1919 under the auspices of the CC RCP(B) and all lower Party bodies" — the founding date is right — followed by an accurate, rather warm description of what they did: initiated government decrees, checked enforcement of protective legislation, intervened in the state budget, and ran the delegate system under which working women were elected for a year and assigned to a Soviet institution for practical training. All true — a remarkable institution, without parallel before or since.

Then the passage simply stops, and the narrative continues into the 1930s as though the sections had quietly become something else. They did not. The Zhenotdel was abolished in January 1930, in a Party reorganisation justified on the ground that the woman question had been solved. Its abolition is not mentioned, dated or explained. A reader has no way of knowing that the body the book praises had been shut down forty-five years before the book was printed.

The women who ran it fare no better. Inessa Armand, its first director, and Alexandra Kollontai, its second, appear exactly once each — inside a single sentence, in a list of eleven names, as part of "a whole galaxy of outstanding professional women revolutionaries": "Nadezhda Krupskaya, Maria Ulyanova, Anna Yelizarova, Inessa Armand, Alexandra Kollontai, Konkordia Samoilova, Yelena Stasova, Klavdia Nikolayeva, Sofia Smidovich, Feodosia Drabkina, Raissa Zemlyachka and many others". Three of the Zhenotdel's directors are in that list — Armand, Kollontai and Smidovich — and not one is connected to it. Kollontai — the first woman in modern history to hold ministerial office, People's Commissar for Social Welfare from October 1917, the most original Marxist writer on sexual and family relations the revolution produced, and a

leader of the Workers' Opposition in 1921 before she was removed to a diplomatic career abroad — is a name in an undifferentiated string. This is a book about women's emancipation that cannot describe its own most important theorist of it, because to describe her would raise the question of what happened to her.

The same evasion covers the khujum, the campaign against the veil in Central Asia. Women "threw off their yashmaks and horsehair nets—the symbols of slavery—and burnt them on bonfires", and "The battle for a new way of life for women was a hard one and was accompanied by many sacrifices." The sacrifices were unveiled women murdered by male relatives and neighbours, in numbers historians place in the thousands for Uzbekistan alone in 1927–28. That the sentence appears at all is to the authors' credit; that it does not say who died or at whose hands is the book's method in miniature. And of collectivisation the volume says only that it "enabled women to occupy an equal place alongside men in agricultural production" — a sentence written about the years in which the countryside starved.

Soviet sociology in the 1960s and 1970s did study domestic labour seriously; the USSR took part in the multinational time-budget research of the mid-1960s, and the results showed what everyone knew, that women in full-time employment carried the household as well.

This book knows the concept and quarantines it. The phrase "twofold burden" occurs once — "This twofold burden results in an early loss of working capacity among women" — and it is about Italy, England, West Germany and Spain. The "double burden" occurs once more, again in the capitalist chapter, describing women forced by inadequate services to carry "the double burden of professional employment and housework preventing them from taking an active part in social and political life" (the scan reads "dorable"). In the entire chapter on socialist society, the word "burden" is used once, of the load Soviet women carried during the Second World War. The double shift is diagnosed as a disease of capitalism.

What the USSR gets instead is infrastructure: canteens serving 80 million people a day, laundries and dry cleaners, flats with gas and central heating, "labour-saving gadgets". The state lightens women's housework. Who does it is not asked.

There is one crack, worth marking because it shows what these authors could see. In the section on the other socialist countries, the book concedes that "in other families, however, old prejudices remain: domestic chores are assumed to be the

exclusive sphere of women, below the dignity of the husband" (the scan has "to he"), and endorses equal sharing of domestic work. That is an honest sentence. It is placed at a safe geographical distance, framed as a survival of the past, and no comparable sentence is permitted about the Soviet Union.

The section on women and state administration is the most instructive in the volume, and the reason is arithmetic. It reports that women were 31.3 per cent of deputies to the USSR Supreme Soviet and 48.1 per cent of deputies to local government bodies; 34 per cent of people's judges; chairmen of the presidiums of the Supreme Soviets in five autonomous republics. It concludes that "women occupy 63 per cent of all posts in the various bodies of state administration and economic management" — "clear evidence of the genuine democracy of socialist society".

