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ON LITERATURE AND ART

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On Literature and Art

What Marx and Engels actually said about literature and art, gathered from letters, drafts and reviews - including Engels on Balzac, and the principle that the less an author's opinions show, the better the work.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Introduction to This Edition

Marx and Engels never wrote a book on art. What they left is scattered — a letter to a young novelist, a paragraph in the drafts of *Capital*, an aside on Greek mythology, a review, a note in the margin of a friend's play — and it is out of those fragments that this volume is built. The Publishers' Note is candid about the method: the collection is compiled from two earlier Soviet books, *On Art* and *On Literature*, and "the headings and subheadings have been supplied by the editors." So the architecture of the book — its march from the "Materialist Conception of the History of Culture" through "General Problems of Art" to the long survey of "History of Social Thought, Literature and Art" — belongs not to Marx and Engels but to the Institute of Marxism-Leninism. B. Krylov's preface tells the reader what that architecture is meant to show: that the founders, out of their revolution in philosophy, arrived at "genuinely scientific aesthetic principles" — a science of art, complete enough to guide the art of a socialist state. That claim, and the distance between it and the texts assembled beneath it, is the subject of this introduction.

Read for themselves, the fragments are far subtler than the frame. What is striking is how little of the reductive Marxism later built in their name is actually here. Marx, drafting his Introduction of 1857, stops in genuine puzzlement before Greek art: why should work rooted in a vanished, primitive society still move us? His answer refuses the mechanical link between base and superstructure that vulgar Marxism would make compulsory. "The Greeks were normal children," he writes; their art keeps "an eternal charm because it is a stage that will never recur." Art, in other words, does not rise and fall in step with the mode of production; it can outlive its own economic ground.

The same independence governs Engels's famous letters, both printed here. To Margaret Harkness he lays down the principle

that would scandalise every later commissar: "The more the opinions of the author remain hidden, the better for the work of art." His proof is Balzac — a royalist, "politically a Legitimist," whose sympathies lay entirely with the doomed aristocracy, and who is nonetheless "a far greater master of realism than all the Zolas," because his novels record the bourgeoisie's victory against everything their author wished. That an artist's truthful eye could defeat his own politics Engels calls "one of the greatest triumphs of Realism, and one of the grandest features in old Balzac." To Minna Kautsky he is just as plain: "I am by no means opposed to partisan poetry as such," but "the purpose must become manifest from the situation and the action themselves without being expressly pointed out." (A *Tendenzroman*, in the German of these letters, is a novel written to preach a thesis.) This is an aesthetics of realism over doctrine — generous, anti-didactic, suspicious of art that serves conclusions on a platter. Its limits are those of any body of occasional writing: it is fragmentary, never systematised by its authors, and marked by a nineteenth-century confidence — the "childhood of humanity," the fixed canon of Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Goethe and Balzac — that a later reader must weigh rather than simply inherit. But its temper is unmistakable, and it is the opposite of a rulebook.

Was the state that canonised these texts faithful to them? Here the gap becomes a chasm. The "scientific aesthetics" Krylov announces was cashed out, in the Soviet Union, as Socialist Realism — the doctrine proclaimed at the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934 and policed for the next half-century. Its demands were *partiinst* (party-mindedness, art bent to the Party's line), the "positive hero," and the portrayal of reality in its revolutionary development — that is, as the Party wished it to become. Everything else was hunted down as "formalism": Shostakovich denounced in 1936, and again in the post-war Zhdanovshchina (the cultural crackdown led by Andrei Zhdanov from 1946) that broke Akhmatova and Zoshchenko and silenced a generation. Every one of those demands is precisely the didacticism Engels warned Kautsky and

Harkness against. The doctrine erected on Marx's and Engels's authority inverted what they had written: it required the tendency to be pointed out, the author's opinions to be paraded, the future resolution served on the platter. The book is a standing refutation of the machine that reprinted it.

And it cuts closer still. On Engels's own authority the reader is taught that a clear-eyed reactionary who sees his world truly — the Legitimist Balzac — is worth more than any writer who trims his art to a cause. It is hard to imagine a lesson more subversive of a state that demanded compliant hacks and jailed the truthful. The very passage the Soviet editors could not omit, because it is the centre of Marxist writing on the novel, licenses the reader to prefer the honest enemy to the obedient friend. The anthology hands over, in the founders' own hand, the standard by which the cultural policy of its own publisher stands condemned.

Taken back from that frame, *On Literature and Art* is more alive than the catechism allowed. Its method — materialist but never mechanical, alert to the "relative autonomy" of art, prizing the truth that "may crop out even in spite of the author's opinions" — is a resource against two opposite errors at once: the ghost of Zhdanov, who subordinated art to a line, and the market, which dissolves art into content and brand. Marx's wonder at Greek art and Engels's defence of Balzac are, between them, an inoculation against every attempt to reduce a work to the politics of its maker.

This is where the Fourth International takes up the book. The authentic Marxist line on art was kept alive not in Moscow but in exile. Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution* refused to license any single "proletarian" style and mocked the idea that a decree could manufacture a culture; and in 1938, with the painter Diego Rivera and the surrealist André Breton, he issued from Mexico a manifesto *Towards a Free Revolutionary Art*, demanding complete freedom for art against the Stalinist and fascist state alike — written in the very years Socialist Realism was hardening into law. From that standpoint the Soviet aesthetic is legible as a betrayal, not an application: Marx and Engels wrote to free the artist's eye, and the bureaucracy chained it. Read against the doctrine that later claimed it, this anthology is not the founding charter of Socialist Realism. It is its earliest and most authoritative refutation — the measure of the betrayal, in the founders' own words.

ARTS & LETTERS

Life and Work of Walt Whitman

Twenty years of archival work on Whitman by a Soviet scholar who read the Brooklyn Eagle journalism, the earliest notebooks and the Library of Congress manuscripts - and who argues the poet is better loved abroad than at home.

Maurice Mendelson

Introduction to the 1976 Edition

The spine says 1976. The book is older than that, and it says so itself, in its own back matter. Mendelson's bibliography of Russian writing on Whitman lists, under 1969, "Mendelson M., Zhizn i tvorchestvo Whitman'a (Life and Work of Whitman), 2nd revised and enlarged ed., Moscow, Nauka, 1969", and under 1965 the first edition from the same publisher, 368 pages. Nothing in the notes postdates 1971. The latest American event the book registers is a Washington Post piece by Colman McCarthy from May 1969, written for the poet's 150th birthday. The Foreword — which opens "Several years ago, in 1969, poetry lovers all over the world celebrated the 150th birthday of the great American poet, Walt Whitman" — was evidently added later for export. Everything behind it is the Nauka book of 1969, which is in turn a revision of 1965. Read it as a book of the late Brezhnev-era Academy, not of 1976.

That matters, because 1976 was the American Bicentennial, and a reader could be forgiven for assuming that Progress Publishers commissioned a Soviet Whitman as counter-programming. They did not commission it. They timed it. Search the text for "bicentennial" and there is nothing; search for "two hundred years" and there is nothing. The book was written for a Whitman anniversary, not an American one. What Progress did was pick the year to put it into English — and the effect, in 1976, is a quiet claim of ownership. The argument the book leaves in a Western reader's hands is that America's greatest democratic poet is neglected at home and beloved elsewhere. Mendelson makes it explicitly: "It is true that in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries Whitman's poetry has become the property of an immense audience. It is also true that in his own homeland he has not yet fully conquered the public." He assembles the supporting cast with care — Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's copy of *Leaves of Grass*, passed around a women's prison and left behind there; Gus Hall in a 1966 interview, "I discovered Whitman while I was in Leavenworth." In the year

of the tall ships, this is a book arguing that the republic has mislaid its own bard and that the workers' movement has been keeping him.

Maurice Mendelson was not an apparatus functionary. His bibliography records a doctoral dissertation on Whitman submitted in Moscow in 1956, a foreword to a Whitman selection for Goslitizdat in 1954, and centenary articles in *Pravda* and *Oktyabr* in 1955. He spent something like two decades on one poet, and it shows on every page. This is the rare Progress title where the honest thing to do is to spend most of the space on what the book gets right.

The scholarship

Mendelson works from the documents. He uses Whitman's Brooklyn Eagle journalism at length and in detail — the 1846–48 editorship, the leading article "Slavers—and the Slave Trade", the Wilmot Proviso fight, the paper's boast in the issue of 3 February 1847 that it was "the very first Democratic paper which alluded to this subject ... in a decisive manner", the dismissal by the owner Van Anden and Van Anden's evasive public explanation, and the Brooklyn Advertiser's rival account, which held that the editor had kicked a well-known politician down the stairs. He uses the earliest surviving notebook, identified by the Eagle office address on its flyleaf, and quotes its aphorisms directly. He uses a manuscript in the Library of Congress to date the founding of the Brooklyn Freeman, and Whitman's Library of Congress notes on Russian history and economics. He uses Traubel's *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, Edwin Haviland Miller's edition of the Correspondence, and the Whitman–Rolleston letters published by Indiana in 1951. He engages American Whitman criticism by name and quotes it accurately before disagreeing with it: Gay Wilson Allen, Emory Holloway, Sculley Bradley, Henry Seidel Canby, Richard Chase, James E. Miller Jr., Leadie Mae Clark, Leslie Fiedler.

The chapter on the Mexican War is the best demonstration that

this is real historical work. It would have been easy to skip. Mendelson does not skip it. He states the damaging evidence first, in his own voice: "The editorials written by Whitman just after the American troops had crossed the border made the Mexicans out to be the blackest of villains. The editor accused them of being ready to execute hundreds of people; he spoke of the tyranny within Mexico and openly advocated seizure of Mexican territory." He quotes Canby's verdict that *Leaves of Grass* expresses "a young expansionist mind in an expansionist country" at full strength before answering it. Only then does he trace the turn — by the first days of 1847 the *Eagle* was arguing that "the time ... has arrived when all citizens should speak candidly and firmly on this subject of the Mexican War. Let it go no further!" — and he grounds the turn in a specific mechanism: the war question became inseparable from the slavery question. That is how the argument should be made, and it is made honestly.

The final chapter, on Whitman's reception in Russia, is the book's unique contribution and is largely unobtainable elsewhere in English. A notice in *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* in 1861 described *Leaves of Grass* as a novel, on the strength of having read English reviews rather than the book. Turgenev, in the early 1870s, wrote to Annenkov of his intention to publish "several translations of lyrical verses by the amazing American poet Walt Whitman (have you heard of him?) with a short foreword. It is impossible to imagine anything more astounding" — and a Turgenev translation of "Beat! Beat! Drums!" survives among his manuscripts in a Paris library. Pyotr Lavrov, the revolutionary populist, wrote on Whitman in 1882 under the name "P. Kryukov". Whitman's own "You Russians and we Americans!" — the December 1881 preface he wrote for a Russian *Leaves of Grass* that was never published — is reconstructed here from the Rolleston and Lee correspondence out of Dresden. And there is John Swinton's letter to the poet of 12 August 1882, reporting that a lecture of his had been translated for a Russian journal: "I guess this is your first introduction to Rooshia." A scholar found these things. They are worth having.

The puzzle, and the shape of its solution

The book's first chapter is called "The 'Puzzle' of Walt Whitman", and it names the puzzle in American terms, quoting Gay Allen: "No author in American literature has been a greater puzzle to his biographers and critics than Walt Whitman." Mendelson then restates it as a series of questions, and the form of the questions gives the game away. Every one is an either/or: was Whitman "a skilful demagogue playing at

democracy, or a poet whose world view was organically linked with that of the democratic masses"? Was he "bound hand and foot by bourgeois individualism, or did his strength lie in an emotional and intellectual leaning towards collectivism?" A puzzle posed as a disjunction has already had its answer chosen.

To his credit, Mendelson does not simply deny the individualism. He concedes it and then subordinates it: "There is no doubt that the individualist and collectivist tendencies in *Leaves of Grass* often clash with each other. Yet the most important, decisive fact about Whitman the poet is, in the final analysis, that he was a man with a 'wide-open heart', attracted by collectivism." In the final analysis is the hinge. The contradictions are admitted as facts and then denied as facts about the poetry, because they have been assigned a direction. Part Four is titled "Firm as Ever": a life with no falling-off, no wrong turnings, only a trajectory.

Sometimes the trajectory is genuinely there. The late Whitman really did tell Traubel "... I find I'm a good deal more of a socialist than I thought I was ..." — Mendelson quotes the hedge along with the claim — and the notes for the undelivered lecture on "The Tramp and Strike Questions" really do say that beneath the political world lies "not the abstract question of democracy, but of social and economic organization, the treatment of working-people by employers". The reading of *Democratic Vistas* is strong and unsentimental; he lets Whitman's "society, in these States, is canker'd, crude, superstitious, and rotten" stand without softening, and he is candid that the book's cure — that literature alone might redeem the republic — is a "naive idea".

Where the trajectory is not there, the method shows its costs. Consider "Passage to India". Mendelson introduces it as a poem about technological optimism, notes that Whitman was excited by the transcontinental railway and the Suez Canal, allows that "Whitman expresses the hope that the achievements of the engineers will finally bring various nations closer together", and concludes: "But 'Passage to India' must be regarded as one of the poet's weaker works." The judgement is aesthetic. It is not, apparently, available to him that a poem whose organising image is the opening of the routes to Asia in 1869 might be a poem about the world market, and that the Marxist reading of it — the poetry of capital's global reach, sung by a man who had opposed the seizure of California twenty years earlier — is the most interesting reading on offer. A book alert enough to catch the expansionist Whitman of 1846 goes quiet on the imperial geography of 1868, because that Whitman is late, and lateness

in this book has to mean growth.

What the book cannot say

The pages on Whitman's sexuality are where the book fails, and the failure is precise enough to name.

The subject is present. Calamus is discussed, "adhesiveness" appears a dozen times, Peter Doyle gets several pages, and the Symonds correspondence is quoted. Nothing is hidden. Everything is redirected. Calamus is "dedicated to the theme of manly friendship and 'robust love'", and Mendelson adds at once that "the poet emphasized that such poems had first of all a political significance". "Adhesiveness" — Whitman's own borrowed phrenological term for attachment between men — is glossed throughout as Lunacharsky glossed it, as a yearning for collectivism. Doyle, a horsecar conductor in his twenties when they met, becomes "his adopted son", and the letters between them are "the letters of a father or an elder brother". There was no adoption.

The refutation, where it is offered directly, is not an argument. "Critics of the Freudian school seek the key to Whitman's genius in his supposed homosexual inclinations. Again it must be said that no one has been able to adduce actual facts confirming such hypotheses. In Whitman's verse and prose the sun shines brilliantly and a fresh wind blows; his works breathe naturalness and purity." A claim about a man's life is answered with a description of the weather in his poems, and "purity" is left to do the work that evidence would have done. Later: "Whitman's biographers have offered us no real proof of the poet's homosexual inclinations." The pathology, note, is never attributed to Whitman; it is relocated onto the people asking. The critics have a "Freudian bent", they are "psychopathologists", they suffer from "sick thoughts" and generate "wild conjecture". Symonds, who asked Whitman the question in writing, is a man who needs help getting rid of his ideas.

