



PROGRESS QUARTERLY

Critical Introductions to the Reissued Classics

VOLUME V · NUMBER 2

ПРОГРЕСС · МОСКВА

XVIII

IN THIS ISSUE

PH

GEORGI PLEKHANOV SELECTED PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS (VOLUME I)

IN

THE REVOLUTIONARY VANGUARD

IM

SECRET WEAPON IN AFRICA

PH

PHILOSOPHY IN THE USSR

and 4 more · introductions by Dmitry Chasovennikov

Volume V, Number 2

PH	GEORGI PLEKHANOV SELECTED PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS (VOLUME I) Georgi Plekhanov	3
IN	THE REVOLUTIONARY VANGUARD Mikhail Basmanov and Boris Moiseevich Leibzon	7
IM	SECRET WEAPON IN AFRICA Oleg Ignatyev	13
PH	PHILOSOPHY IN THE USSR Petr N Fedoseyev	17
IN	RECENT HISTORY OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES, 1918–1939, VO G. N. Sevostyanov and others	22
PE	USSR STATE INDUSTRY DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD Y. Avdakov and V. Borodin	26
PE	THE AGRARIAN PROGRAMME OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY IN THE FIRST RUSSIAN REVOL Vladimir Ilyich Lenin	30
PE	CAPITAL, VOLUME II Karl Marx	32

PHILOSOPHY

Georgi Plekhanov Selected Philosophical Works (Volume I)

Marxism arriving in Russia: Plekhanov's founding pamphlets of 1883 to 1895, including Our Differences and The Development of the Monist View of History - checked against the manuscripts, with cuts from earlier editions restored and marked.

Georgi Plekhanov

Introduction to the 1977 Edition

This is one of the better books Progress Publishers ever exported, and it is worth saying so at the outset. The five-volume Selected Philosophical Works was prepared not by a propaganda department but by the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, working with Plekhanov House — the archive attached to the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library in Leningrad that holds his manuscripts. The Publishers' Note records that the texts "have again been checked with the extant manuscripts in Russian or other languages" and with editions published in Plekhanov's lifetime. The annotations are substantial and largely factual: they date pamphlets, identify obscure Narodnik (Populist) journals, trace where a passage first appeared. The notes open with a statement of method — square brackets in the text "contain phrases and passages omitted in certain previous editions" — which is to say the editors restored material that earlier Russian printings had dropped, and told the reader they had done it. That is scholarship. The English is serviceable and in places better: The Development of the Monist View of History is given in Andrew Rothstein's translation, first published in London by Lawrence & Wishart in 1947, and most of the rest is R. Dixon's. For several of these texts these remain the only English versions in general circulation. A reader who wants Plekhanov in English still, more than half a century later, largely has to come here.

This is Volume I; the companions carry dates of 1976, 1976, 1980 and 1981, and the Publishers' Note sets out the division — the first three volumes on the defence of Marxism against Narodism, revisionism and Machism, the fourth on Russian philosophy and social thought, the fifth on literature and art. Volume I covers twelve years, 1883 to 1895, and it is the right twelve years. It opens with Socialism and the Political Struggle, the founding pamphlet of the Emancipation of Labour group, and Our Differences, the long settling of

accounts with Narodism. It prints both the 1884 and 1887 draft programmes, the demolition of the renegade Lev Tikhomirov, the two versions of the 1889 Paris congress speech, the 1891 essay for the sixtieth anniversary of Hegel's death, Plekhanov's notes to his own Russian translation of Engels's Ludwig Feuerbach, and finally the Monist View with its two appendices against Mikhailovsky. This is Marxism arriving in Russia, written by the man who brought it. Whatever one concludes about Plekhanov after 1903, the case for reading these particular texts does not depend on the verdict.

The volume exists in this form because Lenin insisted on it. The introductory essay by V. Fomina ends on exactly that note: Lenin "pointed to the necessity of studying Plekhanov's philosophical works and insisted on their being republished". Plekhanov was thus the one leading Menshevik whose books never left Soviet print — an awkward exception that had to be managed, and the management is what repays attention here. The copyright page gives the sequence plainly: "First printing 1960 / Second revised edition 1974 / Third edition 1977", over a translation copyright of 1974. The book in your hands is therefore a 1974 text in a 1977 jacket, and the essay in front of it was written for 1960.

There is one thing this introduction can say that no other volume in this series can, and it took the rest of the catalogue to see it. While Progress was printing Plekhanov in five volumes, the same publisher was issuing philosophy textbooks that did not mention him. In V. G. Afanasyev's Marxist Philosophy (1980) — 130,932 words, the standard export primer — the name Plekhanov does not occur once. It is not a scanning artefact: the string does not appear in any mangled form, and the fragment "khanov" returns nothing at all. What the book does contain is a roll-call of the precursors of historical materialism in which "A big contribution to the theory of social development was made by Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky and other Russian revolutionary democrats of the 19th century." The men Plekhanov wrote his books about

are credited; the man who wrote the books is not there. V. Krapivin's *What is Dialectical Materialism?* (first printing 1985, reprinted 1987) does the same, in 64,000 words, including a section on the philosophy of the Russian revolutionary democrats — and the title phrase is one this very volume shows Plekhanov defining in a footnote of 1895: "We use the term 'dialectical materialism' because it alone can give an accurate description of the philosophy of Marx." G. P. Frantsov's *Philosophy and Sociology* (1975) is the sharpest case: Plekhanov zero, Herzen fifty-eight times, Chernyshevsky forty-nine.

This is a choice and not an accident, and the proof is that another Progress textbook made the opposite one. A. F. Sheptulin's *Marxist-Leninist Philosophy* (1978) quotes Plekhanov approvingly four times and cites him by page from this very edition — his footnotes read *Selected Philosophical Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1974, and Vol. II, Moscow, 1976 — on the origins of the materialist conception of history and on the role of the individual. The books were on the shelf and in the catalogue. Some authors used them and some wrote around them. Keeping a man in print is not the same as teaching him, and in the 1970s and 1980s Progress was doing the first while several of its own textbooks declined to do the second.