The Supreme Soviet did not govern; it met for a few days a year to ratify. Power lay with the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and the Politburo is not mentioned in this book — not in the section on Soviet state administration, not anywhere in the discussion of the USSR. In 1975 it had no women on it, and had had none since Ekaterina Furtseva was dropped in 1961. She remains the only woman ever to have sat on it as a full member. She had died the previous October, and is not named here either.

Instead the section names two women. Nina Popova heads the Union of Soviet Friendship Societies; Tereshkova, "the first, and as yet the only, woman cosmonaut", chairs the Soviet Women's Committee. Both sit on the Central Committee; both preside over bodies whose function is representation abroad rather than decision at home. Those are the summits the book can point to.

The single most revealing sentence in the volume is about Bulgaria: the Politburo of the Bulgarian Communist Party "passed a resolution on March 6, 1973" entitled "On Increasing the Part Played by Women in Constructing an Advanced Socialist Society". A body of men resolved that women should participate more. The book prints it as an achievement and does not notice.

Then set the book's own figures side by side. Women were 51 per cent of workers and office employees. They were, on the volume's own numbers, over three million of the CPSU's 15 million members — one in five. They were zero per cent of the Politburo. The gradient runs steeply downwards from the shop floor to the room where things were decided, and the apologetic weight of the chapter rests on stopping the count

before it reaches the top.

The socialist case for women's emancipation does not depend on this book being right, and the anti-Stalinist left made the argument at the time.

Trotsky answered the 1936 reversal in the year it happened. *The Revolution Betrayed*, written in exile that spring and summer, devotes its seventh chapter, "Family, Youth and Culture", to exactly this: that the recriminalisation of abortion and the rehabilitation of the family were not moral corrections but the confession of a bureaucracy which had failed to build the laundries, canteens and nurseries that alone could have replaced the household, and chose to restore the household instead. It remains the indispensable text on why 1936 happened, and it was written without hindsight.

The Fourth International kept at it. In *Intercontinental Press* of 6 March 1978 ("Women Around World Raise Demand for Equal Rights", pp. 260–262), its United Secretariat published an International Women's Day statement tracing the day to the Copenhagen Congress of Socialist Women in 1910 and the Petrograd textile workers of 1917, and observing that in the Soviet Union and the other bureaucratised workers' states March 8 had degenerated into ritual celebration until the women's liberation wave of the late 1960s gave it content again. That is the precise counter-argument to the volume in your hands, published three years after it; the statement of 18 March 1979 ("Working Women of the World Begin to Break Their Chains", pp. 292–294) carried the case further. Earlier, on 20 March 1972 (p. 312), the same body had backed the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition's campaign for abortion as a woman's right to choose — the demand this book cannot name. In November 1979 the Fourth International's world congress adopted a full programmatic resolution, "Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women's Liberation" (reported in *Intercontinental Press*, 27 November 1979, p. 1170). For the argument against Stalinism specifically, see Michel Pablo's "The Liberation of Women", *Fourth International* no. 11, pp. 21–27.

The case against *Women Today* is not that the gains it describes were fake. They were real, they were large, and they were won by a revolution. It is that they were handed down rather than taken, and what is handed down can be taken back. The women of 1919 had the *Zhenotdel*, legal abortion, divorce for the asking, and an organised political existence of their own inside the ruling party. They lost all four — without a vote, without a debate anyone was allowed to report, and without the means to resist, because the political power that

would have let them defend those gains had already been taken from the working class as a whole. That is what 1936 proves, and it is why this book, which had every reason to mention the year, mentions it only to praise a constitution.

Read it, then, as evidence rather than history: an accurate record of what Soviet women had by 1975 — the clinics, the creches, the degrees, the 70 per cent of doctors — and an equally accurate record of what could not be said about how they got it, what had been taken from them on the way, and who was permitted to decide. The book closes with a sentence its authors meant and the state that commissioned it did not: "The full liberation of women and the cause of socialism are inseparable." They were right. That is the standard by which the rest of the volume has to be judged.