The most revealing passage in the book is the one where Mendelson does his job and then stops. He quotes Whitman's furious reply to Symonds — the pages of *Leaves of Grass* "are not to be even mentioned for such gratuitous and quite at the time undreamed and unwished possibility of morbid inference—which are disavowed by me and seem damnable" — and he notes, accurately, that Whitman went on to assure Symonds he had fathered six children and had a grandson who wrote to him. And then Mendelson writes the honest sentence: "No researcher has been able to unearth any facts which would confirm that the poet had children and grandchildren." He has

put on the page, in his own words, the fact that the denial he is relying on contains a demonstrable fabrication. He draws no inference from it. He moves to the next paragraph, which is about a letter to Charles Warren Stoddard. The evidence is presented; the conclusion is unavailable.

This was not a limit of the state of knowledge. Mendelson takes the Symonds text from the introduction to Walter Lowenfels's *The Tenderest Lover* (Delacorte, 1970) — an American selection of Whitman's love poetry, edited by a communist — and uses the document while ignoring the reason anyone had gathered it. He cites Edwin Haviland Miller's *Correspondence* throughout and quotes Miller's remark that the poet "remain[s] mystifying" without engaging Miller's own psychological reading of the poetry, published in 1968. He knew where the argument was. Soviet law criminalised sex between men throughout his working life, and Soviet publishing would not have carried the other conclusion. It is possible that Mendelson believed what he wrote. It is not possible that he had no idea what he was declining to consider.

The policy that is not in the book, and where it is

Search this text for "Stalin" and there are no hits. Search for "socialist realism", "Zhdanov", "formalism": none. That is a real finding and it deserves stating plainly. Mendelson is not writing agitprop. He quotes Lenin once, on Marx and Hermann Kriege, and the citation is apt. He quotes Marx's letter to Lincoln from the General Council minutes. Otherwise the Marxism in the book is a general one — classes, the trajectory of American capitalism, the Utopian socialists — and the literary method, whatever else is wrong with it, is not the method of a state directive. Much of this book could have appeared, with different footnotes, from an American university press.

The policy is nevertheless in the volume, in two places, and both are outside Mendelson's prose.

The first is a name in his own bibliography. The 1935 *Leningrad Leaves of Grass* is listed with its two introductory essays, one by Chukovsky and one by "Mirsky D." That is D. S. Mirsky, who returned to the Soviet Union in 1932, was arrested in 1937, and died in a camp in the Kolyma region in 1939. He appears twice in these pages as a bare citation. The book has dates for the edition and none for the man. Mendelson could not have written it any other way, and it would be cheap to blame him for the omission. But a reader in 1976 who wondered what became of the critic who introduced Soviet readers to *Leaves of Grass* would find, in a book of this

thoroughness, no thread to pull.

The second is on the last page. Bound behind Mendelson's index, Progress advertises a companion anthology of Soviet multinational literature, "composed of works belonging in form to some specific nation, in content to the ideas of socialism." That is the Stalin-era formula, printed on the endpaper of a book whose author never once invokes it. Trotsky quotes the same words in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), ch. 7, "Family, Youth and Culture": "Culture should be socialist in content, national in form." That chapter remains the sharpest account of what happened to Soviet literary life and why. Its central claim about the fate of writers under the bureaucracy — "The most eminent artists either commit suicide, or find their material in the remote past, or become silent" — needs one addition to cover the case in your hands. There was a fourth exit: the remote place. A nineteenth-century American poet, dead since 1892, was among the safest subjects a Soviet literary scholar could choose, and the scholarship here is as good as it is partly because the distance bought the room to do it well. The same chapter records what Trotsky had proposed instead, in 1924: that the state might "place limitations upon creative freedom, but in no case pretend to the role of commander in the sphere of science, literature and art." He was not offering unlimited freedom, and the record of the early Soviet years is not spotless on this. He was refusing the state the role of judge of literary merit — the role that decided, among much else, that some critics get bibliographies and some get camps.

For the specific vice of this book — the conversion of a poet's whole life into a political trajectory — the best short answer in our tradition comes from C. L. R. James, writing as G. F. Eckstein in *Fourth International*, vol. XI no. 2, March–April 1950, on Mailer and Melville. The Stalinists, James wrote, "taking advantage of the confusion of bourgeois thought, continue to make the most outrageous approximations between a writer's political beliefs and his artistic creation." In the same essay James disposes of Mendelson's central question in a single clause, by refusing it: "While Whitman sang paeans to great individuals, Melville in 1851 drew the individualism of American capitalism to the end." The individualism is a fact about Whitman, not a phase he was leaving. It is what a Marxist criticism has to explain, not explain away.

What to keep

Read Part One, the Brooklyn Eagle chapters, and the final chapter on Whitman in Russia. The first two are careful documentary history; the last contains material you will not

easily find in English. Read the Democratic Vistas pages, which are strong. Read the treatment of Calamus, Doyle and Symonds as a specimen of what a state can make a good scholar do with a subject he understands perfectly well.

And keep the book's own opening page, which is better than its argument. Mendelson begins in Arkhangelsk in the summer of 1942, among the survivors of a torpedoed Arctic convoy. One elderly American sailor asks him, shyly, whether a particular book might be obtainable in the town: he had carried it across the oceans for decades and it had gone down with the rest of his possessions. "The American was asking about a book, but he seemed to be speaking about a living human being, someone very close and dear to him." He found another copy in Arkhangelsk. That is the honest core of this book — that *Leaves of Grass* moved between an American seaman and a Soviet scholar in the middle of a war, and that neither of them needed a resolution of the puzzle to know what had passed between them. Mendelson spent three hundred pages resolving it anyway.

INTERNATIONALISM

The Hague Congress of the First International September 2–7, 1872

The complete surviving record of the First International's last congress, September 1872: minutes, mandates, accounts and commission papers from the Marx-Engels archive - with the anarchist delegates' own notes printed alongside.

Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC CPSU

Introduction to the 1976 Edition

This is the best book in the series, and the reason is that its editors mostly got out of the way. Seven hundred pages of minutes, mandates, financial accounts, greetings telegrams and commission papers from the six days in September 1872 when the International Working Men's Association held its last congress, transcribed from the manuscripts in the Central Party Archives of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Moscow — the Marx-Engels papers, which the Soviet state had bought, gathered and, whatever else it did, kept. Its full title is *The Hague Congress of the International Working Men's Association, September 2–7, 1872 (Minutes and Documents)*, and it appeared in a Progress series called *Documents of the First International*. The Russian edition was prepared by Irene Bach, Antonina Koroteyeva and Tatyana Vasilyeva under Bach's general editorship and published in 1970; the English translation is by Richard Dixon and Alex Miller, the same hands responsible for much of the *Collected Works*, with Natalia Karmanova, Margarita Lopukhina, Maria Shcheglova and Ludgarda Zubrilova editing for Progress. The copyright page carries no printing history — only "© Translation into English, Progress Publishers 1976" — so the English text is a first printing of a six-year-old Russian book, and 1970 is the date to argue from. Nor is this the whole of the project, though the preface does not say so: a companion volume, *The Hague Congress of the First International ... Reports and Letters*, followed from Progress in 1978, and we know of it because the Institute's own *International Working-Class Movement* cites both side by side. The 1976 volume's claim to contain "all the extant official documents directly reflecting the work of the Congress and its commissions" is therefore narrower than it sounds. Within that scope it is a serious scholarly edition, and a reader who wants to know what actually happened at The Hague has to come here.

Start with the apparatus, because that is where an edition either

earns trust or loses it. The preface tells you exactly which manuscripts survive and in what state: Benjamin Le Moussu's official French minutes, which begin only at the third sitting; Friedrich Sorge's fuller notes, extant in two slightly differing copies, one of them the Wisconsin manuscript published in facsimile by Hans Gerth in 1958, whose variant readings this edition gives in footnotes; and the fragmentary notes of Nikolai Zhukovsky, whose mandate the congress refused. The notes describe the physical documents — pencil on thirty-six sheets of a ledger-book, sheets 15.6 by 10.3 centimetres, Engels writing on the inner envelope of a letter — with the fussiness of people who have handled the paper. Crossings-out in the manuscripts are restored in footnotes, including ones that are not flattering: where Engels deleted a passage conceding that the General Council recognised the New Madrid Federation "in despite of the Regulations," the deleted words are printed.

More tellingly, the edition publishes its opponents. Zhukovsky was an anarchist and his minutes are given anyway, with the note observing only that his record "is not free from prejudice, but serves as a supplement to Sorge's report." Note 37 reproduces, from the anarchist historian Max Nettlau's biography of Bakunin, Zhukovsky's pencil record of the expulsion debate — which means that a Moscow institute printed James Guillaume saying "This has been a tendentious trial" and Adhémar Schwitzguébel saying "The workers will condemn the decision of the majority." The main body of the minutes carries Guillaume's charge in full, including his comparison of the commission's verdict to the Commune's leaders being "led to the scaffold side by side with thieves." On the disputed authorship of the Catechism of the Revolutionary, the note is exemplary: "Some researchers attribute it to Bakunin, others to Nechayev. Utin has no doubts of its having been written by Bakunin." And note 141 records, without comment or resistance, Guillaume's observation that the General Council's powers had been enlarged at Basle

"partly through the efforts of Bakunin," who then thought the Council more revolutionary than the sections. None of that had to be there.

The hardest test of an edition, though, is what it does when its sources disagree about a fact its publisher has an interest in, and here the volume passes it twice over. Two records of the expulsion votes are printed, and they do not match. Sorge's minutes report "Expulsion of Bakunin from the International Working Men's Association: carried by 29 votes to 7 with 8 abstentions." The congress resolutions — drawn up by Marx and Engels and published in London in October 1872, printed here as well — resolve "To exclude Michael Bakounine. Voted for, 27; against, 6; abstentions, 7." Two votes and one abstention apart, on the most consequential decision the International ever took, and the edition reconciles them nowhere. It goes further. Beneath the resolutions it sets out, from the French text, the roll-call by name: the twenty-seven who voted to expel Bakunin, Marx and Engels among them; the six who voted against, Désiré Brismée and Victor Dave and the Belgians; and the seven who abstained, a list that includes Guillaume, who was expelled on the next vote. Alongside the resolutions' own admission that "these votes upon the Alliance were taken after a great number of ... delegates had been obliged to leave," the editors add a footnote recording that Engels's manuscript at that point read "French, English" where the printed text says French and German. A publisher inventing a clean story does not print the roll, the discrepancy and Engels's second thoughts about who had gone home.

So the documents are the documents, and the notes are largely a working scholar's notes. What remains is the preface — nine pages, roughly 3,200 words, unsigned, issued in the name of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism — and the preface is a different kind of writing.

Its argument is announced in the first paragraph: the congress "marked the victory of scientific communism over anarchism and other anti-Marxist trends in the International." The task of the congress, we are told, included "to put an end to the disorganising and splitting activity of the Bakuninists." Note the tense. The outcome is folded back into the agenda, so that what the delegates decided becomes what they had been convened to decide. The climax of the preface is the adoption of Clause 7a on the political party and the dictatorship of the proletariat, which "signified the victory of the principles of Marxism in the programme of the International."

Against that, consider what the preface does not say, and

consider it by counting. In its 3,200 words the string Bakunin occurs eight times, and on every one of those eight occasions it is inside the word Bakunist. The man is never named in his own right in the preface to the congress that expelled him. Guillaume does not occur at all. The word expulsion appears once, and it is the Spanish federation demanding, before the congress opened, "the expulsion of sectarians from the International" — not the congress's own act. New York appears once, and it is New York Section No. 1 issuing a mandate to its delegate Karl Marx. Nothing tells the reader that Bakunin and Guillaume were expelled; nothing tells the reader that the General Council was moved to New York. Those were the two decisive acts of the congress. In the body of the book, freed from the preface, Bakunin occurs 694 times, Guillaume 219, New York 141. A congress of sixty-five expelled the most famous revolutionary in Europe on some forty votes cast in a thinning hall, and said so, twice, in two counts that disagree. The preface, summarising, records neither the act nor the arithmetic.

That is the whole of the criticism, and it is worth stating just as plainly what the criticism is not. This apparatus does not read 1872 through 1972. In roughly 240,000 words Lenin is never once cited, quoted or invoked — the word Leninism occurs four times and every one of them is the publishing institute's own name. Stalin does not appear at all, nor Mao, nor any analogy to the Sino-Soviet split or to Paris in May 1968. The phrase "petty-bourgeois" occurs five times in the whole volume, twice in speeches made by delegates in 1872 and twice in the annotation, in contexts a nineteenth-century historian would use it. The contrast with the sibling volume in this series, Boris Leibson's *Petty-Bourgeois Revolutionism* — published in Russian in 1970, the same year as the Russian text of this book — is total. Leibson runs a single line from Bakunin's secret Alliance through the Barcelona anarchists to Trotsky to the Red Guards to the rue Gay-Lussac, all one disease. Nothing of that kind appears here. Whoever wrote the preface, and whoever wrote the notes, were not doing the same job, and it would be dishonest to pretend otherwise.

There is a further comparison worth making carefully, because a companion introduction in this series has made it loosely. The same Institute's *The International Working-Class Movement* — volume two, covering 1871 to 1904, Progress 1981 — narrates The Hague in a few pages, and it does say what this preface will not: the commission of inquiry "confined itself to recommending the expulsion of Bakunin and James Guillaume from the International for their divisive activities. This the congress proceeded to do." It reports the transfer of the General Council to New York, with Engels's

explanation, and footnotes that the Blanquists walked out when it passed. On the two bare facts, the general history of 1981 is franker than the documentary edition's own preface of 1976. That much holds.

What does not hold is the inference that volume two is therefore the more honest book. Read the passage to the end and the direction of its criticism reverses. Volume two does say that the Alliance resolution was "the only resolution of The Hague congress not entirely in keeping with the line mapped out by Marx and Engels" — but the complaint is that the congress was too lenient, not that it was unjust. Marx and Engels had wanted the Alliance dissolved as a body; the commission, volume two writes, "was misled by the testimony of the Bakuninists," reached no finding on whether the secret Alliance existed, and expelled two men instead, so that "the question of an organisational separation from the anarchists was not resolved." Nothing is conceded to the anti-authoritarian side; the anarchists are conceded only a tactical escape. Guillaume appears in volume two four times, once as the object of a Sorge jibe about wanting the International "without a head", once as the man expelled, twice in apparatus. He is never allowed to speak. In the 1976 volume he speaks for pages, calls the proceedings a tendentious trial, and leaves the hall declaring that though expelled he remains loyal to the International — and the edition prints that too.

So the finding needs restating in its true form. It is not that the general history is more honest than the documentary edition; on any measure of what a reader can check, the documentary edition is incomparably more honest, because it prints the record and the general history only characterises it. The gap is between the two pieces of Institute prose — the 1981 narrative and the 1976 preface — on two specific facts, and it runs the unexpected way. And there is a plain reason for it: volume two's Hague section is footnoted to this book, cited by title, publisher, year and page, and one of those pages is 282 — the first page of the Congress resolutions, the page that carries the vote counts. The general history of 1981 could afford to say that Bakunin was expelled because the documentary edition of 1976 had put the roll-call in print; it read the numbers and reported the act without them. The candour is downstream of the edition, not independent of it.