Fomina's essay is built as a bell curve. Up to 1903 the superlatives are unstinting: Plekhanov is "one of the world's greatest thinkers and publicists", the one Marxist of his generation who, in Fomina's account, "raised the banner of the fight against Bernsteinianism". After 1903 the register changes and the vocabulary becomes clinical — desertion, deviation, error, falling off. What is striking is that every cause assigned to the decline is external to Plekhanov's own thinking. His move to Menshevism was "determined in no small degree by the influence of reformism, which was widespread in the working-class movement in Western Europe". By 1917 he was "out of touch with the Russian revolutionary movement" and "a captive to the social-reformist and social-chauvinist theories of the Second International". He is acted upon; he does not decide.

The First World War, in which Plekhanov supported the Entente and broke publicly with Lenin, receives one sentence: "During the First World War Plekhanov adopted a social-chauvinist standpoint." No writing of his from 1914 to 1918 is named, quoted, dated or answered. October is handled in a subordinate clause — he "had a negative attitude towards the Great October Socialist Revolution, seeing it as a 'violation of all the laws of history'" — immediately followed by the mitigating clause that does the real work: "he did not fight

against the victorious working class and Soviet power". Then he dies, and is buried near Belinsky and Dobrolyubov.

The device is not crude falsification. Nothing here is false in the narrow sense. It is a technique of containment: the political Plekhanov is reduced to a set of labels with no arguments attached, so that the philosophical Plekhanov can be preserved intact. The essay states the causal arrow explicitly — his "serious theoretical mistakes in philosophy" were "connected with ... his falling off to Menshevism in politics" — and the arrow runs one way only. Marxist philosophy is never at risk; the man went wrong, and where the philosophy went wrong it was politics that spoiled it. This is comfortable, and it is why a reader of this essay is given nothing whatever with which to judge the 1917 dispute for themselves. The silence is not accidental, and it is compounded by the shape of the edition. A. Maslin's introduction to Volume III is titled for Plekhanov's writings of 1901–13. Volume IV closes with Chernyshevsky in Siberia, dated 1913 in the contents; Volume V closes with *Art and Social Life*, dated 1912–13. Across five volumes and roughly 1.6 million words, not one text is dated later than 1913. The wartime and revolutionary Plekhanov is not merely under-argued, he is absent from the set — and the set announces its own completeness with an index of the writings it contains.

There is a second thing the essay is doing that is easy to miss. Plekhanov's polemic against the Narodniks' worship of "critically thinking individuals" — a genuine and central argument of the 1880s — is repeatedly rendered in Fomina's prose as a critique of "the cult of the individual", the exact formula of the Soviet campaign against Stalin's memory. She calls the Narodnik position "the extremely harmful cult of the individual, of the 'hero', who stands above the masses", and closes the passage with a sentence that is not about the 1890s at all: "Plekhanov's Marxist works still help in the fight to eliminate the remaining survivals of the cult of the individual." That was written for 1960. It survived the revision of 1974 and stands in the third edition of 1977, long after the campaign it belonged to had been quietly shut down — a small fossil of de-Stalinisation left embedded in a Brezhnev-era reprint. Whose cult is never said.

Against this, the apparatus deserves real credit for what it refuses to delete. Plekhanov's own notes to the 1905 edition attack Lenin by his pseudonym, accusing "Mr. Vladimir Ilyin" of professing the market theory of the vulgar economist J. B. Say. The editors print the attack and answer it in a note — "Plekhanov's statements about Lenin referring to the year 1905 are absolutely untrue" — rather than cutting it. A second note

records that Plekhanov "ascribed Blanquism to Lenin in 1905". The 1892 "hieroglyph" passage on sensation, which Lenin had demolished in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, is printed in full and flagged. The same method runs through the *Monist View*: where Plekhanov argues that dialectical materialism cannot supply a mechanical explanation of history, the editors let the sentence stand and append a signed dissent beneath it — "Plekhanov's statement is radically at variance with the basic principles of Marxist-Leninist dialectics" — then quote Engels against him and give the page. Two further editorial notes take issue with his handling of the geographical environment, citing his own pages back at him. A reader can see the disagreement, locate both sides, and decide. Argument, not excision. Set beside what the same publisher did to the historical record elsewhere, this is a different order of editorial conduct, and the difference should be recorded.

The largest irony is one the framing cannot absorb at all. In *Socialism and the Political Struggle*, printed here complete, Plekhanov works through what would follow if a revolutionary minority seized power in an unripe Russia and refused to hand it back. Such a government, he writes, would "have to seek salvation in the ideals of patriarchal and authoritarian communism", modified only so that production was managed "not by the Peruvian 'sons of the sun' and their officials but by a socialist caste". Under such guardianship the people, "far from being educated for socialism, would even lose all capacity for further progress". Fomina's essay, which quotes generously from this pamphlet, does not quote that. No note attaches to it. In 1977, a Moscow institute of philosophy printed, without comment, an 1883 prediction of rule by a socialist caste. The book is more honest than its introduction.

What the essay withholds, Plekhanov's ablest opponent supplied, and supplied it early. Trotsky wrote a note on Plekhanov on 24 April 1922, four years after his death, as part of the introduction to the first two volumes of his own collected works; it was translated into English and printed in the *American Fourth International*, vol. 4 no. 3 (whole no. 31), March 1943 — the composition date is the one that matters here, not the issue. It is not a demolition. "This was a truly great man," Trotsky writes, having already written the same sentence once without the adverb, and the estimate that follows is close to Fomina's: Plekhanov did not create historical materialism, but "he introduced it into Russian life", overcoming "the homegrown revolutionary prejudices of the Russian intelligentsia, in which an arrogance of backwardness found its expression". The difference is everything that comes after. Where Fomina assigns the decline to Western reformism acting on Plekhanov from outside, Trotsky locates it inside the

man's own situation: he was "a forerunner, the first crusader of Marxism on Russian soil", a theoretician without a party and without practice, and "this disturbance of the balance between theory and practice, which arose from the whole circumstances of Plekhanov's life, proved fatal for him". Where Fomina names no wartime writing, Trotsky names one, quotes it, and gives the page — the introduction to the *History of Russian Social Thought* (Moscow, 1919), in which Plekhanov limits the class struggle to domestic relations and replaces it, between nations, with "more or less friendly collaboration where the question of the defense of the country from external attack arises". Where Fomina reports a social-chauvinist standpoint, Trotsky quotes the moral premise Plekhanov reached for once the class criterion had gone: "defensive war is a just war". And he ends by claiming him: "The great Plekhanov, the true one, belongs entirely and wholly to us."