Contemporary Anti-Communism

A Soviet and East German inventory of the Western anti-communist apparatus - Radio Free Europe, the Hoover Institution, Brzezinski's Columbia institute, the Carnegie and Ford money - and of how far the label itself could be stretched.

G. Parkhomenko

Introduction to the 1976 Edition

Chapter Four of this book contains a section called "Some Aspects of the Activities of Anti-Communist Centres." It is a catalogue: the Free Europe Committee and Radio Free Europe, the Radio Liberty Committee, the Hoover Institution at Stanford, Columbia's Research Institute on Communist Affairs under Zbigniew Brzezinski, the Russian Research Centre founded at Harvard in 1948 on Carnegie money, the Ford and Rockefeller foundations, the West German Ostforschung network, the British Council, the BBC and the London School of Economics. Then, having worked through the capitalist great powers, the authors write a single sentence to cover the rest of the world:

There are anti-communist centres in other countries, the most prominent being the Socialist International and the Fourth, Trotskyist, International.

That sentence is the book in miniature, and it is the reason to read it. The Fourth International in 1976 was an organisation of a few thousand cadre with no state, no intelligence service, no endowment and no transmitter. It is placed here, without argument, in the same list as the Hoover Institution — because the category "anti-communism," as this book uses it, is not a description of who funds you or what you want. It is a description of the effect your criticism is said to have. Everything else in the volume follows from that operation, and the volume is worth preserving because it performs the operation more openly than any other Progress title of the period.

Contemporary Anti-Communism: Policy and Ideology is not a monograph and has no author. Its front matter lists twenty-one contributing authors — V. Artyomov, E. Batalov, V. Mshvenieradze, Y. Zamoshkin and others, alongside G. Langendorf, A. Loesdau, W. Paff, U. Plener, O. Reinhold, K.-H. Schwank and J. Vogeler, a set of names that marks this as a joint Soviet–East German production — and an editor of

the Russian text, G. Parkhomenko. No institute is named for any of them; no preface explains the commission; the English edition simply announces that it is "Translated from the Russian." Eight chapters run from imperialism's political strategy through the economics of socialism, "communism studies" in the West, ideological subversion against the USSR, neocolonialism, opportunism in the working-class movement, petty-bourgeois ideology, and the propaganda of the American way of life.

The date on the title page is misleading. The book's evidence stops moving in 1973. There are exactly three references to 1974 and two to 1975, all of them statistical series; the American bicentennial is discussed as something "coming, in 1976." Spain and Portugal are still listed as seats of anti-communism, though the Portuguese dictatorship had fallen in April 1974 and Franco had been dead for months when this went to press. The Helsinki Final Act — signed in August 1975, the single most important event for the argument this book is making — is not mentioned. The only occurrence of the word "Helsinki" refers to a Socialist International conference held there in 1971. What the English reader of 1976 received was a text closed around 1974 and shipped, unrevised, into a year whose politics it had not seen.

Take the reporting seriously first, because a good deal of it is accurate, and a reader who assumes Soviet books simply invent their enemies will be corrected here. Anti-communism was an organised industry with budgets and buildings. The Hoover Institution was founded in 1919 and did function as a research and publishing centre for the cause. The Columbia institute existed and Brzezinski ran it. The great foundations did fund Soviet studies on a scale no other field enjoyed. The Free Europe Committee did run Radio Free Europe and did solicit money as though it were a charity. Chapter Five's account of Chile is right in its essentials — that Washington preferred "a combination of economic, ideological and political means of pressure in order to prepare and accomplish an internal counter-revolutionary coup," and that "the Right-wing, pro-fascist elements in Chile were co-ordinated

and directed by special agencies of the Pentagon and the CIA." The US Senate's own Church Committee had published its staff report on covert action in Chile in December 1975. And the book is not wrong that the language of anti-communism was used domestically against people who were not communists: it notes the "unqualified support for anti-communist legislation, the actions of the Un-American Activities Committee, the persecution of progressive organisations." It even opens with an attribution worth keeping — that Thomas Mann "called anti-communism the most colossal absurdity of our epoch."