What the preface does instead is quieter and, for that reason, worth naming. It treats the split as settled rather than as a controversy, and it treats expulsion as housekeeping — something you do to put an end to disorganising activity, like clearing a drain. Apply to it the test this series applies elsewhere: is the accusation cashed out into acts that could be

shown not to have happened? In the body of the book, emphatically yes. The charge against Bakunin is made of dated documents — the Alliance's own statutes, Utin's enormous report on its Swiss activity and its connection with the Nechayev case, Mesa's statement on Spain, the letters of French correspondents — every one of them printed here and every one of them arguable with. The preface's own register is the other kind: "disorganising and splitting activity", a property of persons rather than a description of anything done. The book convicts Bakunin on evidence; the preface convicts him on essence, and does not name him while doing it.

It is difficult to read that from an institution whose own founder had been expelled and shot. The Institute of Marxism-Leninism was the successor of the Marx-Engels Institute directed by David Ryazanov, the scholar who did more than anyone to assemble these archives, and who was expelled from the Party in 1931, exiled, and shot in 1938. The people preparing this volume knew that. It does not follow that they falsified anything; the evidence of this book is that they did not. It does follow that the one register in which the editorial voice speaks — expulsion as necessary sanitation, dissent as splitting — is the register that had cost their own institution its founder. The silence about Bakunin's expulsion in a preface to a volume about Bakunin's expulsion is not a lie. It reads like a subject nobody wanted to describe in their own words.

The documents themselves are a good deal less settled than the preface. Engels argues for New York partly on the ground that the London council had been in place eight years and "there must be a change at last to avoid a feared ossification," and partly because he and Marx were tired and would not serve again. Édouard Vaillant, a Communeard, objects that "he does not understand why the Council is being transferred so far away from the main body of the army, which is in Europe," and predicts that Europe "will be obliged to find another head for itself." The congress divided on it twice, and the first division was close: "Voted for the change, 26; against, 23; abstentions, 9," before the seat "has been transferred to New York, by 30 votes against 14, for London, and 12 abstentions." Vaillant was right; the International in Europe did not survive, and the New York council wound the Association up at Philadelphia in 1876. Whether the transfer was a strategic retreat, a defence against Bakuninist capture, or a decent burial is still argued over, and the reader of this volume has everything needed to argue about it — including the names of the twenty-six and the twenty-three. That is the mark of a good edition of primary sources: it arms the people who disagree with its preface.

For the tradition from which this introduction is written, the Hague documents have never been comfortable reading, and should not be. They have also never been ignored. The Fourth International marked the International's hundredth anniversary with a declaration of its United Secretariat, "Celebration of the Centenary of the First International," published in *World Outlook*, vol. 2, no. 32, 25 September 1964, which conceded at the outset that the First International worked "despite political limitations, organizational weakness and consuming internal disputes," and that it "did not prove able to carry on its work to a final successful conclusion." That is a franker sentence than anything in this preface. Twenty-two years earlier, in *Fourth International* for December 1942, Walter Held had used The Hague as a standard against which to judge the Left Opposition itself: he quotes Engels writing to Bebel that "if we had come out in a conciliatory way at the Hague, if we had hushed up the breaking out of the split — what would have been the result?", and then turns the question on Trotsky, who in 1923 had waited rather than forced the issue against Stalin. "The one opportunity to 'make the bubble burst' was missed by Trotsky in the spring of 1923," Held writes. That is the reflexive use of the argument — 1872 held up not against the Bakuninists but against one's own leadership — and it is the thing that no Institute preface in this catalogue ever does.

On the edition's own merits our tradition also spoke, though from the far side of a split. Reviewing Hans Gerth's *Wisconsin* volume of 1958 — the only English Hague minutes available before this one, and the edition whose variants Moscow collates here — a reviewer signing only "A.L." in *The New International* for Spring–Summer 1958 (Shachtman's magazine by then, no longer the Fourth International's) allowed that "students and specialists now have access to invaluable source material" but judged the debates "too fragmentary and skimpy to get a feeling for the issues in dispute and the arguments advanced on each side." That complaint is exactly what the 1976 volume answers, and it should be said plainly: on this subject Moscow produced the better edition, and did so eighteen years later with material no Western editor could reach. The centenary of The Hague itself, in 1972, appears to have passed without comment in the movement's press — nothing in *Intercontinental Press* across 1971 to 1973, weekly and searched. The reason is not hard to guess. An anti-Stalinist Marxism whose own founders were expelled from an International has to think carefully before celebrating an expulsion, even a justified one, and 1872 is where the argument about what a revolutionary organisation may do to its minorities begins.

Read the preface first, then set it aside, and read the minutes.

Sorge's record of the tenth sitting, Guillaume's defence, Utin's enormous and vengeful report on Nechayev, the Portuguese federation's address, the mandate instructing Harriet Law to press for equal pay — this is one of the great documentary collections of the nineteenth-century workers' movement, and it was made available in English by people working for a state that had a great deal to hide. They hid very little of it here.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM

This Nation and Socialism Are One

Le Duan's speeches at the moment of victory and reunification, including the Political Report of June 1976 - the thought of the party that defeated France and then the United States, in its leader's own words.

Le Duan

Introduction to the 1976 Edition

This Nation and Socialism Are One is a collection of Le Duan's speeches and essays, gathered and edited by Professor Tran Van Dinh and issued by Vanguard Books of Chicago in 1976, with a preface dated that same year by the political scientist A. W. Singham. The date is not incidental to the book; it is the book's whole reason for being. Saigon had fallen on 30 April 1975, the country was formally reunified in the elections of April 1976, and Le Duan — First Secretary of the Vietnam Workers Party, the man who had directed the war in the South and now stood as Ho Chi Minh's successor at the head of a single Vietnamese state — delivered the Political Report to the reunified National Assembly on 25 June 1976, "thus officially opening the stage of Socialist Reconstruction for the whole of Vietnam." Tran Van Dinh assembled the volume in the immediate afterglow of that victory, to make available in English, for a Western readership sympathetic to the anti-war movement, the thought of the party that had beaten first France and then the United States. It is a solidarity book, not a Soviet export product; but the doctrine it carries belongs to the same family as the Progress Publishers titles this series examines, and it states that doctrine more nakedly, in its own leader's words, than any Moscow textbook would dare.

The liberation struggle this book stands on was real, and any reading of it that forgets that has disqualified itself at the outset. The French did conquer Vietnam in the nineteenth century and rule it for the benefit of Paris; the Japanese did occupy it; the United States did visit upon a poor agrarian country a weight of ordnance greater than all sides dropped in the Second World War, and lost. Le Duan's own writing does not exaggerate the achievement, because the achievement did not need exaggeration. His tribute to the women of the southern resistance — the "brass-legged and iron-shouldered transport fighters" who kept the supply lines open under bombardment, the detainees who "despite cruel tortures, remained unwavering in their rock-like belief" inside the U.S.-Saigon prisons — is one of the more moving passages of

political prose to come out of the war, and it is earned. A reader who came to this book knowing nothing would learn a true and terrible and heroic thing. Nothing in what follows is a denial of any of it. The criticism this introduction makes lands on the doctrine the book uses to interpret that struggle, and on a history the doctrine is built to erase — never on the Vietnamese people's fight, which needs no apology from anyone.

The doctrine: nation, class, party, one

The title is a thesis, and Le Duan means it literally. "Nation and socialism are one," he tells the National Assembly. "For us Vietnamese, love of country now means love of socialism; it means devoting all our zeal, strength, intelligence and talent to the building of their socialist homeland." A page earlier he states the condition that has, in his account, made the two identical: "Today, when our fatherland has gained complete independence and when the country has been cleared of all aggressors and has been reunified, nation and socialism merge into one." Patriotism and the socialist project are no longer two loyalties that might pull apart; after 1975 they are the same loyalty, and to be a good Vietnamese is to be a builder of socialism.

The strategic spine beneath that fusion is the doctrine of stages. Le Duan states it with complete clarity: the party's 1930 Political Theses laid down that "the Vietnamese revolution must go through two stages: first, the national democratic revolution; then, bypassing the stage of capitalist development, a direct passage to the socialist revolution." This is orthodox Comintern strategy for the colonial world — first unite the whole nation against the imperialist and the feudal landlord, defer the socialist question, then advance to it once independence is won — and Le Duan attaches it, without embarrassment, to the name that guarantees its authority. The communists, he writes, "must now seize hold of the national democratic banner and march forward as Stalin had insisted they do." One will search a long way in the Progress catalogue before finding so frank a citation of the source.

The engine of the two stages is the worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the party. The peasants, "conscious of having land once the country had been independent," "followed the proletariat and firmly built the worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the working class, through its Party." That leadership is not one institution among others. "The Party is the nucleus lying at the heart of social life which sets in motion the whole apparatus of the regime, and drives the entire society forward." The state itself is the party's instrument: "Only through the State... can the line, policies and tasks worked out by the Party penetrate into social life and become a reality."

And here the fusion in the title reaches its logical end, in the single most revealing sentence of the book. "In any given historical period," Le Duan writes, "a nation is best represented by a certain class. In Vietnam today, when the nation and socialism are one, the best representative of the nation is the Vietnamese working class and its vanguard party, the Vietnam Workers Party." Follow the chain: the nation is one with socialism; socialism is embodied in a class; that class is represented by its vanguard party. The party therefore is the nation's authentic self. This is not a rhetorical flourish. It is a theory of legitimacy, and it has a sharp practical edge. If the party is the true representative of the nation, then those who oppose the party from the left — who claim to speak for the workers and peasants against it — are not rivals within the revolution. They are enemies of the nation. The doctrine that unites the nation is also the doctrine that licenses the elimination of everyone who might divide it.

The road that ran over the Trotskyists

Search the whole of this book — all eighty-five thousand words of it — and certain names never appear. The word "Trotsky" does not occur once. Neither does Ta Thu Thau. Neither does La Lutte. There is no acknowledgement, anywhere, that the Vietnamese revolutionary movement of the 1930s contained a large, indigenous, working-class current that took the socialist revolution seriously, that outpolled the Stalinists in its own stronghold, and that was physically destroyed in 1945 — not by the French, and not by the Americans, but by the movement whose victory this book celebrates. The silence is total, and it is not the silence of a foreign author's ignorance. Le Duan lived through these events; he was a Central Committee member of the party that carried them out. The silence is the doctrine at work.

The facts are not obscure. They are recorded by the movement's own survivors — the Saigon historian Ngo Van

above all — and were reported in the Fourth International's press across four decades. In the 1930s Saigon possessed one of the strongest Trotskyist movements anywhere in the colonial world. Around Ta Thu Thau and the newspaper *La Lutte* ("The Struggle," *Tranh Dau* in Vietnamese), Trotskyists and Communists collaborated for several years in a united front that at moments topped the poll in the city's municipal elections and had a serious base among its workers. *Intercontinental Press*, the weekly of the American Socialist Workers Party, set out the arc in its issue of 23 September 1985: "The Struggle" group led by Ta Thu Thau, "which was later recognized (in 1939) as the Vietnamese section of the Fourth International — worked closely with the Indochinese Communist Party in southern Vietnam from early 1933 through mid-1937." The alliance broke when Moscow's Popular Front line made cooperation with any anti-colonial Trotskyist impossible; in one of the ironies the official history cannot afford, Ta Thu Thau was jailed in 1937, the same account records, "by the 'democratic' Popular Front government of French imperialism" — a French Popular Front in which the Communists sat.

Then came the reckoning. In the late summer and autumn of 1945, as the August Revolution swept into Saigon and the Trotskyists pressed to arm the workers' committees and carry the revolution past its bourgeois-democratic limits — precisely the "second stage" that Le Duan's doctrine insists must wait — the Viet Minh security services turned on them and killed them. *Intercontinental Press* stated the essential fact plainly in its issue of 9 April 1979: "Dozens of Trotskyists who opposed this were massacred by the VCP, including the popular Trotskyist leader Ta Thu Thau." The 1985 account is more particular still: the leaders of "The Struggle" and of the sister League of International Communists "were murdered" over a few weeks; Ta Thu Thau himself, arrested by Viet Minh forces in south-central Vietnam as he travelled from Hanoi back to Saigon, "was tried and acquitted three times by local People's Committees in Quang Ngai province, but subsequently was murdered nonetheless." He had spent much of the previous decade in French prisons. He was killed by the revolution he had given his life to.

This is not a charge invented by later critics with a grudge. The Fourth International named the murders as the news of them arrived and mourned Ta Thu Thau as one of its own. Its International Executive Committee, in an appeal "Against the War in Indo-China!" printed in *Fourth International* in June 1947, sent its "fraternal greetings to the courageous fighters of Viet-Nam" and, in the same breath, recorded that the Indo-Chinese section "on the morrow of the country's

'Liberation' and at the very beginning of the Indochinese revolution, was deprived by the criminal hands of Stalin's GPU of many of its leading elements, among them the heroic figure of comrade Ta-Thu-Thau." The appeal called on the survivors to continue the fight "both against French imperialism and against all betrayal of the revolution from within by the Stalinist agents, leading the Viet Minh." The movement gave its greetings to the Vietnamese struggle and grieved its Vietnamese dead in a single sentence, and saw no contradiction, because there was none.

The erasure did not end in 1945. It was still being maintained forty years later, and Intercontinental Press caught it in the act. Reviewing a February 1983 article in the Vietnamese Communist Party's own theoretical journal *Tap Chi Cong San*, the paper noted in November 1985 that the party was still slandering "murdered Fourth International leader Ta Thu Thau and other Vietnamese Fourth Internationalists as 'agents of imperialism' and 'spies for Japanese fascism'" — the identical charge Moscow had leveled at them before the killings — and observed that "not a single Vietnamese government or Communist Party leader has ever publicly repudiated these murders. Not once in 40 years." This *Nation and Socialism Are One*, published in 1976, sits squarely inside that forty-year silence. Its refusal to name Ta Thu Thau is not an oversight of editing. It is the same act of state, performed in a book of solidarity for a Western audience that had never heard the name and would not learn it here.

The reply the doctrine cannot state

What was the quarrel actually about? Not personalities, and not a squabble over tactics. It was the deepest strategic question the socialist movement of the twentieth century ever faced, and Le Duan's book states one answer to it with unusual candor while suppressing the other entirely. The question is whether the revolution in a backward, colonial country must pass through a discrete "bourgeois-democratic" stage — a national-democratic stage in which the working class subordinates itself to a broad patriotic bloc and postpones its own social demands — before socialism can be posed at all. Le Duan's whole framework answers yes: two stages, the first completed, the second now "opening." The Vietnamese Trotskyists answered no, and they answered it in the name of the theory the Soviet tradition spent forty years suppressing without ever quoting: the theory of permanent revolution.

Trotsky had put the colonial case in the second thesis of *The Permanent Revolution* (1930) in words that read as though

addressed across the decades to this exact book: "With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses." The claim was never that the democratic and socialist tasks could be legislated apart and scheduled in advance. It was the opposite: that they interpenetrate, that they cannot be cleanly separated into a "first" and a "second" stage, and that a movement which holds the working class back behind a national bloc for a whole epoch forfeits the one force capable of carrying the anti-imperialist revolution to its end. The Saigon Trotskyists took this seriously enough to press, in 1945, for arming the workers rather than hailing the returning Allied troops. That is what they were killed for.