Plekhanov's error was symmetrical and equally consequential: from the correct premise that Russia's revolution would be bourgeois in its tasks he drew the fatal conclusion that its outcome must be a long capitalist development. That is the deduction Trotsky broke with in 1905–06, and the break was methodological before it was political. Michael Löwy sets it out in the dossier "Trotsky 60 years on" (*International Viewpoint* 324, September–October 2000), arguing that Trotsky's rejection of "economism, one of the essential traits of Plekhanov's Marxism" was a founding methodological premise of the theory of permanent revolution. Ernest Mandel put the genealogy more bluntly, answering Doug Jenness in "In Defense of the Permanent Revolution" (*Intercontinental Press*, vol. 21 no. 15, 8 August 1983): the expectation of a long capitalist development after the democratic revolution was "the old thesis of the whole Russian Social-Democracy first formulated by Plekhanov and reasserted in the Party program drafted jointly by Lenin and Plekhanov, which only Trotsky had challenged in 1905-1906". That sentence is worth setting against Fomina's, because it credits Plekhanov with more influence than she does — it makes his premise the common property of Russian Marxism, Lenin included, rather than a Menshevik deviation. The same exchange works over Marx, Engels and the Russian commune, and what Plekhanov's current was right and wrong about in the 1880s. The American Trotskyist George Novack goes further still: his essay "Sociology and Historical Materialism" builds its whole account of what Marxist sociology is on Plekhanov's threefold division of Marxism into dialectical materialism, historical materialism and scientific socialism, crediting him by name for the scheme. Frantsov's *Philosophy and Sociology*, a Soviet book on the history of social thought, never mentions him. Read any of these alongside this volume and the argument

comes back to life — which is more than either the man's admirers or his official custodians managed to do for him.

Read the book. It is the best of Plekhanov, competently edited and decently translated. Read the introductory essay too, but read it as a document of 1960 rather than as an account of its subject: it is a small, careful demonstration of how a state that had made most of its own founding generation unmentionable went about keeping in print the one opponent it could not do without.

INTERNATIONALISM The Revolutionary Vanguard

The Soviet apparatus's two specialists on heresy - a Comintern historian and the professional answerer of Trotskyists - on what makes a vanguard, and on quietly replacing class analysis with loyalty to the party as the test.

Mikhail Basmanov and Boris Moiseevich Leibzon

Introduction to the 1977 Edition

The most revealing line in this book is a chapter heading. Chapter Three, section two, asks: "Do Present-Day Deviations Remain Petty-Bourgeois?" Seven years earlier, Boris Leibzon had written a whole volume for Progress Publishers on the assumption that they did — Petty-Bourgeois Revolutionism (1970), which classified Maoists, anarchists and Trotskyists as specimens of a single social disorder. Now, writing with Mikhail Basmanov, he puts his own category in the interrogative. And the answer he gives concedes almost everything before retrieving the word anyway: "the petty bourgeoisie whose views were opposed by Marx and Engels is today non-existent in Europe as well. It has become to a large extent a quite different petty bourgeoisie." Régis Debray had complained that the label meant nothing in Latin America. The authors accept that it means little in Europe either, and keep it: "Leftism, both present and past, is the product of the petty bourgeois maddened by the horrors of capitalism."

Something has replaced the class analysis, and this book announces what on its first working page. "The attitude to the problem of a Party, to the character and role of that Party remains the criterion of a true revolutionary spirit in the working-class movement." Not the class you come from; the party you accept. "Vanguard" now does the sorting that "petty-bourgeois revolutionism" used to do, and it does it more efficiently, because it needs no sociology at all. This is the third of four books in this series by these two men — Leibzon in 1970, Basmanov's *Where Are Trotskyites Leading the Youth?* in 1973, Leibzon alone again in *Unity, Solidarity, Internationalism* in 1981 — and it is the one where the machinery is visible without disassembly.

The pairing is itself the commission. Leibzon was a Comintern historian working from party archives; Basmanov was the Soviet apparatus's professional answerer of Trotskyists, published in *Kommunist* and translated into English by the people he attacked. One held the ultraleft file, the other the

Trotskyist file. Basmanov was known well enough abroad to be answered by name: Intercontinental Press gave most of a thirty-two-page issue to him in 1970, printing his "The New Stalinist Case: Role of Trotskyism in the Modern World" in full beside a point-by-point reply, George Saunders's "Role of Basmanov in the New School of Stalinist Falsification" (vol. 8 no. 16, 27 April 1970). Two years later the same reviewer reported the instruction this book carries out. In *Kommunist* no. 18 for 1971, Boris Ponomarev — the article carries his rank, secretary of the CPSU Central Committee — set the propaganda cadres five tasks, the first being "To profoundly lay bare the anti-Leninist essence of Trotskyism, its ideological and political kinship with open anti-Communism, with opportunism of right and 'left' persuasions." Saunders translated the passage in Intercontinental Press vol. 10 no. 3, 24 January 1972, and noted that Ponomarev's assignment followed "a decade of steadily mounting attacks on Trotskyism written by obscure apparatus-propagandists" — of whom the first he names is Basmanov.

The directive's punctuation travels with it. Brezhnev, quoted here from the 1969 Moscow Meeting, calls for "an intensification of the struggle against revisionism and both Right and 'Left' opportunism". The scare quotes sit on one side only, and so does the arithmetic: this book uses some form of Right opportunism twenty-two times and "Left" opportunism twice. Right opportunism is a thing; "Left" opportunism is a thing in inverted commas, which is to say a counterfeit. It matters that this can be traced to a printed order rather than inferred from a habit of speech.