So it is remarkable how badly the book documents the case it could have won. In roughly 103,000 words on anti-communism, the letters CIA appear twice. Once for Chile; once for émigré organisations in West Germany. The section on the Free Europe Committee says its budget "amounts to about 15 million dollars" and that it "is financed by the monopolies" — and never mentions the Central Intelligence Agency at all. This was not a secret being protected. The CIA's funding of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty had been forced into the open in the American press, disclosed on the Senate floor by Clifford Case in January 1971, and formally ended by Congress, which moved the radios onto an open appropriation. Georgi Arbatov's own Progress volume of 1973, *The War of Ideas in Contemporary International Relations*, had stated flatly that the direction of the Free Europe Committee "is in the hands of the US State Department and the CIA." Three years later this book retreated to "the monopolies."

The pattern extends. Joseph McCarthy is not named. Neither is the Hollywood blacklist, the Smith Act prosecutions, the Rosenbergs, the Congress for Cultural Freedom, or Encounter. A 103,000-word study of anti-communism as a state-organised enterprise omits the episode that gave anti-communism its name in English and the cultural apparatus whose exposure in 1966–67 had been the propaganda gift of the decade. The omissions are not accidental and they are not ideological squeamishness. They are a matter of where the book's attention actually goes. Roger Garaudy is discussed on twenty-four occasions and Ernst Fischer on twenty-five; Herbert Marcuse on ten. Solzhenitsyn appears exactly once in the entire book, and not as a subject — only as a text that Garaudy had the impertinence to cite. Sakharov does not appear at all. The book is not primarily about the American right. It is about the left.

Chapter Six, "Anti-Communism and Opportunism in the Working-Class Movement," is where the machinery is exposed. Its first section is headed "Revisionism in the Service

of Anti-Communism," and it treats the Fischer–Marek group in Austria, the Garaudy group in France and "the revisionists in Czechoslovakia in 1968" as three national expressions of one phenomenon, whose "common language" was anti-Sovietism. The governing sentence is elsewhere, in Chapter Four:

The same objective is pursued by the attacks on the CPSU, its policies and the experience of the USSR by the Right and "Left" revisionists, Trotskyists, renegades of communism and the Peking "theorists". Their anti-Sovietism dovetails with imperialist anti-Soviet propaganda, with anti-communism, and objectively serves the interests of imperialism.

The load-bearing word is objectively. No collusion has to be shown, no funding traced, no agreement demonstrated. It is enough that a criticism, once uttered, can be quoted by an enemy. The book is candid that this is the test, and applies it consistently. Trotskyism is filed twice: as an anti-communist centre in Chapter Four and as an "ultra-Left" variant of anti-communism throughout, "Left-radical — Trotskyist, Maoist and other — 'ultra-revolutionary' elements, whose principal aims are to slander the Communist parties." Yugoslav self-management appears once, in scare quotes, as the model to which revisionists appeal when they propose "abolishing the socialist states as quickly as possible." Czechoslovak reform communism is not a tendency but a crisis, the authorities cited being the CPC plenum of December 1970 and the Lessons of the Crisis Development, the document produced by the leadership installed after the invasion. Eurocommunism has no name here — the word had barely been coined — but Chapter Six is the brief against it, drafted in advance. The one place the book allows a gradient is the New Left, which it treats as recoverable: "this movement signified a shift to the Left," and where communists could free its participants "of their anti-communist prejudices," the majority "began gravitating toward a union with the working-class movement." Even the generosity is instrumental. The New Left is worth saving because it might be absorbed.

Now the silences, which are the finding.

The name Stalin occurs six times. Four of those are inside the phrases "the Stalin personality cult" and "'Stalinism'," and every one of them appears in order to condemn someone else for invoking it. Garaudy "slandorously identified the epochal achievements of this struggle with the negative consequences of the Stalin personality cult." Wolfgang Leonhard's revisionism "absolutises the negative consequences of the

Stalin personality cult." Anti-communist propaganda "plays on the CPSU's criticism of the personality cult." Nowhere does the book say what those consequences were. The reader is told repeatedly that the measure others apply to the terror is excessive, and is never told the quantity being measured. The year 1937 does not appear. The Moscow Trials do not appear. Not one of the defendants, not one of the shot generals, not one of the returned prisoners is named. Hungary in 1956 is mentioned twice, both times as "the counter-revolutionary rising" — and the Soviet army's entry into Budapest is not mentioned; instead John Foster Dulles is credited with declining to intervene. Czechoslovakia is named twenty-eight times without the book ever recording that five armies crossed its border in August 1968. There is no Soviet invasion anywhere in this book. There is only "the collapse of the imperialist plans in Czechoslovakia in 1968."