One does not have to settle that argument in the Trotskyists' favour to see what the book has done with it. Le Duan condemns no rival theory by name; he simply proceeds as though no rival existed, as though the "two stages" were self-evident Leninism and the men who disputed them in Vietnam itself had never lived. The reader is given a doctrine and denied its critics, presented with a road and shielded from the graves beneath it. The Fourth International's press — Fourth International in 1947, Intercontinental Press in 1979 and 1985, and later *International Viewpoint*, which reviewed Ngo Van's own history of the period in 1995 — kept the record the party destroyed. Whatever one concludes about permanent revolution as strategy, the fact that the argument had a Vietnamese side, and that its Vietnamese partisans were murdered rather than refuted, is exactly the kind of fact a book like this exists to make disappear.

What is genuinely Le Duan's, and worth keeping

None of this makes the book worthless; it makes it a primary document of the first importance, and it contains real thought that should be credited plainly. Le Duan was not a Moscow functionary reciting formulae. He was the strategist of an actual, victorious people's war, and where he writes about how revolution is made he is often original and sometimes wise. "Revolution is creation," he writes; "it cannot succeed without imagination and ingenuity. There has never been nor will there ever be a unique formula for making a revolution that is suited to all situations." That is not a boilerplate sentence. It is the considered view of a man who had watched imported formulae

fail — including the 1956 land-reform errors his own party publicly admitted — and who had learned that the seizure of power in August 1945 worked precisely because "our Party creatively applied the law of violent revolution and insurrection," combining political and military struggle and seizing "the opportune moment" when Japan surrendered. His insistence that a small nation could defeat a great power by opposing "smaller to bigger forces, lesser to larger quantities," through the total mobilization of a whole society, was not propaganda; it was a description of something that had actually happened, and that the strategists of three empires had said was impossible.

There is intellectual substance, too, in Le Duan's theory of "collective mastery" — his attempt to describe socialism not merely as state ownership but as the working people's active, organized command over their own society, exercised through the state "and under the leadership of the vanguard party." A critical reader will note at once that the last clause reintroduces the very substitution the theory claims to overcome — the "collective master" turns out to need the party to master on its behalf — and *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) had already anatomised, in the Soviet case, how easily the mastery of a class becomes the mastery of a bureaucracy that speaks in the class's name. But the tension is Le Duan's own, and he presses at it more honestly than most of his Soviet contemporaries. His pages on cadres and organization, on the danger of "autocracy and arbitrariness on the one hand and anarchy on the other," on the need to bind even the party's own officials by law, come from a leader who had seen what an unaccountable apparatus does to a revolution and was trying, within a framework that could not name the problem, to guard against it.

That is why the book belongs in this series and why it should be read rather than dismissed. It is a lucid, confident, first-person statement of the Soviet-tradition doctrine of the national-liberation revolution, offered at the peak of that doctrine's prestige, by the one man best entitled to state it, at the very moment of its greatest triumph. And it is more revealing than any Moscow textbook precisely because it is so unguarded — because it tells you, in the leader's own voice, that the nation and the party are to be treated as one thing, and leaves you to discover elsewhere what was done, thirty years before, to everyone who disagreed. Read Le Duan for the strategy of the war, which is genuine and hard-won, and for the theory of the peace, which is a clear specimen of the doctrine this series exists to examine. Then set the title beside the record it suppresses. The nation and socialism were made one in Vietnam; but the making required that certain

Vietnamese socialists be unmade first, and this book is a monument to how completely they were forgotten.

INTERNATIONALISM

The Theory and Practice of Proletarian Internationalism

The Soviet philosophical establishment on what internationalism had come to mean by the 1970s - and on the promotion of "socialist internationalism" over the older proletarian kind. Written for friends abroad, eight years after Prague.

USSR Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy

Introduction to the 1976 Edition

This book is about a single word, and what a state did to it.

The word is internationalism — the oldest idea in the socialist movement, older than the parties, older than the Russian Revolution, the idea that working people in every country share an interest that cuts across their borders and their flags. The Theory and Practice of Proletarian Internationalism was produced in 1976 by the Institute of Philosophy of the USSR Academy of Sciences — specifically its "Section of the Philosophical Aspects of Proletarian Internationalism and National Relations," a team of authors rather than a single named scholar — and issued in English by Progress Publishers in Moscow the same year. Its closing line of the Foreword tells you who it was written for: "We trust that this book will be of use to our friends abroad." It is an export text, meant for the shelves of sympathisers and Communist Parties in the West, and it sets out, with the calm authority of the Soviet philosophical establishment, exactly what "internationalism" had come to mean by the middle of the 1970s.

What it had come to mean is the subject of this introduction, because the meaning had been quietly turned inside out. The book itself supplies both halves of the story, the original and the substitute, and the distance between them is the most important thing in it.

The year, and what it was for

Establish the date first. The spine reads 1976 and the internal evidence agrees: the latest events the authors reach for are the 24th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (1971), the international gathering of Communist Parties held in Moscow in 1969, the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the USSR (celebrated at the end of 1972), and a run of five-year-plan figures for 1971–75. There is no 25th Congress here — that

met in February 1976 — so the text was closed just before it. This is a genuine mid-1970s book, not an older one in a new jacket.

That moment matters. 1976 sits at the high tide of détente — the relaxation of tension between Moscow and Washington that had produced arms-control treaties and, in August 1975, the Helsinki Final Act. It also sits deep inside the Sino-Soviet split, the open and by then militarised quarrel between the Soviet Union and Communist China that had broken the world movement into rival camps. And it comes eight years after Warsaw Pact tanks had crushed the reform-communist government of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. All three pressures shape the book, and the book's job was to hold a line under all three: to explain to "friends abroad" why the leadership of the international movement belonged, by right and by theory, to Moscow — against the Chinese who denied it, against the Czechoslovak reformers who had tested it, and against Western Communists who were beginning to wonder aloud whether they needed Moscow's blessing at all.

The doctrine as the book states it

The authors are careful and, to their credit, explicit. They distinguish two terms and rank them: proletarian internationalism and socialist internationalism are "of the same type," but "Socialist internationalism is a new, higher stage in the development of proletarian internationalism." The first belonged to the era of the workers' movement under capitalism; the second is what internationalism becomes once there are socialist states — a "world socialist system," a "socialist community" of countries bound together. The book's three parts follow this ascent: general theory, then the experience of the multinational USSR, then the relations between socialist states.

At the level of the states, internationalism is cashed out as

three things: the unity and "cohesion" of the socialist countries, their economic integration through the trading bloc known as Comecon (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance), and — the load-bearing phrase — "fraternal assistance," the mutual help socialist states owe one another. Around this the book builds a concept it calls "internationalist duty," an obligation that it insists is moral first and legal second, binding the parties and peoples of the socialist community to defend "the positions of world socialism."

None of that, stated so far, is a distortion of the socialist tradition. Solidarity between working people across borders is the tradition. The distortion is in a move the book makes so smoothly that a reader can miss it: the substitution, inside the word "internationalism," of one subject for another.

The reversal

Here is the classical idea, and the book states it beautifully, because it has to — it is quoting Marx. In Part I the authors reproduce the General Rules that Marx wrote for the International Working Men's Association, the First International founded in 1864: the emancipation of labour is "neither a local nor a national, but a social problem, embracing all countries in which modern society exists." The subject of that sentence is the working class. Internationalism is something workers do, a form of "solidarity and mutual assistance" that "grows out of the mutual support and assistance afforded by the national detachments of the working class." The book knows this. Its opening chapter is titled, in so many words, the theory and practice of uniting proletarians of all nations and countries. Its own account of the early Comintern — the Communist International of 1919, the "Third International" — is an account of workers acting from below: the "Hands off Soviet Russia" strikes, the German workers who refused to arm the White Poles, the international brigades of 54 nations in Spain.

Then the subject changes. Once socialist states exist, internationalism stops being what the working class owes to itself and becomes what everyone owes to a particular state and a particular party. Watch where the duty points. "Communist construction in the USSR," the authors write, "is not only the national task of the Soviet people; it is also its chief internationalist duty." Read that twice. The one internationalist obligation the book assigns to the Soviet Union is to build up the Soviet Union. For everyone else, internationalism means orientation toward Moscow. The Communist and Workers' Parties are warned against the

"cunning tactics" of imperialists who encourage them "to isolate" themselves "from the vanguard of the world communist movement — the CPSU, the Party of Lenin." A party that measures its freedom by its "independence" of the Soviet party is not exercising internationalism; it is "betraying the revolutionary ideals of the working class."

This is the reversal in one line. Workers of all countries, unite — a call the workers address to each other — has become an instruction that the parties of all countries defer to a leading centre. The book does contain a formula of reciprocity: a joint Soviet-Czechoslovak communiqué it quotes says each party "bears an internationalist responsibility to the countries of the socialist community." But notice that even the reciprocal duty runs toward the community, that is, toward the bloc whose acknowledged vanguard is the CPSU. The obligation is horizontal in wording and vertical in fact. Internationalism, as this book defines it, is a duty others owe the Soviet Union, and it is never once a duty the Soviet Union owes anyone that could be enforced against it.

The test: Czechoslovakia, 1968

A doctrine of "fraternal assistance" has to be tested against the one case that made the phrase notorious, and the book does not flinch from it — which is itself revealing, since several other volumes in this Progress series pass over 1968 in silence. Here it is named, defended, and made into theory.

The mechanism first, stated in the authors' own voice: "The development of co-operation between the socialist states has also raised the question of the military assistance to be provided by the countries of the socialist community to a state in which, for some reason, the socialist gains are threatened by internal counter-revolution and imperialist reaction. Proceeding from these principles, the socialist states provided such assistance to the Czechoslovak people in 1968." The invasion of a socialist country by five of its allies has become "military assistance" rendered "to the Czechoslovak people" — the people, that is, whose government the tanks removed. This is the doctrine that the West named after the Soviet leader Brezhnev: that the socialist community may override the sovereignty of any of its members when "socialist gains" are judged to be at risk. The book states it as a principle of internationalism.

Then the blessing. The authors quote, approvingly, a verdict on the invasion: the entry of the five armies into Czechoslovakia was "an act of internationalist solidarity," and "This internationalist act saved the lives of thousands of

people, ensured internal and external conditions for peaceful labour, consolidated the western borders of the socialist camp and destroyed the hopes of imperialist circles to revise the results of the Second World War." The source given for these words is the document *The Lessons of the Crisis* — the self-condemnation adopted in 1970 by the "normalised" Czechoslovak leadership installed after the invasion, under Gustáv Husák. So the occupied country's own reinstalled Central Committee is produced as the witness that the occupation was solidarity. That is not an accident of the argument; it is the argument. The reformers of 1968 are recast as "opportunistic elements" who "tried to discredit the idea of internationalist duty by appealing to the national feelings of the Czechs and Slovaks." Wanting your country's government to be chosen by your country has become a symptom of "bourgeois nationalism." Husák himself is quoted to seal it: national sovereignty "devoid of class content is a refined and very effective weapon of the Right opportunist, revisionist and anti-socialist forces." Sovereignty, in short, is legitimate only when it points the same way the tanks did.

The word "internationalism" has now done a complete circle. It began as the solidarity workers extend to one another against their rulers. It ends as the name for an army sent by one workers' state to unseat the government of another. The same word covers the German strikers of 1920 who would not arm the Poles, and the five armies of 1968. That is what the CPSU made "internationalism" mean, and this book is the philosophical justification of it, set out for readers abroad in plain expository prose.

The other test: China as "nationalist"

The Sino-Soviet split forces the doctrine into its second characteristic move. If loyalty to Moscow is the content of internationalism, then a Communist Party that breaks with Moscow cannot be presented as taking a different internationalist line — it must be recast as having abandoned internationalism altogether, that is, as nationalist. The book does exactly this, methodically, with China.

The Communist Party of China is not treated as a rival interpreter of Marxism but as a case of infection: "as the influence of Chinese internationalist Communists declined, so nationalism became more prevalent in the ideology and policies of the Communist Party of China." The Chinese leaders, the authors say through a Brezhnev quotation, moved "from polemics with the Communist Parties" to "splitting, subversive activity," and their guiding aim is purely destructive — "the objective of doing the greatest possible

damage to the USSR ... is now the sole criterion determining the Chinese leaders' approach to any major international problem." The verdict is flat: "The Maoists' nationalism is helping imperialism and not the forces that are struggling against it."

Whatever one thinks of Maoism — and there is much to criticise in it — notice the shape of the accusation. Because internationalism has been defined as orientation to a centre, disagreement with the centre can only be described as nationalism, splitting, and objective service to the enemy. The category has been built so that it cannot be turned back on the CPSU. The Soviet party is, by construction, the party that combats nationalism; it can never be the party accused of it. This is worth stating precisely, because it is the deepest problem with the book and not merely a matter of tone: the central term is defined in such a way that only opponents can ever fall under it. A concept that can convict everyone except its author is not an analytical tool. It is a loyalty oath with footnotes.

The reply the movement had already made

None of this went unanswered, and the answer had been in print for forty years by the time this book appeared. The anti-Stalinist Marxist tradition — the current associated with Leon Trotsky and, after his murder in 1940, with the Fourth International — had diagnosed precisely this transformation of "internationalism" as it happened.

The root of it, in that analysis, is the doctrine of "socialism in one country," the claim advanced by Stalin from 1924 that a complete socialist society could be built inside the borders of the USSR alone. Trotsky's *The Third International After Lenin* (1928) called this what it was: a break with the internationalism of Marx and Lenin, dressed as its continuation. "On August 4, 1914," he wrote — the day the German socialists voted war credits and the Second International collapsed into national camps — "the death knell sounded for national programs for all time." A genuinely revolutionary party "can base itself only upon an international program," and "herein lies the basic and primary difference between communist internationalism and all varieties of national socialism." The point is exactly the one the 1976 book inverts: for Trotsky the national orientation of the workers "must and can flow only from a world orientation and not vice versa." "Socialism in one country" reversed the arrow — it made the world movement's task the defence of one national state — and everything else followed.

What followed, Trotsky argued in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), was a foreign policy to match. "Foreign policy is everywhere and always a continuation of domestic policy," he wrote in that book's eighth chapter, and the theory of socialism in one country "already signaled an effort to liberate Soviet foreign policy from the program of international revolution." The Communist International was not dissolved; it was captured. "The less the policy of the Kremlin preserved of its former internationalism, the more firmly the ruling clique clutched in its hands the rudder of the Communist International ... At the present time, the Communist International is a completely submissive apparatus in the service of Soviet foreign policy, ready at any time for any zigzag whatever." Written in 1936, that sentence describes the machinery whose mature doctrine the 1976 book states without embarrassment: an "internationalism" whose content is the interest of a single state, and whose test is obedience.

The Revolution Betrayed is the standard against which every volume in this series that speaks for the Soviet state should be read. Its argument is not that the October Revolution failed but that a privileged administrative caste had risen on top of it — a bureaucracy defending its own position — and had refitted the language of the revolution to that end. The redefinition of internationalism traced above is a textbook case: a word that once named the self-emancipation of the working class made over into the name for loyalty to the men who governed in the working class's name. Readers who want the reply at book length have, in this series' companion volumes, the primary texts; readers who want it argued against the same doctrine in its 1970s form will find it in the sibling introductions to *Contemporary Trotskyism* (Basmanov, 1972), to the *Leninist Theory of Socialist Revolution* (1975), and to *Socialism and Democracy* (1974), each of which meets a different face of the same official case.

What the book still carries

A reader told that everything here is worthless would learn nothing, and it would not be true. This book is a real transmission-belt for the genuine internationalist heritage, even as it bends the heritage to a new purpose, and the transmission is worth having.