For the date is the whole point. Between the two earlier books and this one, the West European communist parties had begun to move. The French party dropped the dictatorship of the proletariat at its Twenty-Second Congress in February 1976. Thirty European parties met in East Berlin at the end of June 1976 and produced a document with no reference to proletarian internationalism as Moscow understood it. Berlinguer, Marchais and Santiago Carrillo met in Madrid on 2 March 1977. Carrillo's "Eurocomunismo" y Estado appeared

that April; the Soviet journal *New Times* attacked him by name that June. The word for all this was in every newspaper in Europe.

It does not occur in this book. Neither does the name Carrillo — and that nil has been tested, because in Leibzon's 1981 volume the same search returned zero and the man was there, spelled "Carillo" by the scanner. Here he is absent under every spelling I can construct, as are Eurocommunism, Euro-communism and Eurocomunismo. Berlinguer appears three times, always as a friendly witness — on the Italian party's handling of the 1974 divorce referendum, on the party of "cadres and the masses." Marchais appears once, to be quoted saying that "democratic centralism is the highest form of democracy." The Spanish party appears four times: once for the civil war, and otherwise only as a patient. Its theoretical journal *Nuestra Bandera* is cited from the close of 1973 for the error of holding that peaceful coexistence was "consolidating the socio-political status quo in the world"; and "those Spanish Communists, who held a negative view of the effects of detente, reconsidered their attitude" after an October 1974 meeting with a CPSU delegation. The largest communist parties in Western Europe are present in this book only as evidence for the case against them.

The case is instead prosecuted through proxies, and the choice of proxies is the argument. Roger Garaudy, expelled from the French party in 1970, is named twenty times. Ernst Fischer, expelled from the Austrian party in 1969 — the authors say so — seventeen, including his suggestion that membership be opened "to many of those who do not approve of all the provisions of the programme." The *Il Manifesto* group, expelled from the Italian party in 1969, is quoted saying "the writings of Marx contain nothing about the theory of the Party." André Gorz is convicted of holding that "today the revolutionary Party of the new type cannot imitate the Leninist pattern." Every position the Italian, Spanish and French leaderships were actually advancing in 1977 is answered here in the mouth of a man those leaderships had already thrown out. It is a way of having the argument while denying that there is one, and it lets the authors write, at the very end, that "Revisionism's ideological and organisational defeat by no means signifies that there is no longer any need to fight on two fronts." That sentence was published in the year of the Madrid summit.

Now that all four of these men's Progress volumes can be read together, something can be said about this one that cannot be said about any of the others. Count the opportunism in each, against a pooled rate of 1.56 per 10,000 words across the

195 Progress volumes held here. Leibzon alone in 1970: seventeen uses, 3.49 per 10,000. Basmanov alone in 1973: one, and that one inside a quotation from Lenin — in 23,783 words about Trotskyism he never once reaches for the word in his own voice. Leibzon alone again in 1981: twenty-three, 2.84. And the two of them together in 1977: eighty-one, 8.75 per 10,000, the fourth densest use in the whole catalogue. Now count Trotsky. Leibzon 1970: 207 mentions. Basmanov 1973: 415. Leibzon 1981: one. Here: 131. The two vocabularies are separately available to both men. What is unique to the collaboration is the weld: passages in which a Trotsky word stands within 120 characters of an opportunism word occur eleven times here, and not once in any of the other three books.

This is not an argument from frequency, and it should not be mistaken for one. Frequency proves nothing about rigour — the Fourth International's own Tenth World Congress documents run at 1.69 per 10,000, which is indistinguishable from the Progress average. The point is narrower and it is about authorship. Leibzon had a Comintern historian's interest in opportunism as a nineteenth-century phenomenon with a Bernstein in it. Basmanov had a polemicist's file on Trotskyism, and no use at all for the word. Put them in one room and the result is a book in which the historian's category is soldered to the polemicist's target, so that "opportunism" ceases to name a policy and becomes the substance of which a named enemy is made. Neither man wrote that book alone, before or after.

Where the real dispute does surface, it surfaces as a question about internationalism. Chapter Nine, the last, is a sustained argument that a party's independence and its loyalty to the movement are not in tension, and that anyone who says they are is a nationalist. Brezhnev is quoted from the Twenty-Fifth Congress: "Unfortunately, some have begun to interpret it in such a way that, in effect, little is left of internationalism." The authorities marshalled behind him are Gus Hall of the United States, on the danger of admitting "two kinds of nationalism," and William Kashtan of Canada — leaders of small parties, cited against the mass parties of Italy and France. The formulation the chapter is proudest of is borrowed from the West German journal *Marxistische Blätter*: "The GCP is in fact dependent. It is dependent on the interests and demands of the working class, for it is part of the working class." This is offered as a refutation of the charge that the parties took direction from Moscow. It is a play on the word.

And it is in this chapter that the book's method with sources is easiest to catch. Trotskyist "national nihilism", the authors write, "stems from Trotsky's following thesis: 'The

unshakeable certainty that the basic class aim ... cannot be achieved by national means or within national boundaries is the essence of revolutionary internationalism." No source is given. The Posadas quotations that frame it are footnoted to Lucha Obrera; Trotsky gets nothing. The sentence is real. It is from *The Third International After Lenin* (1928), chapter III, where the standard English has it: "The invincible conviction that the fundamental class aim, even more so than the partial objectives, cannot be realized by national means or within national boundaries, constitutes the very heart of revolutionary internationalism." What the ellipsis removes is the clause in which Trotsky grants that partial objectives exist — in a book that elsewhere convicts him of holding "that there can never be intermediate aims in the struggle for socialism."

That is not an isolated slip; it is the book's practice, and it is measurable. The volume's apparatus runs to 244 blocks of footnotes; Lenin's *Collected Works* is cited in seventy-three of them. It cites Deutscher's *The Prophet Outcast*, Léo Figuères's *Le trotskisme, cet anti-léninisme*, and a dozen Trotskyist newspapers and pamphlets — *World Outlook*, *Keep Left*, *The Newsletter*, *Lutte Ouvrière*, *Voix Ouvrière*, *Lucha Obrera*, the *Ligue communiste's* own manifesto. It does not cite a single work by Trotsky, and it does not name one. This is a regression, not a house style: Leibzon on his own in 1970 named *My Life*, *Terrorism and Communism* and *The Permanent Revolution*, quoted from each, and even told the reader which chapter of the last he was objecting to. Opponents who are cited can be checked. Opponents who are only characterised cannot.