Nor is there anyone inside the Soviet Union who disagrees with the Soviet government. The words dissident, censorship, jamming and samizdat do not occur once. The one engagement with the subject is a passage attacking "the Western propaganda campaign under the hypocritical slogan of 'protecting human rights' in socialist countries," whose real aim, the authors write, is "the liquidation of the actual achievements of socialism." That was published in English in 1976, the year the Moscow Helsinki Group was founded by Soviet citizens asking their government to keep an agreement it had signed.

One passage should be named without euphemism. The catalogue of American anti-communist centres, having listed Hoover and Columbia and Harvard, continues: "The innumerable Zionist organisations in the USA are also helping to devise anti-communist strategy and spread anti-communist propaganda," and identifies the United Jewish Appeal, the World Jewish Congress and the World Zionist Organisation as instruments of anti-Soviet propaganda. Chapter Five adds that the ideological equipment of pro-imperialist regimes "consists of white and coloured racism and also of Zionism." This appeared months after the UN General Assembly's resolution of November 1975, and it belongs to the Soviet "anti-Zionist" campaign of the 1970s, whose function inside the USSR was not the criticism of Israeli policy — a legitimate object — but the supply of a permitted vocabulary for something else. Readers of a book that spends eight chapters explaining how enemies disguise themselves should be told when its authors are doing it.

The reply was being made, in print, in the very months this book reached English-language readers, and it was not a

defence of anybody's intelligence service. In *Intercontinental Press* of 26 July 1976, David Frankel reviewed Solzhenitsyn's *Lenin in Zurich* and called it "a fabrication and a dreary smear-job from beginning to end," taking apart in particular the revival of the 1917 slander that the Bolsheviks were German agents. The Fourth International, in other words, was demolishing Solzhenitsyn in the same season in which Moscow was listing the Fourth International among the world's principal anti-communist centres. Two weeks earlier, in the issue of 12 July 1976, Gerry Foley had reported on the conference of European Communist parties held in East Berlin at the end of June, and recorded the fact that most damages this book's central claim: "The fact that the French CP protested the imprisonment of Leonid Plyushch forced the Kremlin to release a left-wing dissident, dealing a significant defeat to bureaucratic repression and the propaganda designed to justify it." Plyushch was a Marxist, held in a psychiatric hospital, freed in January 1976 because communists in the West made a noise about him. On this book's accounting, that campaign was anti-communism. It was the opposite: it was the only thing that worked.

The device itself is older than any of the authors. Trotsky named it the amalgam in *The Stalin School of Falsification*, published in English in 1937 — the merging of an opponent with an enemy so that one refutation disposes of both, and so that the opponent's actual argument never has to be met. What is instructive about this volume is that it does not hide the device. It states the criterion, applies it in public, and prints the resulting list. Read as a survey of Western Sovietology it is a serviceable if under-sourced institutional inventory, and Chapter Five on Chile and neocolonialism holds up better than most of what surrounded it. Read as what it is — the fullest statement in English of the doctrine that criticism is measured by whose hands it might fall into — it is a primary document of the mechanism by which a state that claimed the October Revolution made it impossible to defend that revolution from the left. Anti-communism was real. This book is the record of what was done with the word.

FICTION

Abai (Abridged)

A boy watches his father order an execution on the steppe, and grows up to found written Kazakh literature. The major novel of the Soviet export list. With a new critical introduction.

Mukhtar Auezov

Introduction to the 1975 Edition

A boy of thirteen rides home across the steppe from a Moslem religious school, impatient, spurring ahead of his escort to shorten the last day of the journey. Within a few pages he is standing in a crowd watching his father have a man hanged from a camel, and then, because the man is slow to die and the crowd has begun to murmur, ordering the body carried to the top of a cliff and thrown off it. The boy presses his hands over his eyes and sinks to the ground. The father is Kunanbai, the aga-sultan — the tsar's appointed head of the clan. The boy is Abai Kunanbayev, who will become the founder of written Kazakh literature.