The historical chapters of Part I are the best of it. The account of working-class solidarity with the young Soviet republic — the "Hands off Soviet Russia" movement, Harry Pollitt and the British committee, the German dockers and the White Poles, the international workers' relief organised through Clara Zetkin during the Volga famine of 1921, the arms smuggled to

Russian revolutionaries in 1905 — is drawn from real events and real documents, and it recovers a history of voluntary solidarity from below that most Western readers of 1976 would never have encountered. When the book quotes Marx's General Rules, or Lenin on the alliance "coming into being between the revolutionaries of different nations," it is handing the reader the authentic article. The irony is deep and instructive: the same volume that redefines internationalism as obedience preserves, in its opening chapters, the record of an internationalism that was nothing of the kind — the record of workers who acted on their own judgement, across borders, against their own governments. That record is the standing refutation of the doctrine built on top of it, and it is here in the book, undamaged, for anyone who reads Part I against Part III.

Two heritages, then, are transmitted in these pages, and they do not agree. One is Marx's International Working Men's Association and Lenin's stand in 1914 against the "social-chauvinism" that had wrecked the Second International — the insistence that a socialist who backs his own government in its wars against the workers of other countries has ceased to be a socialist. The other is the doctrine of 1968, "internationalist assistance" delivered by tank. The book presents the second as the mature form of the first. It is nearer the truth to say that the second was built out of the wreckage of the first, and that the wreck has a date the book itself supplies — the vote of 4 August 1914, which Trotsky called a death knell and which this book, quoting the early Comintern with one hand while justifying Prague with the other, never quite hears.

Read it, therefore, for what it honestly is: the clearest statement in English of what the largest state descended from October taught the world to call internationalism, at the calm centre of the 1970s, with the Chinese quarrel and the Czechoslovak reckoning both fresh. On the authors' own evidence — their own quotation of Marx, their own record of solidarity from below — the word they are defending and the word they are using are not the same word. The reader who holds the two apart will have understood both the book and the tradition it claims.

ARTS & LETTERS

The Humanism of Art

Socialist realism defended for painting rather than literature, by the editor of the Soviet Union's leading art journal - taking on Ortega y Gasset directly, and reading Delacroix, Rembrandt and Deyneka with real attention.

Vladislav Mstislavovich Zimenko

Introduction to the 1976 Edition

The other volumes on aesthetics in this series argue about literature. This one is about painting, and that changes the ground under the whole argument. When Vladislav Zimenko writes about "the humanism of art" he means, in the first place, pictures — Deyneka's parachutists and steel-workers, Plastov's villages, Saryan's Armenia, Korzhev's severe faces — and the doctrine he is defending, socialist realism, was imposed on Soviet painters at a cost that is different from the literary one and, if anything, sharper. The book is the work of an insider. Its own front matter identifies Zimenko (born 1919) as "an eminent Soviet art critic" and, more to the point, "Editor-in-Chief of the magazine *Iskusstvo* (Art)" — the flagship journal of the Union of Artists' establishment. This is not a scholar working at the margins under constraint. It is a man near the centre of the apparatus that decided what Soviet painting was allowed to be, writing the case for the defence, in English, for readers abroad.

Start with the date, because it is close to honest. The imprint is genuinely Progress — "Translation into English. Progress Publishers 1976. First printing 1976" stands verbatim on the copyright page, which several volumes in this series cannot say — and the lag behind the Russian is short. The latest datable Soviet matter inside the book is a pair of paintings by Tetyana Yablonskaya, *Nameless Heights* (1970) and *Youth* (1971); an article in *Iskusstvo* No. 5 for 1973; and a Brezhnev speech collected in *Following Lenin's Course* (Moscow, 1972). The 1975 and 1976 dates in the footnotes are all Progress editions of Marx, Engels and Lenin used for quotation, not sources. This is a manuscript closed around 1972–73 and issued in English in 1976: a book of the settled middle of détente, when the USSR wanted to present its official culture to the West as a mature humanism rather than a set of orders. That is exactly how it presents it.

Take the argument seriously first, because there is a real one here and the criticism that follows is worth nothing if it is not

conceded. Zimenko's genuine target is not a phantom. It is the modernist elevation of the difficult, the private and the illegible over the human and the shared — and against that he makes a case with a long and respectable history, one that is not only Soviet. He quotes Ortega y Gasset's *The Dehumanisation of Art* accurately and fights it on its merits: Ortega's book is "spearheaded against realist art, against art with social content, art as an instrument of cognition," and rejects "the idea of art as a mass medium." Zimenko thinks art that turns its back on the mass of human beings, and on the possibility of being understood by them, has given something up that matters. John Berger, writing from an entirely different politics in the same decade, thought so too; so did much of the figurative tradition. When Zimenko insists that "art spoke of man, expressing affection and respect for him," and traces "a long line of bequests of the legacy of active social humanism" through Egyptian sculpture, the Renaissance, Rembrandt, Repin and Delacroix, he is not merely reciting. He reads pictures with attention and sometimes with feeling — he is good on Delacroix's *La Liberté guidant le peuple*, good on Deyneka's *The Parachutist* (1939) against the later *Ace Pilot Shot Down*, one all "lightness and abandon," the other "pervaded with the despair of the doomed man." A reader who dismisses the whole book because of its politics will miss a critic who could look.

Notice, too, what the book does not do, because it is to Zimenko's credit and it distinguishes him from his neighbour on the same list. Avner Zis's *Foundations of Marxist Aesthetics* (Progress, 1977) grounds socialist realism on Lenin's 1905 article "Party Organisation and Party Literature," completes it with "commitment" and "Party guidance," and is candid that "Party guidance in matters of art" is the point. Zimenko does almost none of this. The word *partiinnost* does not occur; the phrases *Party guidance* and *Party leadership* do not occur; even *commitment* appears only twice and not as a slogan. He roots the doctrine instead in Gorky — "the founder and first brilliant exponent of socialist realism" — and in the humanist continuum of world art. He cites Lenin's 1905 article once, and when he does, he reaches not for the disciplinary

sentences about the writer as "a cog and a screw" but for the emancipatory promise: "It will be a free literature, because the idea of socialism and sympathy with the working people, and not greed or careerism, will bring ever new forces to its ranks." This is the humane face of the doctrine, and Zimenko means it. The trouble is not that he is lying about what he wants. The trouble is everything the book has to leave outside its covers to let him want it in good conscience.

Because this is a book about painting, the suppressed history is the history of the destruction of Russian painting, and it is almost entirely absent. Consider the roll of names. Kazimir Malevich: zero. Vladimir Tatlin: zero. Alexander Rodchenko: zero. Marc Chagall: zero. Pavel Filonov, who was hounded into obscurity through the 1930s and starved to death in besieged Leningrad in 1941: zero. Suprematism: zero. The one member of the pre-revolutionary avant-garde Zimenko does name is Wassily Kandinsky — once, and the mention is itself a small act of dispossession. Discussing whether distorted images are "abstract," he writes that "such paintings as Kandinsky's *Landscape with Cottages* or *Composition Two* are not abstract paintings, but the usual forms have been so changed and distorted as to be unrecognisable." Kandinsky, a Russian who taught in Soviet art institutions before emigrating in 1921, appears not as one of his country's lost painters but as a specimen of Western eeriness, filed under the enemy.

The rest of the avant-garde is present only as a corrected error. Cubism, Futurism and Constructivism appear — the Constructivists "grouped around the magazine *Lef* and especially *Vyeshch*" are credited with "a definite influence" — but always as "formalist currents" that the real Soviet artists "passed through" and "overcame." The emblematic case is Alexander Deyneka, whom Zimenko admires without reserve and quotes at length in the artist's own voice: "Even when we resorted to abstract art forms, we were convinced that we were doing something useful, socially necessary (which made it all the easier for us to abandon it when we realised its complete absurdity)." That parenthesis is the whole operation in a breath. The abandonment of experiment is narrated as free intellectual maturing — the scales fell from our eyes, we saw the absurdity, we walked away — with no suggestion that anyone made the walking compulsory. It is the rule this series keeps meeting, in its purest visual form: error is admissible, the category is not. An artist may have been young and wrong; the method that replaced his youth is never in the dock, because everything done under coercion is retrospectively reclassified as something the artist chose.

And in the very next sentence of that same quotation stands the

book's sharpest unmarked grave. Deyneka goes on: "The militant vanguard of Soviet art — Mayakovsky, Eisenstein and Meyerhold — possessed our minds and were a model we strove to follow." Vsevolod Meyerhold, named here with affection as a model of the revolutionary vanguard, was arrested in 1939, tortured into signing a confession, and shot in February 1940; his wife was murdered in their flat. He is in this book exactly once, as a fond memory, and the book does not know — or cannot say — what became of him. It is the Zis pattern precisely. There Zis praised Shostakovich's Katerina Izmailova for showing "how the terrible world ... crushes a passionate, full-blooded individual," without a syllable about what the terrible world did to its composer. Here Zimenko lets Meyerhold be quoted as an inspiration and does not turn the page to the cellar.

Now the enforcement machinery, which is the other half of the finding and which is not there at all. In a book on Soviet painting published by the Soviet state, the words Stalin, Zhdanov and Khrushchev each occur zero times. The *Manège* Affair — the emblematic event, when on 1 December 1962 Khrushchev toured the *Manège* exhibition and abused the abstract painters to their faces, ending the visual thaw — is absent; *Manège* zero, 1962 zero. The Central Committee decree of 23 April 1932 that dissolved the independent art groups and cleared the way for a single compulsory Union: absent. The Union of Artists itself, the instrument that administered every Soviet painter's career, is never named as such — the phrase does not occur — and surfaces only as a source of self-praise, in the report that "at their Third All-Union Congress, Soviet artists said that their art belongs wholly to the people." Alexander Gerasimov, the painter who presided over official Soviet art under Stalin as first president of the Academy of Arts and the foremost image-maker of the leader cult on canvas, is absent — the checker flags a "Gerasimov" in the text, but it is Sergei Gerasimov, a gentle landscapist, discussed for a small canvas of field flowers; the Gerasimov who mattered institutionally is a genuine silence. The doctrine is founded on Gorky and the humanist tradition, and its actual founders, the men who wrote the decrees and destroyed the painters, are outside the frame.

The elision is at its most delicate around 1961. Zimenko writes that "the period since the All-Union Exhibition of 1961 ... represents an especially important and interesting stage in our artistic advance, the results of which have yet to be summed up." That exhibition was one of the high points of the visual thaw. What happened next — the *Manège* crackdown of December 1962, the campaign against abstract art through 1963, the return of ideological discipline to the studios — is

precisely what he declines to sum up. The stage is named; its ending is left as an unfinished sentence.

There is one more parallel to Zis, and it is almost verbatim. Zis's book was structured against two former Communists, Fischer and Garaudy, both expelled from their parties over the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, an event his book does not contain. Zimenko's version is smaller but identical in shape. Among his opponents he lists "people who once called themselves Marxists such as Herbert Marcuse and Ivan Svitak," and adds of the second: "The latter left socialist Czechoslovakia and found a nook among the active anti-communists of the Russian Institute at Columbia University." Ivan Sviták was a Czech Marxist philosopher and a voice of the Prague Spring; he "left socialist Czechoslovakia" because the Warsaw Pact crushed the Prague Spring in August 1968. Czechoslovakia occurs once in this book, in that sneer, and the reason a man had to leave it is the one thing the sentence withholds. The apostasy is used and the cause of the apostasy is suppressed, in a single clause.

This is where the reflexivity test cuts, and it cuts unusually deep in a book with this title. The Humanism of Art proposes a standard: art in the service of the human, against everything that impoverishes, "eviscerates and mutilates" the human. Turn that standard on the state that commissioned the book. Filonov starved; Meyerhold was shot; Malevich was harassed into silence and painted his last canvases in a forced return to figuration; the Armenian poet Yeghishe Charents, whose 1923 portrait Zimenko reads with real tenderness for its "great repressed pain," died in an NKVD prison in 1937. Soviet art was disciplined, and Soviet artists were destroyed, precisely in the name of a humane and legible art of the people — the name on the cover of this book. A volume that could turn its own title on that history would be a great and terrible document. This one cannot. The humanist standard is aimed outward without exception, at Ortega, at Marcuse, at the "desert of the city" of Western modernism, and never once at the concentration camp of Soviet art. Zimenko has the instrument in his hand — he defines the humanism of art with care — and is not permitted to point it homeward.

Its political vocabulary confirms the direction of aim. The deviation words this series measures elsewhere are simply not Zimenko's: opportunism and revisionism occur zero times each. His policing vocabulary is aesthetic — formalism and modernism, the crimes of the studio, not the crimes of the faction — which fits a book that wants to fight on the ground of taste and humane feeling rather than of Party discipline. It is the most respectable register available, and the respectability is

the point.

The reply is older than the book and was, on this exact subject, unusually specific. Writing to *Partisan Review* on 18 June 1938, in "Art and Politics in Our Epoch," Trotsky wrote a sentence that could serve as the epigraph this book most needs and least wants: "The style of present-day official Soviet painting is called 'socialist realism.' The name itself has evidently been invented by some high functionary in the department of the arts." His essay is not about literature in general; it is about painting, about painters ordered to draw "with their brushes the crude lines of what they themselves realize is an historical falsification." From it he drew the first principle that the whole of Zimenko's book exists to deny: "Art, like science, not only does not seek orders, but by its very essence, cannot tolerate them." And its rival account of where art comes from — not from cognition completed by commitment, but from need and unrest: "a protest against reality, either conscious or unconscious, active or passive, optimistic or pessimistic, always forms part of a really creative piece of work. Every new tendency in art has begun with rebellion." The institutional description had come two years earlier, in chapter 7 of *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936): "a general compulsory organization, a kind of concentration camp of artistic literature," in which "the most eminent artists either commit suicide, or find their material in the remote past, or become silent." That is the Union Zimenko will not name, described before it had finished its work.

For the Zhdanov years the contemporaneous account is Ernest Mandel's, writing as Ernest Germain in "Purge of Soviet Culture" (*Fourth International*, vol. 10 no. 11, December 1949). Mandel recorded the 1948 formalism campaign in music — "Shostakovich, Prokofieff, Khatchaturian, Miaskovsky, Shebalin and Popov were severely criticised for having written 'formalistic' works" and removed from their posts — and Zhdanov's 1946 report condemning Akhmatova for "the emotion of loneliness ... foreign to Soviet literature." Formalism was not, in the world Zimenko is defending, a term of art criticism; it was a charge, and the charge ended careers. And for the visual thaw and its reversal, our own tradition scored the hit inside the decade: George Saunders, in "Fifty Years of Soviet Literature" (*International Socialist Review*, vol. 30 no. 1, January–February 1969), described "a campaign, in 1963, allegedly against abstract art, which was broadened in the following years into a drive against all 'bourgeois ideological influences.'" That campaign is the sequel to the exhibition of 1961 whose results Zimenko says "have yet to be summed up." Saunders summed them up seven years before Zimenko declined to. (The *Manège* confrontation itself of

December 1962 has no contemporaneous account in the corpora this series holds; the archives begin, for continuous coverage, in 1968. What we can cite is the campaign it launched, and the principle it violated.)