What the difference costs is visible wherever the book states a doctrine. "The revolutionary teaching is reduced to the theory of 'permanent revolution' in its Trotskyist interpretation... Everything is reduced to two non-historical propositions. The first is that there can never be intermediate aims in the struggle for socialism and, the second, that socialism can only triumph on a global scale." The second is fair: Trotsky's own summary of the theory — the numbered postulates in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930), chapter 10 — has the socialist revolution attaining completion "only in the final victory of the new society on our entire planet." The first is a reversal. The same postulates hold that in colonial and semi-colonial countries "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" — democratic and national tasks being the whole content of the theory, not an omission from it. A reader with the book open beside this one can settle the question in a minute. A reader

with only this one cannot, which is the purpose of leaving it uncited.

The starkest case had already been pointed out to the authors in print. Here, a Trotsky phrase is introduced as common property: "The words 'war is the mother of revolution', coined by Trotsky long ago, are quoted by all ultra-revolutionaries who want action but do not know where to apply their strength." Basmanov had used the same phrase, equally unsourced, in the text *Intercontinental Press* reprinted in April 1970, and Saunders answered it in the notes to that issue: it comes from the Manifesto of the Fourth International adopted at the movement's Emergency Conference of 9–16 May 1940, drafted by Trotsky, and the sentence entire reads "In history war has not infrequently been the mother of revolution precisely because it rocks superannuated regimes to their foundation, weakens the ruling class, and hastens the growth of revolutionary indignation among the oppressed classes." Seven years after being given the source and the missing qualification, the co-authors print the fragment again, still with no source, and now with the added claim that Trotsky coined it — which he did not, and did not say he had.

One question is worth putting to a book like this, and it is not about the word count. Can the category it prosecutes ever be turned on the people using it? In 92,620 words, exactly one passage places an opportunism word anywhere near the CPSU, and it is Gus Hall at the Twenty-Fifth Congress: "Opportunism appears wherever strong ideological pressure is felt from the enemy." Opportunism, so defined, is not something a communist party can generate; it is weather blowing in from outside, and the party's only possible relation to it is resistance. Compare the documents of the Fourth International's Tenth World Congress, printed in *Intercontinental Press* vol. 12 no. 46, 23 December 1974, which attach the same word to a named organisation and a described policy — "the ultraopportunistic policy of the CPI and the CPI(M) — a policy of governmental collaboration, alliance with the possessing classes and their parties, repression of popular movements" — and which apply the category to their own sections as readily as to anyone else's. One usage can be wrong about a particular case. The other cannot be wrong at all, and that, rather than how often the word appears, is what distinguishes them.

Against all of this the reader should set what the anti-Stalinist left was writing in the same months, because it is locatable and it is contemporaneous. Ernest Mandel's "Three Facets of 'Euro-Communism'" ran in *Inprecor* on 28 April 1977 and was reprinted in *Intercontinental Press* vol. 15 no. 19, 23 May 1977. Gerry Foley covered the East Berlin conference in "The

East Berlin CP Summit Conference," Intercontinental Press vol. 14 no. 27, 12 July 1976; when Moscow moved against Carrillo he wrote "High Stakes in Conflict Over Carrillo" and reviewed "Eurocomunismo" y Estado in the same issue, vol. 15 no. 26, 11 July 1977. Mandel's book-length answer, *From Stalinism to Eurocommunism*, followed from NLB in 1978. None of these treated the Eurocommunist turn as a vindication; the criticism from that quarter was that the Western parties were adapting to their own bourgeoisies while their break with Moscow remained diplomatic rather than programmatic. Two hostile critiques of the same object, from opposite directions, are more useful to a reader than either alone. Mandel, incidentally, is named once in this book, as "the ideologist of Trotskyist social-reformism", with nothing of his quoted and nothing of his cited.

Then there is the history, and here the record has to be corrected by subtraction. Search this volume of 92,620 words for Stalin and you will not find him. Not once — the same result as Basmanov's 1973 book, in a volume four times the length, and in a book whose entire subject is the history of the communist party as an institution. The nil is real and not a scanner artefact; no token in the book lies within two edits of the name. There is no Left Opposition, no Fifteenth Congress, no 1927, no Tenth Congress and its ban on factions, no Moscow trials. The year 1937 appears exactly once in the whole book, in a sentence about Soviet industrial output. Karl Radek is named once, for the draft theses he prepared for the Third Comintern Congress, with nothing to indicate that he was sentenced in the second Moscow trial of January 1937 and did not survive his sentence. The subject index has entries for Anarchism, Liquidationism, Menshevism and Cosmopolitanism, and none for any of these things.

The shape of the silence has changed since 1973, and the change is worth noticing, because it runs the wrong way. Basmanov's earlier book did narrate the defeat of the Opposition: the Party meetings of 1927 at which "only 4,000 persons, less than one per cent, supported Trotsky's views"; the Fifteenth Congress of late 1927 which "adopted decisions that put on record this defeat"; the Comintern Executive's Ninth Plenum of February 1928 ruling that adherence to the opposition "cannot be compatible with membership of the Communist International". Told wholly from the winning side, and stopping short of what happened to the losers — but a narrative, with dates in it. Here the narrative of the party question runs from the Communist Manifesto through the Second and Third Comintern Congresses of 1920 and 1921, praises the Seventh Congress of 1935, notes the Second World War, and then arrives in the 1960s. The whole inner history of

the party that these two men had spent their careers studying has been lifted out — including the part one of them had been willing to print four years earlier.

One passage shows what that costs. The authors praise the Seventh Comintern Congress for correcting the parties' faults: "Sectarian complacency, narrowness in politics, lack of flexibility and the inability to adopt decisions quickly and independently in keeping with the changing situation were becoming a serious obstacle to the fulfilment by the Communist parties of their vanguard role." Every element of that indictment — rigidity, dependence, the inability to decide independently — is what the Italian and Spanish parties were saying in 1977 about the international movement. Granted to the past, denied to the present.