That is the second chapter of this novel, and it establishes at once what kind of book it is. Auezov is not writing a life of a poet. He is writing about a society and its law, and about a child who has to learn the law from the man who administers it. The scene is not there to make Kunanbai a monster. It is there because the execution of Kodar for a crime the reader is never allowed to be sure he committed is how the steppe settled such things, and because Abai's education begins with watching it.

Abai is the one indisputably major novel in this whole export series, and it deserves to be read for itself before it is read as anything else.

The book and this edition

Mukhtar Auezov (1897–1961) wrote about his own family. The jacket of this volume says so without drawing attention to it: Auezov "himself came from the Kunanbai clan", and drew on "facts, recollections, and legends about Abai, treasured by the family". The novelist is writing the founding figure of his national literature, and writing him from inside the household that produced him. That is an unusual position for a novelist to occupy, and it accounts for much of what is best in the book — the absolute sureness about how a aul works, who eats where, who speaks first, what a woman may say and to whom

— and for one of its difficulties, which is that a family chronicle written by a descendant has a direction it wants events to take.

Abai Kunanbayev (1845–1904) is not a figure most English readers will have met. He wrote the first body of poetry in Kazakh that was meant to be read rather than sung, translated Pushkin and Lermontov into Kazakh, and argued for the education of a nomadic people in terms that made him enemies among his own. Auezov's novel follows him from that ride home to the end of his life, and in the process gives the most detailed account in any language of how the Kazakh steppe lived in the nineteenth century: the migrations, the feud, the bride-price, the horse-racing, the poetry contests, the slow encroachment of Russian administration.

Now the edition, which the reader should be told about plainly. The title page of this volume reads ABAI (Abridged), and that word is doing a great deal of work. What Auezov wrote is a very long novel in four books. What is printed here is a condensation, made for the export market, and the volume nowhere states what has been cut, by whom, or on what principle. A reader who finishes it will not know whether the parts that seem to move quickly do so because Auezov wrote them that way or because a hand in Moscow shortened them. This is the first thing an honest edition owes its reader and the 1975 volume does not supply it.

Nor does it name the translator. The copyright page credits the illustrator, Y. Sidorkin, and records "© Translated into English. Progress Publishers 1975" — a corporate copyright with no person attached. Someone turned a Kazakh novel, probably through Russian, into the serviceable and occasionally very fine English printed here, and the house that published it did not think the fact worth a line.

The foreword, and what it leaves out

The volume opens with a foreword by Abdizhamil Nurpeisov, himself a Kazakh novelist and a younger contemporary. It is a

warm and genuinely affecting piece of writing. Nurpeisov remembers the young writers coming back from the war "in worn army coats saturated with the smell of gunpowder smoke", all of them "madly in love with Auezov"; he remembers the older man's kindness to beginners, how "his hands trembled when he took up someone's manuscript", how he would liken the young to "new grass, or a breath of fresh mountain wind". He describes coming into the house and finding Auezov dictating a passage of Abai through a half-open study door. As a portrait of a man by someone who loved him it is worth having.

As an introduction to the book it is a remarkable performance, because of what is not in it.

There is no date of composition. There is no account of the circumstances in which a Kazakh national epic was written and published. There is no mention of the doctrine under which all Soviet fiction was then produced, no mention of the Writers' Union, no mention of any difficulty of any kind. Auezov, in this telling, simply was: "From the outset he was a full-fledged writer," and his gifts unfolded without interruption, admired by the young, honoured by the state, and then dead.

But it would be wrong to say the foreword has no politics in it, and the way it has them is more instructive than silence would have been. Nurpeisov turns to the question of Russia and the steppe, and he does not duck it. He quotes a living Kazakh poet, Olzhas Suleimenov, saying that Kazakhstan was "a huge hard-labour camp floating on the map of the Russian Empire" — which is about as hard a sentence about Russian rule as could be printed in Moscow in 1975.