Trotsky's own book on these questions, *Literature and Revolution* (1923), is the great suppressed Soviet work on exactly the ground Zimenko's chapters cover — what a party may and may not do to an artist, whether a class can be handed a method, what the relation of art to revolution actually is. It was written by a member of the Politburo and published in Moscow, and it had been out of Soviet intellectual life for half a century by the time Zimenko wrote. Trotsky does not occur in this book once; the argument he began is conducted, as in Suchkov and Zis, in a vocabulary he shaped, against an absence where his name should be.

Honesty requires the same discipline turned on our own side. Trotsky in that 1938 essay also overreached, writing that it was "impossible to read Soviet verse and prose without physical disgust" and consigning the whole art of the Stalin period to the record of decline. That verdict does not survive Deyneka's parachutist, or Saryan's Armenia, or Plastov's villages, and it does not survive the plain fact that Zimenko — writing in the doctrine's defence — could still see and describe good pictures. A tradition that holds Progress Publishers to the evidence has to hold itself to it. The case against this book is not that Soviet painting produced nothing; it manifestly did. The case is that the doctrine was enforced by the state upon the painters, that the enforcement destroyed some of the best of them, and that a book calling itself the humanism of art cannot afford to remember any of it.

What is this volume, then? It is the most humane version of the case, written by a man who could look at a canvas and who believed, sincerely, that art belongs to the people and should speak to them of themselves. Everything he affirms about legibility, about art's refusal to abandon man, about the poverty of an "anti-art" that rejects "the very nature of art," has a real argument behind it and deserves an answer rather than a sneer. But the humanism is purchased by amputation. To found socialist realism on the love of man, Zimenko must not mention the Union that administered it, the decrees that armed it, the exhibition it crushed in 1962, or the painters it silenced, exiled and starved. He praises a Meyerhold he cannot bury and a 1961 he cannot finish. Read the book for its eye, which is real; read it, above all, for the sentence in which a Soviet critic lets Meyerhold be named as a model of the revolutionary vanguard and turns the page — because that turning page is the whole method, and it is the fate of the man on it.

ARTS & LETTERS

Foundations of Marxist Aesthetics

A genuine work of philosophical aesthetics - the image, content and form, the categories, creative method - arguing with Maritain, Hartmann and I. A. Richards, and unusually willing to admit its own discipline's unsettled questions.

Avraham Abish Zis

Introduction to the 1977 Edition

Avner Zis was a professor, a Doctor of Science in philosophy, and a Merited Scientist of the RSFSR, and this is a real book of philosophy. It runs to a hundred thousand words in English across five chapters — the nature of art, the image, content and form, the aesthetic categories, and creative method — and it argues. It cites Aristotle, Lessing, Hegel, Plekhanov, Leonardo, Chekhov, and, when it turns to opponents, it names them and gives page references: Jacques Maritain, Nicolai Hartmann, I. A. Richards, the Swiss aesthetician Robert Hainard in *Dialectica* for 1960, papers read at the Seventh International Congress of Aesthetics at Bucharest in 1972. A reader who comes to it expecting a pamphlet will be surprised. Much of it is the work of a man who has thought carefully about how music differs from painting and why a play is not a history textbook.

It is also the theory whose practice the other literary volumes in this series document — and the interesting thing about it is what a book called *Foundations of Marxist Aesthetics* turns out to found the doctrine on.

Start with the date, because for once there is nothing to unpick. Progress translations usually postdate the Russian by years and several volumes in this series carry a spine date that misdates the text by a decade. Not this one. The latest substantive sources Zis uses are Anatoli Yegorov's *The Problems of Aesthetics* (1974), a Moscow collection on musical semiotics of 1973, and the 1972 Bucharest congress; the 1975, 1976 and 1977 dates in the footnotes are all Progress editions of Marx and Engels used for quotation. This is a mid-1970s text published in English in 1977, and it should be read as one: a Brezhnev-era book, written in the settled middle of détente.

The Preface says what it is for, and it is worth taking at its word twice over. "In its present form it is addressed to readers abroad," Zis writes — an export commission, stated openly. And then something less usual: he warns that "while Soviet

writers on aesthetics start out from basically similar premises, varying approaches to particular, as yet unresolved questions, are to be encountered." A footnote in the first chapter makes good on that, registering that some Soviet aestheticians reject his own view that art has a specific subject-matter. A book that admits its discipline contains open questions and internal disagreement is not a catechism, and the concession should be recorded before anything else is said.

Now the polemic, because that is what tells you who the book was written against. Zis names two opponents more often than he names anyone but Marx and Lenin: Ernst Fischer appears some forty times, Roger Garaudy some twenty-three. They are "former Marxists and Communists, who later were to emerge as the leaders of anti-Marxist and anti-Soviet trends in aesthetics." Fischer was an Austrian Communist and author of *The Necessity of Art*; Garaudy was for years the French Communist Party's chief philosopher and the author of *D'un réalisme sans rivages* — "realism without shores", the "limitless realism" Zis attacks by name. What Zis never mentions is why either man ceased to be a party member. Both broke with their parties over the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968: Fischer denounced it publicly and was expelled from the Austrian party, Garaudy opposed it and was expelled from the French party in 1970. Czechoslovakia occurs once in this book, and it is a note on a film about the assassination of Heydrich. The two men whose apostasy structures the book's final chapter apostatised over an event the book does not contain.

That is the shape of the argument. Now its foundation.

The question a book with this title has to answer is where socialist realism comes from. Zis puts the question himself, in the mouth of his enemies, and it is the sharpest sentence in the volume:

where and in which works did Marx, Engels and Lenin write that the creative method for socialist literature should be socialist realism?

He calls this the demagoguery of "turncoats" who "wallow in rhetorical questions". And then he answers it — and the answer is a concession.

They profess to search for the words "socialist realism" in the writings of our great teachers, but overlook, or choose not to notice, the fact that from the theoretical point of view socialist-realist method is vindicated by the whole philosophical structure of Marxist-Leninist theory.

Read that slowly. It concedes the search will fail. The words are not there; what is there is a whole philosophical structure from which they are said to follow. That is not a citation, it is an assurance, and a book of foundations that offers an assurance in place of a text has told you where the foundation is not.

A few pages earlier Zis has already told you where it is, and told you as a boast:

In the thirties large-scale work was undertaken to collect together and systematise passages devoted to aesthetic questions in the Marxist classics: the judgements and statements concerning art were thus assembled to constitute a well-ordered and integrated system of aesthetic principles.

The founders left scattered remarks — a letter about Balzac, a note on Greek art, an exchange with Lassalle about a play. In the 1930s those remarks were gathered and arranged into a system. Zis presents this as scholarship maturing. It is also an accurate description of a doctrine acquiring its foundations after it had acquired its authority, in the decade when the authority was at its most lethal.

There remains Lenin, and here the book does exactly what one expects and does it in the open:

The principle of commitment was elaborated for the first time in Lenin's well-known work "Party Organisation and Party Literature" (1905).

Lenin's article was written in November 1905, during the few weeks of a legal press, and it is about the publications of a political party — about whether a Social-Democratic newspaper may print anti-Social-Democratic material, and about the money that pays for it. Zis quotes it accurately and at length, and to his credit he quotes the restraining passage, the one that concedes that literature "is least of all subject to mechanical adjustment or levelling, to the rule of the majority over the minority" and that "greater scope must undoubtedly

be allowed for personal initiative, individual inclination, thought and fantasy, form and content." He quotes the famous lines about the bourgeois writer's freedom being "masked (or hypocritically masked) dependence on the money-bag", and the prophecy of a literature that will serve "the millions and tens of millions of working people". None of this is falsified. What is done to it is a change of scope. Zis's own summary gives the join away: "Lenin pointed out that literature should be a part of the proletarian cause in general." Lenin was writing about the literary side of a party's work in a country where his party was illegal and had no state. Seventy years later the same sentences are made to license the guidance of every novelist, composer and film director in a state that has one. Zis does not argue for the expansion. He performs it, in a single transition, and moves on.

He knows the objection exists, because he answers a version of it — but only a version. "The West German Sovietologist" (the text gives the name as Jurgen Ruble; this is Jürgen Rühle, author of *Literatur und Revolution*) is reported as describing Lenin's article "as a manifesto for the enslavement of literature through politics". Having named the objection, Zis does not meet it. He classifies it: a "Marxologist" fabrication, coinciding with revisionism, clear for all to see. The strongest argument against the book's central move is admitted to the page and then dismissed by attribution rather than by reply.

So the doctrine is not founded on a text. Is it founded on the record?

Here the counts have to be reported, because they are the finding. In a hundred thousand words on the foundations of Marxist aesthetics, published by the Soviet state's export house in 1977:

Stalin: zero. Zhdanov: zero. Akhmatova: zero. Zoshchenko: zero. Zvezda: zero. RAPP: one passing mention, in a list, paired with "Proletcult", as movements that reduced art to "the proclamation of political slogans". The year 1934 does not appear. The First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers, which in August 1934 wrote socialist realism into the statutes of a single compulsory Union, is not mentioned. The Central Committee decree of 23 April 1932 that dissolved the literary groupings is not mentioned. The Central Committee decree of 14 August 1946 against Zvezda and Leningrad is not mentioned. The Central Committee resolution of February 1948 on Muradeli's opera, which condemned Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturian, Myaskovsky and Shebalin for formalism, is not mentioned.

The doctrine, in short, is founded on neither its texts nor its decrees. What it is founded on is an assertion, and Zis quotes the assertion from a witness. At a January 1965 plenum of the board of the Union of Writers of the USSR, Nikolai Tikhonov declared:

Socialist realism was not thought up or prescribed by anyone, it was evolved by all Soviet writers together, and by each one of us individually; it is the living flesh of our philosophical and artistic searchings and achievements over more than half a century.

Zis endorses this and elaborates it into several pages of intellectual history: in the 1920s critics searched for a name, Alexei Tolstoy proposed "monumental realism", others "proletarian realism", and the field converged. "This was the solution which Soviet aestheticians arrived at after long observation of the course of the artistic process and the development of aesthetic theory as such."

Not thought up or prescribed by anyone.

Set that against a book from the same publisher, seven years earlier, still in print on the same export list. In Soviet Literature: Problems and People (Progress, 1970), Kornely Zelinsky — a delegate to all the writers' congresses, a man who converted to socialist realism in the early thirties and never left — describes the meeting held in Gorky's house in October 1932:

I was present at that meeting and was one of the speakers there. It was then that Stalin gave the Soviet writers' artistic method the definition of socialist realism.

One Progress volume prints an eyewitness saying the general secretary named the doctrine at a private evening in a novelist's house. Another Progress volume, seven years later, prints an assurance that it was not prescribed by anyone. The house that published both did not notice, or did not mind. Zelinsky, who was in the room, hedges his own testimony immediately — "Actually he merely formulated what was already in the air" — and Zis's whole chapter is that hedge grown into a history.

There is a third account, and it was in print before either. Writing from exile on 18 June 1938, in the letter to Partisan Review published as "Art and Politics in Our Epoch", Trotsky wrote:

The style of present-day official Soviet painting is called "socialist realism." The name itself has evidently been

invented by some high functionary in the department of the arts.

He was guessing, and guessed slightly low; Zelinsky supplies the functionary. But the structural claim was right, and Zis's book is the attempt, forty years on, to make it look wrong.

Trotsky's own book on this subject, Literature and Revolution (1923), is the great suppressed Soviet work on exactly the questions Zis's chapters take up — the relation of art to class, whether a proletarian culture is possible, what a party may and may not do to a writer. It was written by a member of the Politburo, published in Moscow, and then removed from Soviet intellectual life so completely that a Soviet professor could write the foundations of Marxist aesthetics in the 1970s without acknowledging that it existed. The name Trotsky does not occur in this book once. The absence is not even a polemic; there is nothing to argue with. What makes it precise rather than merely typical is the back of the volume: Progress's own advertisement for a forthcoming Barabash title promises an attack on "various 'leftist' conceptions of the Maoist and neo-Trotskyist sort". The house could print the word. It is the book that cannot use the book.

And there is one page where all of this stops being an argument about foundations and becomes a matter of a life.

Discussing how two artists can make different works from the same material, Zis turns to Shostakovich's opera on Leskov's Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk — he calls it by the title of its revised version, Katerina Izmailova (the scan reads "hmailova"; the corruption is the scanner's). Leskov, he says, saw a merchant's wife who would stop at nothing. The composer saw something else:

In the conflict between Katerina Izmailova and the real world surrounding her Shostakovich is on the side of his heroine: he does not condemn or justify her, but shows how the terrible world, up against which she finds herself, crushes a passionate, full-blooded individual, who in other conditions might have found an outlet for unusually rich spiritual resources.

This is fine criticism, and it is worth saying so. It is also an account of the one Soviet opera that was destroyed by the doctrine Zis is founding. On 28 January 1936 Pravda printed an unsigned editorial, "Muddle Instead of Music", against that opera; it was withdrawn, and Shostakovich went for decades expecting arrest. The charge was formalism, and the standard invoked against him in 1948, when the Central Committee returned to the attack, was "alien to the principles of socialist

realism" — as George Sanders reported at the time in "J. Stalin, Music Critic" (Fourth International, vol. 9 no. 2, March–April 1948), noting that the resolution condemning Shostakovich, Prokofiev and the rest "fails to criticize a single specific work by any of these figures". Zis praises the opera for refusing to condemn or justify its heroine, which is exactly the refusal the doctrine could not tolerate; and he does it without a syllable about what happened. (The companion volume in this series, Dmitry Shostakovich: About Himself and His Times, Progress 1981, prints the composer's own public account of 1936 and 1948, and should be read beside this page.)

The same pattern governs the rest of the cast. Meyerhold is named once, and not as a person: "the Meyerhold theatre had staged Vishnevsky's Last Decisive Battle", a venue on the road to socialist-realist drama. Meyerhold was arrested in 1939, tortured, and shot in February 1940. Fadeyev appears as the author of *The Young Guard* and as a source of practical advice to novices, never as the chairman of the Writers' Union who shot himself in May 1956. Tvardovsky is quoted twice on questions of form, never as the editor of *Novy Mir* — a journal Zis cites twice as a source. Mandelstam, Babel and Pilnyak are absent altogether.

Which brings the argument to the best chapter in the book, and to the place where the doctrine's cost is legible in the philosophy itself.

Zis's pages on the tragic are the strongest thing he wrote. He works through Aristotle's catharsis and Lessing's reading of it in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*; he distinguishes Hamlet's tragedy, the clash "between a historically necessary demand and the impossibility of its satisfaction", from Lear's, which stems from a "historical error"; he insists on the dialectic of the accidental and the necessary, and observes that "not every hero who perishes is tragic" — Iago and Claudius die, and their deaths are not tragedy. He is good on Hemingway and the lost generation, on De Santis and Fellini, and he quotes Chekhov to fine effect on the tragedy that needs no explosions: people "have their dinners, merely have their dinners and as they do so, their happiness is realised or their lives torn apart." He rejects the sentimental view that tragedy must be pessimistic. This is a serious critic writing about a serious category.

And then the chapter closes:

Of course all the tragic conflicts that in the past were born of the social antagonisms found in the erstwhile society are disappearing in socialist society. It provides no scope for

tragedies resulting from the struggle of the exploited against the exploiters.

What sources of tragedy remain? Two are permitted: "man's struggle with Nature and the dramas of his personal life."