Czechoslovakia, though, is no longer absent, and that is the single largest change from Leibzon's 1970 volume, where it did not appear at all. It appears here once: "The Hungarian and Czechoslovak Communists drew serious lessons from the counter-revolutionary events in Hungary (1956) and in Czechoslovakia (1968)." What follows is not an account of the Prague Spring but a discussion of party recruitment. The Czechoslovak party grew too fast after 1945, admitted people who had not shed "Social-Democratic habits," and this, the authors explain through a long quotation from Gustáv Husák, produced "the situation that facilitated the rapid growth of the Right-opportunist and anti-socialist forces in 1968." So 1968 enters the record as a membership-composition problem, diagnosed by the man the Soviet Union installed to normalise the country. The five Warsaw Pact armies are not mentioned. Neither is the screening of 1970, which expelled or struck from the rolls something on the order of half a million members — roughly a third of the party — the single largest purge of a ruling communist party in Europe since the war, and one that would have been directly relevant to a chapter arguing that party membership should be regulated for quality. Neither is Charter 77, published in January 1977 while this book was in production, or the prosecution of its signatories. On that the reader can consult Jiří Pelikán — director of Czechoslovak television in 1968, then an exile — whose "The Charter 77 Movement" appeared with the full text of the Charter and Gerry Foley's "In the Sarcophagus With Stalin" in Intercontinental Press vol. 15 no. 5, 14 February 1977. (Leibzon repeated the recruitment explanation, without even Husák to pad it, in 1981.)

Chile is handled with more nerve, and it is the one place in the book where an accusation is cashed out into something a reader could disprove: an organisation, a date, an act. "On

August 31, 1973, ten days before the fascist putsch, the Chilean Trotskyists demanded the resignation of the Allende Government." (Eleven days, in fact.) No source is given for it.

It does not survive the check. The Chilean section of the Fourth International, the Partido Socialista Revolucionario, adopted a Central Committee statement on 1 September 1973, and Intercontinental Press printed it in English three weeks after the coup, in vol. 11 no. 34, 1 October 1973. It does say that the Popular Unity government "has exhausted its possibilities" and has evolved rightward — the authors could have made something of that. What it demands is the opposite of a resignation: crush the employers' offensive and the truck owners' strike, support the cordones industriales in requisitioning the strikers' vehicles, "No return of factories to their former owners", continue expropriating the national bourgeoisie, build unity with the MIR and with "advanced sectors" of the Socialist Party. (The Intercontinental Press scan splits words across its column joins — it sets the third of those phrases as "No re turn of factories to their former own ers" — and I have closed the joins in quoting; the words themselves are as printed.) It warns that the bourgeoisie is pressing for "the government's complete capitulation" as its first option while "organizing to forcibly overthrow it". The word resignation does not appear. It remains possible that some smaller group said something like what the book reports on the day the book reports it — the book gives no source, so there is no way to tell. What can be checked is the position of the organisation the phrase would most naturally denote, and it had been in print in English since 1973, saying the opposite. That is the difficulty with cashing a label out: it can be looked up.

The larger evasion in that passage is not the charge but its function. It stands in for an account of the coup in which the only actors with agency on the left are the groups to the government's left. What the Chilean Communist Party itself argued in those months — the constitutional road, the search for an understanding with the Christian Democrats, the resistance to arming the industrial cordones — is not examined at all, though it was the strategy actually in force when the tanks moved. Gerry Foley's "The Coup — What Happened and Why," Intercontinental Press vol. 11 no. 33, 24 September 1973, is the contemporary answer and remains worth reading beside this.

None of which makes the book worthless, and there is a real reason to reprint it beyond its symptoms. Chapter Three's first section, on the changing social structure of capitalism, is serious labour sociology and has aged well. The authors

document the growth of subcontracted homeworking in Italy — some 1,200,000 artisan enterprises in 1970, and around 1,700,000 people, a tenth of the employed population, working at home, four-fifths of them women, at wages often 40 per cent of the average, in what Italians called "black labour." They set out the Japanese dual labour market with figures: in 1969, 63 per cent of workers at Japanese factories employing more than 500 were union members, against 4.9 per cent at enterprises employing up to thirty. They understand what this does to solidarity, and they are right that a working class scattered across "parcel" enterprises is harder to organise. Their material on party cadres and composition — the Italian party's million and a half members supported by only a few hundred full-time functionaries, the age profiles of French and British congress delegates — is the kind of concrete institutional detail that is genuinely hard to find elsewhere in English for this period.

They are also not wrong about everything they attack. Their catalogue of self-proclaimed vanguards — the thousand-odd groups reported in the American press in January 1972, the West Berlin circle of about twenty students announcing an organisation to found a communist party — is funny because it is accurate, and their line about the fragmentation of Trotskyism ("Today there are six 'Fourth Internationals' and the protozoan multiplication of Trotskyist organisations continues") is a fair blow that the tradition has had to absorb. A movement that could produce Alain Krivine's remark that "a student can change a party like a shirt, without serious consequences to his studies and to his activities" had made itself quotable against its own interest.

The book closes: "Ever larger segments of the people today regard the Communists not only as a political Party but as the vanguard of the new life that is bringing liberation to all mankind." Within a year the Spanish party had formally abandoned Leninism at its Ninth Congress and the French party had walked away from the Union of the Left; within a decade the argument this book was written to win had been lost in every country it discusses. That outcome does not prove the Eurocommunists were right about very much. It does show what happens to a category that has stopped describing anything. "Petty-bourgeois revolutionism" at least gestured at a social class. "Vanguard," as used here, means the parties that agree, and the test the reader is offered — the attitude to the Party as "the criterion of a true revolutionary spirit" — is a test that can only ever return the answer it was set to return. Two capable historians, working with real material and reading four languages, spent 92,620 words demonstrating it, cited Lenin seventy-three times and Trotsky not once in a book that names him 131 times, and could not write the name of the man whose

party this had been.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM

Secret Weapon in Africa

A Pravda correspondent's eyewitness account of Angolan independence and the war around it - the Cuban instructors, the rockets at Kifangondo, the South African columns and the mercenary trial in Luanda.