Then watch what happens to it. The very next clause begins "even in those days progressive Russian intellectuals were paving paths of friendship into these outlying steppes", and the labour camp dissolves into a procession of exiles: Dostoyevsky; the Marxists; "a continuous stream of sick and enfeebled prisoners — victims of the tsarist arbitrariness — came plodding to Kazakhstan from the heart of Russia." The Kazakhs, Nurpeisov writes, "did not shun these emaciated, bearded strangers"; the herdsmen called Taras Shevchenko akyn tarasi, a poet of justice; Chokan Valikhanov corresponded with Dostoyevsky, who urged him to be "the enlightened intercessor for his people"; and Y. P. Mikhaelis, exiled for his politics, became Abai's close friend and put him on to the magazine *Sovremennik*.

Every word of that is true and some of it is moving — and it converts an indictment of an empire into a story about

friendship between peoples, in a single sentence, by changing the subject from the state to the exiles the state had banished. This is the characteristic Soviet operation on the national question, performed here with real literary skill. The sharp quotation is not suppressed. It is printed, and then absorbed.

So the foreword is not a failure of nerve. It is the form working as designed. A commissioned foreword in an export edition exists to place the author safely: to establish that he is a classic, that his classic status is uncontested, and that there is therefore nothing to discuss. Warmth is the most efficient way of achieving this, and so is generosity toward the sharpest thing your opponent might say.

The same instinct governs the series. This volume belongs to the Progress Soviet Authors Library, launched in 1973, and the jacket states its purpose: for the first time "the foreign reader will have an opportunity to gain a comprehensive picture of Soviet literature over the last fifty years in its many forms". Fifty years, from 1923 — which is to say a picture beginning conveniently after the revolutionary decade and its arguments, and running through a period whose literary history is, to put it at its mildest, not a story of uninterrupted flourishing. A canon is made by what it leaves out, and this one was assembled by a house that could not name the principle of exclusion.

And the Lenin Prize, which the jacket announces, belongs to the same apparatus. A state literary prize is editorial control applied after publication: it fixes the meaning of a book by declaring which reading of it is the honoured one. Abai was awarded the highest such prize the Soviet Union had. It is worth asking what the prize was for.

What the novel actually does

It is a better book than its packaging.

Auezov's real subject is authority, and he is unusually clear-eyed about it. Kunanbai is the most interesting character in the novel, and he is not a villain of the kind a didactic novel would have produced. He is intelligent, devout, physically brave, genuinely persuaded that what he does is justice, and prepared to be cruel in public precisely because the crowd's sympathy for the victim is itself a threat to the order he maintains. Auezov gives him the scene at the cliff and then declines to editorialise. The horror is left to work on the reader through Abai's hands over his eyes.

The other great strength is the writing itself, which the English reader should be warned is better than the packaging suggests.

Auezov can do the set piece — the migration, the horse race, the funeral feast — but he is at his best on small human weather. Here is Abai, sixteen and in love, seeing Togzhan in her father's yurt:

Besides Suyundik, his wife and his two sons, Adilbek and Asilbek, there was one other creature there — the loveliness of spring itself. She was Togzhan, the daughter of Suyundik. She kept coming in and out from the Small Yurta of her mother, Suyundik's younger wife. The sholpy in her hair tinkled at every movement.

The tinkling hair ornament doing the work of the whole encounter, because the boy cannot look directly and can only hear her moving: that is a real novelist's instinct, and the book is full of it.

The writing about the steppe is the other great strength, and it is not decorative. Auezov knows that a migration is an economic event, that a feud is about grazing, that a poetry contest is a way of conducting a quarrel by other means. The texture of the book is thick with the specific — the shokpar, the soeel, the yurtas set in their order of precedence — and none of it is exotic furniture. It is how the society reproduced itself.

Where the novel is weaker is where it has to arrive somewhere. Abai's development has a destination fixed in advance: enlightenment, learning, the Russian connection as the road out of backwardness. That reading of Abai is not an invention of the Soviet period — he did translate Pushkin, he did argue for schooling — but in this novel it acquires the shape of an inevitability, and characters begin to be positioned according to whether they are ahead of or behind the movement of history. The feudal order is doomed; the reader always knows it; and the effect is to flatten some of the opposition into obstacle. It is the standard cost of the method, and Abai pays less of it than almost any other novel in this series, but it pays some.