That is the no-conflict theory in a philosopher's clothes. It was set down more bluntly by the men who enforced it, and the Fourth International recorded it as it happened. Writing as Ernest Germain in "Purge of Soviet Culture" (Fourth International, vol. 10 no. 11, December 1949), Ernest Mandel listed the axioms then circulating in Soviet criticism: "The Soviet man does not know loneliness." "A Soviet citizen does not desert his wife." "There are no conflicts in a classless society." He gave the case that produced them: the editors of two periodicals removed for allowing Akhmatova to express "the emotion of loneliness ... foreign to Soviet literature". The periodicals were *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, the report was Zhdanov's, and the resolution was of 14 August 1946. Zis has softened the axiom into something a philosopher can defend — tragedy survives, it merely relocates to nature and to private life — but the exclusion is the same exclusion, and the thing excluded is the state.

The measure of what that costs is Zis's own definition. He takes from Marx the finest available formula for the tragic: the collision between a historically necessary demand and the impossibility of its satisfaction. Apply it to the material his own book supplies. Meyerhold, whose theatre he names; Shostakovich, whose opera he admires; Fadeyev, whose advice to young writers he passes on. Each of them made a historically necessary demand of the revolution and found its satisfaction impossible, and one was shot, one lived under sentence, and one shot himself. Zis has the instrument in his hand and is not permitted to turn it around. He can define the tragic exactly and must not name a single Soviet instance of it.

None of which is a reason to dismiss the book, and it would be a poor reader who did.

The chapter on art and cognition is genuine philosophy and is still worth arguing with. Zis defends a real position — that art and science are two distinct forms of cognition, neither reducible to nor rankable against the other — and he defends it against opponents in both directions. Against Hainard, who held that "scientific objectivity and artistic objectivity move in opposite directions", he gives the correct reply and gives it crisply: "Naturally, Shakespeare's tragedies cannot and indeed do not provide the knowledge found in a history text-book. But, conversely the knowledge to be gleaned from Hamlet or King Lear could not be found in a history text-book." Against

the intuitivists, who make art the only road to truth and science a bankruptcy, he is equally firm. He insists that "art apprehends and discovers things other than those which science apprehends" — a difference of object, not of rank — and he is willing to press the point into the hard cases, arguing that music too is cognitive, and that what it yields is knowledge of an emotional kind which is not thereby inferior. His formulation of what art does is better than most: "Art is always revelation: even when it comes to familiar aspects of our everyday lives it can spotlight facets of life which enable us to see the familiar in the unfamiliar and unfamiliar in the familiar." He is also right, against the vulgar sociologists he criticises by name, that art does not reflect the state of the productive forces directly and that treating technique as ideology wrecks the analysis.

The chapter on content and form is the other place the book earns its keep. The Shostakovich–Leskov comparison is one half of a well-made argument; the other is Gustaf Gründgens's Hamburg Faust, staged without cuts to Goethe's text and yet reversing its meaning, so that Mephistopheles wins — "a world in which the Mephistopheleses feel more at home than the Fausts." Identical material, opposed content. That is a real thesis about interpretation, argued from two well-chosen cases, and it does not depend on anything else in the book.

What the reader should not take from it is the theory of freedom in the final chapter, because there the book says plainly what it means. Zis is candid: "Absolute freedom for the individual cannot be, and indeed it will not be even under communism." Commitment is "the supreme expression of freedom". And: "In socialist society, Party guidance in matters of art means that the Party will encourage artists to create works that further the people's interests." He is honest enough to concede that dogmatists exist and do damage — that they "artificially divide a work of art into the ideological and political content on the one hand, and artistic form on the other", so that "political evaluation comes first" and art becomes "just another facet of political ideology, which in practice swallows it up". It is an accurate description of what was done to Shostakovich in 1948, offered as a warning against a tendency rather than a report of an event, and offered without a date, a decree or a name.

The reply is on record and it is specific. Trotsky's "Art and Politics in Our Epoch" (18 June 1938) is the text to set against this book, and not only for its verdict on the bureaucracy but for its rival theory of art: "a protest against reality, either conscious or unconscious, active or passive, optimistic or pessimistic, always forms part of a really creative piece of

work." Where Zis derives art from cognition and completes it with commitment, Trotsky derives it from need and unrest — a difference at the level of first principles, not of policy. From it follows the sentence that the whole of Zis's fifth chapter exists to deny: "a truly revolutionary party is neither able nor willing to take upon itself the task of 'leading' and even less of commanding art, either before or after the conquest of power... Art, like science, not only does not seek orders, but by its very essence, cannot tolerate them." For the institutional history Zis omits, chapter 7 of *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) had already described the machinery — "a general compulsory organization, a kind of concentration camp of artistic literature", in which "the most eminent artists either commit suicide, or find their material in the remote past, or become silent", while "mediocre but 'right-thinking' storytellers like Serafimovich or Gladkov are inaugurated as classics." Both of those names are in Zis's canon of socialist realism, forty years later, exactly where Trotsky predicted they would be. For the Zhdanov years, Mandel's "Purge of Soviet Culture" (December 1949) and Sanders on the 1948 music resolution (March–April 1948) are the contemporaneous accounts.

Honesty requires adding that Trotsky in 1938 overreached in the same essay, writing that it was "impossible to read Soviet verse and prose without physical disgust" and consigning the art of the Stalin period wholesale to the record of decline. That verdict does not survive the Fifth Symphony, or *And Quiet Flows the Don*, or the fact that Zis's own best pages are about a Soviet opera. A tradition that holds Progress Publishers to the standard of the evidence has to hold itself to it too.

What is this book, then?

It is the most respectable version of the case, and respectability is its subject. By 1977 socialist realism had to be presented to foreign readers as a doctrine arrived at by argument. Zis had the equipment for the job: he could read, he knew the Western literature, he could distinguish a good objection from a bad one, and he wrote about tragedy like someone who had felt it. What he did not have was a text to found the doctrine on, and he says so, in the act of denying it. The words are not in Marx, Engels or Lenin; there is instead a philosophical structure from which they are held to follow, a body of quotations assembled in the 1930s, an article of 1905 about party newspapers stretched to cover a state's whole artistic life, and the word of a functionary at a plenum that nobody prescribed anything. Everything that would settle the question — the decree of 1932, the Congress of 1934, the resolutions of 1946 and 1948, the men who wrote them and the artists they destroyed — is outside the book. Read it for the chapters on cognition and on

form, which are good; read it, above all, for the page on Katerina Izmailova, where a Soviet professor writing in the mid-1970s praises an opera for showing how a terrible world crushes a passionate individual, and does not know, or cannot say, that he has described the fate of its composer.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM

The Military—Industrial Complex of the USA

The American military-industrial complex anatomised almost entirely from American sources - Mills, Huntington, the Kolkos, the Pentagon Papers, Fulbright, Proxmire, and a former Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Boris Dmitrievich Pyadyshev

Introduction to the 1977 Edition

B. Pyadyshev's The Military-Industrial Complex of the USA is a short, densely footnoted account of how the American arms establishment acquired its grip on Washington — the committee system, the procurement scandals, the propaganda apparatus, the doctrines from containment to the Guam Doctrine — and it is built, almost entirely, out of American sources. Its hundred and seven notes cite C. Wright Mills, Arthur Schlesinger, Samuel Huntington, Morris Janowitz, Maxwell Taylor, Herman Kahn, Ralph Lapp, Hanson Baldwin, Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, the Pentagon Papers, the Congressional Record, Senator Proxmire's Report from Wasteland, Fulbright's *The Arrogance of Power*, Melvin Laird's own budget testimony, and — more than any other single authority — Adam Yarmolinsky's *The Military Establishment*, which the book itself introduces as the work of a "one-time US Assistant Secretary of Defense" and calls "perhaps the most circumstantial analysis of the MIC in US literature." It is a serious piece of work. Its thesis about the United States is broadly correct. And the argument it exists to make — that the military-industrial complex is the chief obstacle to détente — is one that quietly contradicts the theory the book claims to be applying, and that requires, in order to stand up, the erasure of every armed institution east of the Elbe.

Start with the date, because for once it is not the usual problem. Progress titles in this series habitually arrive years late — Bogdanov's *The US War Machine and Politics* carries 1986 over a 1983 Russian text; Nikitin's *The Ultras in the USA* carries 1981 over a text from the middle 1970s. This one does not. The Russian imprint code reads 1977, and the text behind it closes in 1976. The 25th Congress of the CPSU, held in February 1976, is quoted in the introduction, cited in the conclusion and named as the book's political frame; the latest dated source anywhere in the notes is U.S. News & World Report of 12 April 1976. Gerald Ford appears three times. Jimmy Carter, who won the presidency in November 1976 and

took office in January 1977, does not appear at all. Soviet books about America date themselves by which president they know about, and this one knows about Ford. A one-year lag between Moscow and the English edition is, for Progress, near-simultaneous publication.

That matters for what follows, because it means several of the silences a reader might expect to find damning are not findings at all. Afghanistan does not occur in this book, and cannot: the Soviet invasion was three years away. Neither does the Strategic Defense Initiative, nor "Star Wars", nor Reagan — all of them anachronisms for a text finished in 1976. Where nil returns do count, they count for different reasons, and I set them out below.

What the book was for

Progress titles were commissioned, and the commission here is legible in the front matter. The publisher's own blurb states the argument in one sentence: "With the swing away from the cold war and towards détente, and the ever broader acceptance of the principles of peaceful coexistence, the MIC appears as the chief adversary of the new tendencies in international affairs." The introduction rehearses the Peace Programme of the 24th Congress, the Basic Principles of Mutual Relations signed in Moscow in May 1972, the Helsinki Final Act of summer 1975, and Brezhnev's Helsinki speech. The word détente occurs twenty-six times, peaceful coexistence twenty-one.

The intended reader is not primarily a Soviet one. The book's climactic statement of its own thesis — the passage that opens the conclusion, on the complex commanding "the economic life of whole cities and regions" and intervening "in intellectual and academic life through research grants, 'think tank' projects and selective subsidies to universities" — is a quotation, and it is quoted not from a Soviet authority but from the New Program of the Communist Party U.S.A. (New York, 1970). The 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties is cited three times. This is a book addressed

outward, to the Western communist parties and to the broad constituency of détente in Western Europe and North America, and its job is to supply them with a theory of who is blocking it.

That job determines the book's shape. If the obstacle to détente is a faction — identifiable, based in particular corporations and particular congressional districts, opposed by those other sections of the American ruling class in whom Pyadyshev detects a growing demand for "a more realistic approach to world developments" — then détente is a policy that can succeed by strengthening the sensible Americans against the dangerous ones. Nothing is then required of Soviet policy except patience. This is diplomacy written in the vocabulary of class analysis, and the vocabulary does not survive the contact.

The research holds up

It has to be said plainly, and it is the reason the criticism that follows lands at all. On the United States, Pyadyshev is often exact and occasionally excellent.

He is scrupulous where the companion volumes in this series are not. Bogdanov, writing nine years later on the same subject, records only that Eisenhower "considered it necessary in his farewell speech" to issue a warning. Pyadyshev gives the reader the thing itself: "The term 'military-industrial complex' was first used by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in his farewell speech on January 17, 1961" — the date is right — followed by the substantial paragraph from the address, and, some pages later, a second passage from the same speech on the domination of the nation's scholars by "Federal Employment, project allocations and the power of money". A Soviet author under no obligation to credit an American Republican president with the founding insight of his own book credits him, quotes him at length, and gets the date right. Then he criticises him, and the criticism is a real one rather than a reflex: Eisenhower, he writes, "clearly takes a limited class approach of the bourgeois leader"; "he does not regard the accelerated conjunction of the immense military establishment and the vast arms industry as something organic to the socio-economic system of capitalism which rules the USA." Whether or not one accepts the conclusion, that is a legitimate objection to the liberal version of the argument, and it is stated without sneering.

He is good on the electoral geography. The book's account of the congressional committee system is the one that later American scholarship on defence procurement would confirm: "For decades, the Dixiecrats have controlled national defence

matters in the Congress." He notes that at the end of the Second World War 40 per cent of Army officers and 44 per cent of Navy officers were Southerners, and that the traffic ran in both directions — "their membership of these committees helped further to concentrate military installations in the Southern states, and this made the military commanders and the Southerners who headed the committees join hands." He identifies states where Pentagon contracts supply over 15 per cent of personal incomes. This is worth flagging because the companion introduction to Bogdanov's volume credits that author with grasping the complex as "a coalition with an electoral geography, not a conspiracy of arms manufacturers." The credit stands, but it should now be shared and re-dated: the insight was already standard equipment in Soviet Americanist writing by 1976. It is a feature of the genre, not of one unusually sophisticated author.

He is good on waste, with the receipts. The General Electric spares bought by the Navy at \$82 against \$15 elsewhere; the Manned Orbiting Laboratory abandoned after \$1,300 million; the Lockheed near-bankruptcy of the early 1970s and the demand for public money to save the C-5A; Litton Industries taking a contract it lacked the plant to fulfil, its chairman having advised the president on government reorganisation before joining the administration in 1973; Proxmire's defeated amendment to cap the military budget at \$66,000 million. He traces the budget from \$800 million in 1929 through Truman's \$14,400 million of 1949 — which he correctly renders as 5.4 per cent of national product — to \$47,000 million in 1965, rising to \$78,000 million by 1968 under the pressure of Vietnam. Not every figure survives checking: he puts the 1939 budget at "about \$6,000 million", which is out by roughly a factor of four, American military spending in that fiscal year having been nearer \$1,300 million. The \$6,000 million figure belongs to 1941. It is the only substantial numerical error I found, and it runs in the direction that weakens his own case, since a smaller prewar base would have made his curve steeper.

And he is very good indeed on the peace dividend that never came. Having quoted Johnson's 1966 budget message promising progress at home while fighting abroad, and having recorded that in 1968 the Committee for Economic Development and the US Chamber of Commerce published plans for spending the money on housing and cities once the war ended, he delivers the verdict in a single sentence: "Since the end of the war in Vietnam, no one in Washington has recalled the dividends of peace." That was true in 1976 and has remained true through every subsequent American drawdown.

One further point of credit, and it is a real difference from Bogdanov. Pyadyshev sees the American antiwar movement, and takes it seriously. He describes the burned call-up papers and the "combat medals hurled to the ground near the White House by young soldiers sent by the Pentagon to fight in Indochina"; he records that in May 1971 "thousands of soldiers were hurled against the participants of the anti-war movement who thronged the streets of Washington and other American cities"; he notes the movement's connection to the Black movement and the pressure it put on Johnson in March 1968. He even reports, without hostility, that "many Americans are sincerely convinced that the greatest threat to the USA stems from its own MIC." Bogdanov's book, nine years later, has no interest in movements at all. Pyadyshev does. It is the best thing in the book, and it makes what is missing more conspicuous rather than less.

The theory the book will not follow

The trouble is not that Pyadyshev is a vulgar economic determinist. He is less of one than Bogdanov, whose account collapses into the claim that "the banks and the shareholders of the military corporations demand investment profitability." Pyadyshev's formulation is two-tiered and better: the complex "has as its political basis the imperialist programme of the US ruling class, and as its material basis, the programme for militarising the US economy and the arms drive with its fabulous profits." Politics first, economics as material base. That is a defensible Marxist structure.