Oleg Ignatyev

Introduction to the 1977 Edition

On the morning of 10 November 1975, Oleg Ignatyev walked from the Hotel Tivoli in Luanda to the former governor's palace to collect his invitation to the ceremony at which Angola would proclaim its independence. He was a Pravda correspondent, and he had been coming to these colonies for a decade — eight trips to guerrilla-held territory, the book's own jacket claims, "more than any other Soviet journalist." Secret Weapon in Africa is the record of what he saw in those last weeks of Portuguese Angola and the first months of the People's Republic: the torchlight procession of the "Veterans of 1961," the Cuban instructors gathered around a map in a two-storey house on the edge of the capital, the katyusha rockets at Kifangondo, the mercenary trial the following summer. It is not a philosophical tract and does not pretend to be one. It is war reportage with a thesis, and the thesis is in the title. The "secret weapon" is the mercenary — the hired white soldier as the instrument through which imperialism, denied its old colonial armies, tried to strangle a newly independent African state. Much of what the book reports under that heading is true, and the first duty of an honest introduction is to say so before it says anything else.

The date of the book. The spine and the copyright page both read 1977 — "First printing 1977," "© Progress Publishers 1977" for the English, translated from the Russian by David Fidlón. But the argument is a 1976 argument. The latest event the book narrates is the verdict of the Luanda mercenary trial, delivered on 28 June 1976; its press citations run out in the spring and early summer of that year (the Christian Science Monitor of May 1976, Granma of March 1976, the Italian L'Europeo of February–April 1976). Ignatyev is writing in the immediate afterglow of the MPLA's victory: South Africa's columns had been driven back across the Namibian border in March 1976, the mercenaries had been captured and sentenced, and the People's Republic had won recognition. This matters for what follows, because the book's horizon closes in mid-1976 — a full year before the event that would test everything it says about the MPLA, the crushing of the Nito

Alves faction on 27 May 1977. The silence on that event is chronology, not evasion; it had not happened. What the book could have said about the MPLA's character on the evidence already before it is a separate question, and the answer to that one is less flattering.

Historicise the moment. 1976 was the high-water mark of Soviet and Cuban engagement in Africa. The Portuguese empire had collapsed in the Lisbon coup of April 1974; Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau came to independence within eighteen months of each other; Soweto rose in June 1976. For Moscow, the Angolan war was the first case since the 1960s in which Soviet arms and a Cuban expeditionary force had turned back a Western-and-South-African intervention and installed an allied government. A book celebrating that victory, written by the Pravda man who had been on the spot, was exactly the export the moment called for. It is worth registering one striking feature of its vocabulary at the outset: in more than seventy thousand words the word "Marxist" does not appear once. The MPLA is presented as a national-liberation movement fighting colonialism, apartheid and mercenaries — not as a party of socialist construction. This is reportage in the register of the anti-colonial front, and the omission is itself a fact about the book's purpose.

What is true, and it is a great deal

Begin the credit where the book is strongest, because the criticism that follows is worthless if the reader thinks the book is a fabrication. It is not. The covert war it describes was real. The United States did run a secret operation in Angola through the CIA, channelling money and arms to Holden Roberto's FNLA and Jonas Savimbi's UNITA; the officer who directed that operation from Langley, John Stockwell, resigned and confirmed its existence and its scale in *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story* (New York: Norton, 1978), published a year after Ignatyev's book and independently of it. The apartheid South African invasion was real: Pretoria sent regular armoured columns hundreds of kilometres into a newly independent

country in the last months of 1975, and Ignatyev's account of the defence of Benguela and Kifangondo, however coloured, describes an actual war against an actual aggressor. The white mercenaries were real, and so were their crimes. The book's closing chapter reproduces the sentences handed down at Luanda on 28 June 1976 — Callan, McKenzie, Gearheart and Barker to death, the others to sixteen, twenty-four and thirty years — and the man it calls Callan, the Cypriot-British ex-paratrooper Costas Georgiou, really did murder prisoners and, notoriously, order the shooting of thirteen of his own men. And the Cuban intervention really did defeat a racist invasion. None of this was an imperialist invention, and the Cold-War literature that treated African decolonisation as a Soviet plot was frequently an apology for the colonial power and for Pretoria.

The book's method deserves a specific word of credit, because it is the method the reference volumes in this series so often lack. Ignatyev cites. He quotes the actual actors and, repeatedly, the Western press against itself — the Sunday Telegraph on the twenty million dollars the CIA planned to spend on British mercenaries, the Christian Science Monitor on the recruits trained at Fort Benning, The Guardian and Newsweek and The New York Times. Most tellingly, he turns to the American scholar John Marcum, the leading Western academic historian of the Angolan revolution, and quotes Marcum's judgement that "'high officials' in Pretoria have announced that South Africa's entry into Angola was made on the basis of an 'understanding' with American officials," and Marcum's conclusion that "at the very least the United States connived at the South African intervention and sought to cooperate with it." A propagandist who can convict Washington out of the mouth of an American professor of African studies has done real reporting. Where this book records Western and South African violence, believe it.

The binary, and the war it left out

The trouble is not with what the book documents but with the shape it forces the documentation into. Ignatyev sets the war up, in his first chapter, as two lines of men at a single barricade: "On one side of the barricades were those who fought for an independent Angola and those who helped them in this struggle. On the other were their adversaries and those who helped them." Everything then sorts cleanly into those two files. On one side: the MPLA, the Cubans, the USSR, the socialist countries doing their "internationalist duty." On the other: the CIA, the mercenaries, apartheid South Africa, Mobutu's Zaire, Chinese arms, and the "splitter puppet

organisations" FNLA and UNITA. The mercenary trial becomes, in his phrase, not a trial of thirteen men but a trial of an institution — "It was a trial over the US Central Intelligence Agency." As a description of the external war this is not far wrong. As a description of the Angolan revolution it erases almost everything that made that revolution difficult, and in particular it erases the internal life of the movement the book exists to praise.