Was the state consistent?

Here is the question this edition invites and cannot ask itself.

The doctrine governing a book like Abai was that Soviet culture should be socialist in content and national in form. The formula is usually treated as a licence, and on paper it is one: it says that a Kazakh novel may be Kazakh. What it also says, in the same breath, is that the Kazakh part is form. The content comes from elsewhere. A national literature is granted the right

to its own materials, its own landscape and its own language, on condition that what those materials are made to mean is settled centrally.

Abai is the best possible case for the doctrine and it still shows the seam. Auezov was given resources no Kazakh writer had ever had — an audience, an academy, translation into the language of international circulation, a national epic commissioned in effect from his own family history — and he used them to produce something that will outlast the state that paid for it. That is a real achievement of Soviet cultural policy and it should be said plainly, because the alternative account, in which nothing good came of any of it, is false and the books are there to prove it false.

But the condition was real too. A novel about a nineteenth-century Kazakh enlightener whose road leads towards Russia is a novel that can be honoured. The reading of Abai that the prize fixed is the one in which the Kazakh past is a preparation. What could not be written, under the same dispensation, was the account in which the encroachment of Russian administration on the steppe was a conquest, or in which the destruction of nomadic society had a twentieth-century sequel. Auezov lived through that sequel: the settlement of the Kazakh nomads at the end of the 1920s and the famine that followed it killed a catastrophic proportion of his people. It is not in this book, and it could not have been. A national literature whose content is set elsewhere cannot write its own worst decade.

Then ask whether the state kept its own bargain. It did not, and the evidence is in this volume's own foreword — not in what it says, but in who wrote it.

Twelve years after this edition appeared, in the winter of 1986, Kazakhs demonstrated in Alma-Ata against Moscow's appointment of a Russian to head their republic. It was among the first open nationalist protests of the Gorbachev period, and the Soviet press spent the following months on the problem of "nationalistic moods" in the Kazakh-language press — attacking, among other things, a newspaper item about a kindergarten where instruction would be in Kazakh "as the children themselves and their parents wanted", and asking whether it was "necessary to publish such material propagating national specificity even from kindergarten age". In Pravda of 5 March 1987 a Kazakh writer was produced to strike the balance. The two languages, he explained, were like "two breasts of a common mother", both needed to sustain a healthy infant. International Viewpoint, reporting the campaign that spring, noted the obvious thing about the metaphor: he did not

suggest that Russian infants needed Kazakh, and Russian children were certainly not losing their language.

The writer was Abdizhamil Nurpeisov, who wrote the foreword to this book.

There is no reason to think worse of him for it than of anyone else asked to perform that function, and the point is not personal. It is that the same man, in the same official capacity, introduces the Kazakh national epic to foreign readers in 1975 and manages Kazakh national feeling for domestic ones in 1987 — and that the second task follows from the first. "National in form" produced both. The doctrine that let Auezov write *Abai* is the doctrine that required somebody to explain, when Kazakhs demonstrated, that a mother has two breasts.

What is living

Not the framework. The framework collapsed, and when it did, the national feeling it had spent sixty years managing turned out to have been managed rather than dissolved.

What survives is the writing, and specifically Auezov's refusal to simplify the world he came from. The steppe in this novel is not a backwardness waiting to be relieved. It is a complete society with its own law, its own poetry, its own cruelty and its own means of arguing with itself, and Auezov renders it with the authority of someone describing his own relatives. A reader who comes to this book for the politics will find them, and they are the politics of 1949 and 1959 and 1975. A reader who comes to it for the thing it actually is — the first great novel written in Kazakh, by a man writing his own great-grandfather's world — will find that it is still there, under the abridgement and the prize and the foreword, doing what it was built to do.

Read it for the boy on the cliff-top with his hands over his eyes. Everything the century afterwards did to Kazakh literature, including the honours, is downstream of the question that scene asks: what does it cost to be educated by the people who hold power over you?