The trouble is that the structure is abandoned the moment the book needs a conclusion. If the complex is "organic to the socio-economic system of capitalism" — Pyadyshev's own charge against Eisenhower's liberalism — then it is not a faction, and it cannot be defeated by the ascendancy of more realistic men within the same ruling class. It is the system's normal form. But the book's whole purpose requires it to be a faction: "the chief adversary of the new tendencies", an obstacle that "anti-MIC groupings" who "have also been establishing positions in influential spheres of the US ruling class" might yet remove. He wants systemic militarism when he is arguing against American liberals and factional militarism when he is arguing for Soviet foreign policy, and he never notices that the two arguments cancel.

This is not a technicality. It is the intellectual signature of détente-era Soviet writing about the West, and it is why the book cannot say anything useful about what détente actually was. Détente was not a contest between American hawks and

American doves with Moscow cheering the doves. It was a bargain between two states, each of which was arming heavily throughout it, and the terms of that bargain — recognition of postwar borders, non-interference, the subordination of movements in each bloc to the diplomatic requirements of its patron — were exactly what the book's own audience in the Western communist parties was being asked to accept. A theory that locates all militarism in one bloc cannot describe an agreement between two.

What is falsified

Four claims, all of them about Eastern Europe and Korea, and all four packed into a single stretch of one section — "Illusions of Empire", the opening section of Chapter Four, "The MIC and Foreign Policy". They are worth taking in order, because they escalate.

Korea. "The war against the Korean People's Democratic Republic was started on June 25, 1950." On 25 June 1950 the Korean People's Army crossed the 38th parallel in force, with Stalin's authorisation, given in April 1950 after repeated requests from Kim Il Sung, and with Soviet operational planning assistance — as the Soviet archival material released after 1991 and published through the Cold War International History Project establishes. Bogdanov commits the same falsification nine years later; the recurrence in two separate authors, in different institutions, a decade apart, establishes it as a fixture of the genre rather than one man's lapse. It is worth noting which version is cruder. Bogdanov at least felt the need to insert it as a bracketed authorial gloss on an American source he was quoting, over his own initials. Pyadyshev simply states it, in the passive, as though nobody in particular had done it.

Czechoslovakia. Having described the Berlin crisis of 1948, Pyadyshev continues: "The following year, reactionary circles in Czechoslovakia tried to stage a bourgeois coup with the aid of Western circles." This is wrong twice over. The events were in February 1948, not 1949; and they were not an attempted bourgeois coup but a successful communist one. The non-communist ministers resigned; the Communist Party, holding the Interior Ministry and its police, mobilised armed workers' militias and action committees to purge the state apparatus; Jan Masaryk was found dead beneath a window of the Foreign Ministry on 10 March. Bogdanov's version of this — that the events "ended with the complete victory of the democratic forces" — is at least chronologically accurate. Pyadyshev has moved the date to cover the inversion.

East Berlin, June 1953. This is the one that costs the book most, and it should be quoted in full: "On June 17, 1953, the Berlin provocation was mounted against the German Democratic Republic in the hope of sparking off a tide of revolt across Democratic Germany and so separating it from the other socialist countries. This proved to be a great miscalculation: the working people of the GDR rallied round the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and gave a crushing rebuff to the mutineers."

What happened on 16 and 17 June 1953 was a strike by East Berlin construction workers on the Stalinallee against raised work norms, which spread within a day into a general strike and rising across the industrial cities of the GDR, and which was suppressed by Soviet tanks. The "working people of the GDR" were not the ones administering the rebuff; they were the ones receiving it. A book whose entire method consists of asking which material interests drive which state policies, and which devotes chapters to the American army's deployment against domestic protest, describes a workers' rising against a workers' state as a foreign provocation, and describes the army that crushed it not at all.

Hungary. "In October 1956, a counter-revolutionary uprising was provoked in Hungary with the help of the forces of international reaction, in an effort to wrest Hungary from the ranks of the socialist community and to undermine its unity. The Hungarian people beat back all these encroachments." No Soviet divisions, no Imre Nagy, no workers' councils, no executions.

And one silence that is genuinely a finding, because the events were eight years old and the book is about the obstacles to détente: Czechoslovakia occurs exactly once in this volume, in the sentence misdating 1948. The invasion of August 1968 is not mentioned. In a study of how the militarisation of a superpower distorts its foreign policy, published nine years after the Warsaw Pact invaded a member state, this is not an oversight.

The mirror

Now the part that can be settled by counting, and where the comparison with Bogdanov's volume becomes worth the trouble.

The following do not occur anywhere in *The Military-Industrial Complex of the USA*: "Warsaw Pact"; "Warsaw Treaty"; "Soviet military"; "Soviet arms"; any figure for Soviet military expenditure; any figure for the Soviet

defence burden as a share of national income or national product; the Soviet defence industry; a Soviet general.

Pyadyshev possesses the correct analytical instrument and uses it well. He reports that spokesmen for the complex want military outlays raised to "10–12 per cent of the gross national product (from 1960 to 1969, the figure averaged 8.9 per cent)". He tracks the arms manufacturers' margins — profits "20–30 per cent higher than those of corporations turning out civilian products". He reaches back to give Truman's 1949 budget as "5.4 per cent of the national product". He knows, in other words, that the share of national product absorbed by the military is the measure that matters, and that the political weight of an arms sector is proportional to it. He applies the measure to one country. Bogdanov, in 1986, does exactly the same thing with the same instrument and the same result: 5–13 per cent of GNP and over a quarter of federal expenditure for the United States, and no Soviet figure at all. Two books, ten years apart, by different authors in different institutions, with an identical hole in the identical place. That is not evasion by an individual; it is a rule of the genre, and naming it as a rule is the point of reading them together.

But it is worth being exact, because the silence is not uniform across these books — it is a gradient, and where a volume sits on it tells you something. Bogdanov at least concedes, once, in his final pages, that a challenge from the American side "only means the Soviet Union will have to answer in kind—by building its own weapons systems." The Soviet arms programme appears in his book as a reflex: an effect with no cause, but an effect that is at least named. Pyadyshev grants less. The nearest this book comes to admitting that the USSR manufactures weapons is a passing reference in the conclusion to "the defence capability of the whole socialist community" — a capability with no producer, no ministry, no budget, no constituency and no cost. There is no Red Army in these pages, no Soviet Army, no Soviet general, no Soviet ministry of defence; the words do not appear. Soviet armaments exist here only as an abstract noun in the possessive.

That is the distinctive thing about this volume, and it is worth separating from the genre pattern. That two Soviet books on American militarism, a decade apart, both apply the burden metric westward and never eastward is a fact about the genre — a third companion volume in this series shows the same shape, and other introductions in the series have now confirmed it independently. What is particular to Pyadyshev is how far the erasure extends. Bogdanov omits a comparison. Pyadyshev omits the institution.

And then, in the same conclusion, the sentence that makes the whole structure visible: "The Soviet Union has no territorial claims on any country whatsoever, has threatened no one and has no intention of attacking anyone."

The reply that existed

That sentence had been answered forty years before it was written, and by a reader of the same tradition. In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), in the chapter "Foreign Policy and the Army", Trotsky sets down the doctrine of the day: "The present official formula of foreign policy, widely advertised not only by the Soviet diplomacy, which is permitted to speak in the customary language of its profession, but by the Communist International, which is supposed to speak the language of revolution, reads: 'We don't want an inch of foreign land, but we will not surrender an inch of our own.'" His objection is not that the formula is aggressive but that it is conservative — that "retreating step-by-step before the consequences of its own mistakes, the bureaucracy has arrived at the idea of insuring the inviolability of the Soviet Union" by folding it into the European and Asian status quo, a policy he holds to be in absolute conflict with the workers' state's "continual obligation to come to the help of the liberative movements in other countries". Pyadyshev's 1976 sentence is that formula with the negatives multiplied, and his book is that policy's theoretical apparatus: a defence of the status quo written as an attack on militarism.

The same chapter supplies the answer to the book's central silence. Trotsky's subject in it is the restoration of the officer ranks in the Red Army in 1935 — lieutenant to marshal, eighteen years after their revolutionary abolition — and his verdict is precisely the analysis Pyadyshev applies to the Pentagon and refuses to apply at home: "The source of bureaucratism, with its routine and swank, is not the special needs of military affairs, but the political needs of the ruling stratum. In the army, these needs only receive their most finished expression." A Soviet military-industrial interest, with its own castes, its own claim on the best plant and the best engineers, and its own reasons for inflating threats, had been described in print in 1936. Pyadyshev's method could have found it in 1976. His commission would not permit it.

On June 1953, the reply is contemporaneous and specific. The Fourth International printed two treatments of the East German rising within months of it: George Clarke's "The June Days in Review" (vol. XIV no. 2, whole no. 121) and an editorial, "The East German Uprising" (vol. XIV no. 3, whole no. 122). Both carry printed issue dates earlier than the events they describe

— March–April and May–June 1953 respectively — and both plainly went to press later; the editorial quotes a German socialist paper of 7 July 1953. Cite them by whole number and by content, not by the date on the cover.

Their content is the direct refutation of Pyadyshev's sentence, and it was written before the dust settled. Clarke: "The movement of June 16–17 was overwhelmingly working class in nature and took the classic forms of strike actions and demonstrations." And, against exactly the reading the Soviet account would adopt: "There was no demand for any change in the forms of property ownership, or anything which could have been construed as a desire for a return to capitalism." The editorial is blunter: "This political uprising of the German workers laid bare the irreconcilable conflict between the working masses and the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy." Note what that editorial says about the bureaucracy in the same passage — that it "consumes and wastes a lion's share of the national income". The metric Pyadyshev applies only to Washington had already been turned eastward by the people he was writing against, and turned eastward in 1953.

On Czechoslovakia the reply is earlier still. The Fourth International's issue vol. IX no. 2 (whole no. 84) carried an analysis of Czechoslovakia written the previous September, prefaced by an editorial note on what had happened in the meantime: "The recent events leading to complete Stalinist domination of the Czech government have put an end to the 'idyllic' conditions in this 'democratic' island among the buffer states of the USSR." That is February 1948, described as what it was, by people with no stake in Washington's version either.

All of that, though, is the tradition answering across decades. The sharper fact is that the specific arguments this book declines to make were being made in English, in print, in the very months it was being translated.

Take the missing number first. On 7 March 1977 — while the Progress edition was in production — Intercontinental Press carried David Frankel's "Pentagon's Real Reason for Stepping Up the Arms Race" (vol. 15, no. 8), which reported the CIA's estimate "that the Kremlin has been spending from 11 to 13 percent of the Soviet gross national product on military programs. In comparison, the Pentagon eats up about 6 percent of the much larger U.S. gross national product." The two figures are not strictly commensurable with Pyadyshev's — his 8.9 per cent is an average across 1960–69, before the post-Vietnam drawdown, and Frankel is relaying a CIA number rather than an independent estimate. But that is the point. The metric Pyadyshev possessed and applied only to

Washington was, in the same season, being applied to both capitals in a journal any interested English reader could buy. And Frankel does not use it to make Moscow look bloodthirsty. His argument is that the comparison then current — that the USSR was outspending the Pentagon by a third — was misleading, because Soviet productivity was lower and so "it is more expensive for the Soviet economy to produce weapons." Which cuts the same way: a larger share of a smaller product, buying less. That is a burden, and it was a burden the Soviet population carried.

Second, the concept itself. Three years earlier, in "Detente: Why Both Sides See It as Good Business" (Intercontinental Press, vol. 12, no. 18, 13 May 1974), Dick Roberts had refuted Pyadyshev's central category head-on: "The truth of the matter is that a 'military-industrial complex' apart from and in disagreement with the major sectors of U.S. capital does not exist. The biggest U.S. corporations, like General Electric, make military equipment." He observes that the lesser bomber and missile firms are owned by the same financial interests as everything else, and that the Rockefellers' Chase Manhattan Bank "in fact, holds 8.7 percent of the common stock of Boeing." If that is right, there is no faction to isolate and no sensible wing to strengthen, and the entire political architecture of Pyadyshev's book falls.

What makes the piece land is its target. Roberts was arguing against the *Daily World*, the paper of the Communist Party USA, for describing Senator Jackson as a representative of the military-industrial complex. Pyadyshev's own conclusion, three years later, takes its climactic statement of thesis from the New Program of the Communist Party U.S.A. The argument this book exists to supply to the Western parties was already being contested inside the American left, on the ground the book had chosen, before the book was written. Roberts also noticed the asymmetry Moscow itself observed in practice: listing five top American military contractors then trading with the USSR — Boeing, General Dynamics, General Electric, Litton, Tenneco — he remarks that Moscow lets no notion of a military-industrial complex affect its positions "except where propaganda is concerned." (A word is dropped in the scan at that point; I quote only the clean clause.)

Third, and most awkwardly for the book, the category was turned eastward in these years — by a Soviet Marxist. Intercontinental Press of 5 May 1975 (vol. 13, no. 17) printed Roy Medvedev's "What Lies Ahead for Us? On A.I. Solzhenitsyn's Letter", which contains a section headed, in Medvedev's own text, "The Military-Industrial Complex and the Threat of War". Medvedev writes that détente is hampered

by "the pressure from the military-industrial complexes in the USA as well as in the USSR", that "the influence of the Soviet military and military-industrial circles on the adoption of fundamental political decisions has grown since Stalin's death", and — the sentence Pyadyshev's whole conclusion is built to prevent — that the bulk of Soviet divisions west of the border "serve not so much to shield us from possible aggression from Western countries as to guarantee that Soviet influence will be maintained in the East European countries." Medvedev was a dissident historian, not a Fourth Internationalist, and Intercontinental Press is only the venue; but he was a Marxist, he was Soviet, he was writing in 1974–75, and he used Pyadyshev's own central concept symmetrically. The thought was available. It was available in Russian, to a Russian. It was not unthinkable — it was unpublishable, and the difference between those two things is the subject of this introduction.

For the long view, Ernest Mandel's *The Meaning of the Second World War* (Verso, 1986) supplies the category this book belongs to. Listing what emerged from the war, Mandel names "the outbreak of the Cold War essentially as a test of strength between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the resulting 'campist' ideology among broad layers of the international labour movement" (ch. 16, "The Outcome"). Campism is the disease Pyadyshev's book is written to spread: the conviction that because one bloc's militarism is real — and Pyadyshev demonstrates at length that it was — the other bloc's must be defensive by definition. The demonstration is honest. The inference is the thing to refuse.

What the book is for

Read it as the best short Soviet statement of a case that was, on its own subject, substantially true. The American military-industrial complex existed, Eisenhower named it, the procurement scandals were real, the Southern committee barons were real, the peace dividend was never paid, and a competent reader of the Congressional Record and the American press could establish all of it — which is what Pyadyshev did. On the United States between 1947 and 1975 this is a useful and largely reliable book, and its treatment of the American antiwar movement is more generous and more curious than what the same publishing house was producing a decade later.

Read it also for the shape of the hole. Every one of the hundred and seven footnotes is a small monument to something the author's own state did not permit: a Senate committee that publishes its hearings, a Government Printing Office, a senator

who writes a book called *Report from Wasteland*, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense who publishes a critical study of the establishment he served, a leaked Pentagon archive printed in a newspaper. Pyadyshev could write this book about America precisely because America produced the documents. He could not write it about the Soviet Union, and the twin proofs of that are on facing pages — the careful percentage of American GNP on one, and on the other, a country that "has threatened no one and has no intention of attacking anyone."