Here the corrective is not a hostile one. The Fourth International — the anti-Stalinist Marxist tradition from which these introductions are written — supported the same side Ignatyev did, and said so at the time, in the same months he was writing. Its American weekly, *Intercontinental Press*, whose regular writer on Angola was Ernest Harsch, drew the exact distinction the Soviet account blurs; reviewing the war on 8 March 1976 it insisted that "It is one thing to use the weapons of the imperialists. It is quite another thing to permit the actual armed forces of the imperialists to intervene." The first was the MPLA's right — the paper defended its access to Soviet arms without qualification — and the second was the crime of the FNLA and UNITA in opening Angola's door to Pretoria. The starting point of these analyses was to "combine our support to the MPLA, FRELIMO, and the PAIGC with an analysis of the direction of their political development." On the decisive question the two traditions agree; writing in June 1978, once the Cuban brigades had moved on to a very different war in the Horn of Africa, the Trotskyist review *Africa in Struggle* still judged that in Angola "the Cuban role was progressive to the extent that it represented a defence against the South African army." Against Pretoria and the CIA, the Fourth International was on the MPLA's side of the barricade. What it would not do — and what Ignatyev cannot do — is pretend that the barricade had only two sides.

Because the MPLA had a third front, an internal one, and the book touches it exactly once. In 1973 the movement's vice-chairman, Daniel Chipenda, led a serious split; Ignatyev names it, but only to dispose of it. Chipenda, he writes, "caused a split in the organisation by his tribalistic, adventuristic manoeuvres," went over to the enemy, plundered occupied towns, and finally "bolted, with a vast sum of stolen dollars." That Chipenda did end up an instrument of South Africa is true. But notice the form of the explanation: a dissident is not a political current with a position that can be stated and answered, he is a traitor whose treachery is his whole biography. The contemporaneous FI analysis of the same split, published in *Inprecor*, made precisely the objection an honest reader should make of Ignatyev's page: "He was denounced as a traitor, but certainly a political explanation of

why should have been offered. Not only was this never done" — and the writers noted, uncomfortably for the official story, that "it also seems that a compromise may have been reached between the 'traitor' and the rest of the leadership." A movement that explains its opponents by their venality rather than their politics has told you something about how it intends to govern.

There was, moreover, more than one internal opposition, and the book mentions none of the others. Alongside Chipenda's "Eastern Revolt" there was the *Revolta Activa*, the "Active Revolt" led by the Andrade brothers and Gentile Viana, which drew its support from the movement's intellectuals and which — in the words of the Portuguese Trotskyists who chronicled it — "criticized the lack of internal democracy and the rule of an 'all powerful president.'" Of this Ignatyev says nothing. Mário de Andrade, who had led the MPLA during Agostinho Neto's imprisonment and whom the book mentions warmly in its early chapters as a founder, has by the 1970s become, in the book's silence, a non-person. The pattern is the one this series meets again and again: the movement has a living authority and no dissenters, because the dissenters have been written out.

And there is one act of suppression the book cannot excuse by chronology, because it happened in the very weeks Ignatyev was in Luanda. In October 1975, as the MPLA prepared to declare independence, it arrested the militants of the *comités de acção* and the "people's power" (*poder popular*) committees — the neighbourhood and factory organs the movement's own left had thrown up in the capital — and, in Harsch's contemporaneous account, "the arrests of members of the CAC and 'people's power' groups in Luanda in October 1975 were accompanied by a typical Stalinist slander campaign, which portrayed the dissidents as 'partisans of Trotsky and Bakunin.'" That phrase should stop any reader of this series short. It is the identical anti-Trotskyist amalgam the Progress textbooks manufacture at their desks in Moscow — the imaginary "Trotskyite" as the hidden hand behind every deviation — now deployed by an African liberation movement against its own rank-and-file, in the same city and the very weeks in which Ignatyev was gathering the material for this book. By July 1976, with *Secret Weapon* in Africa already at the printers, Harsch could write flatly in *Intercontinental Press* that "the MPLA's 'socialism' is limited to its rhetoric." None of this is retrospective wisdom. It was in print, in English, from writers who wanted the MPLA to win, while Ignatyev's manuscript was still warm.

What came a year later

All of this the book could have weighed in 1976. What it could not have known — and here the chronology must be respected exactly — is what the movement's intolerance of its own left would produce on 27 May 1977, when a faction associated with Nito Alves, a member of the MPLA Political Bureau, attempted a coup against Neto's leadership and was crushed. The reprisal was not confined to the plotters. In the months that followed the MPLA killed thousands of real and suspected nitistas; the toll has never been established and estimates range from the low thousands into the tens of thousands, but that it was a massacre is not in dispute. Ignatyev's manuscript had closed a year before it happened, and it would be a cheap trick to charge him with a silence about the future. The point is a fairer one: the Fourth International, which had backed the MPLA against imperialism exactly as Ignatyev did, reported the massacre as it unfolded — the tradition Ignatyev wrote for did not, then or ever.

Harsch covered it week by week in *Intercontinental Press* through the summer of 1977, and caught at once the terrible symmetry the official silence was built to hide: Nito Alves had himself been "the central figure" in the earlier purge of the *poder popular* left, "employing the same charges that were later to be used against himself." Now Neto denounced Alves's followers as a "black racist faction" — "resorting," Harsch noted, "to some of the MPLA's standard slanders" — and made no secret of what awaited them. "We don't want to waste time on trials," Neto said; "we want to get this over with as quickly as possible." By September *Intercontinental Press* could report that "Neto has announced that some of the MPLA dissidents have been executed." And in July 1977, under the headline "We Have Set Up a Dictatorship," the paper printed the words in which Neto answered his own left — words that need no gloss and dissolve the book's entire framing in a sentence: "We are the MPLA and we have set up a dictatorship under which we live.... It is the MPLA which lays down the path to be followed."

The Portuguese section of the Fourth International drew the fuller balance sheet. Writing in November 1977, and translated in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, José Maia named the dead: the guerrilla commanders of the First Military Region — "Van Troi, Sihanouk, Bakaloff, Nito Alves, Monstro Imortal, and Ho Chi-Minh, along with others. All were arrested and shot following May 27" — and the militants of the old Luanda underground, "Nado, Juca Valentim, and Zé Van Dúnm, who were later shot on the orders of the MPLA leadership." Four of the executed had sat on the MPLA's own Central Committee;

two, Nito Alves and Monstro Imortal, on its Political Bureau. "May 27," Maia wrote, "was the point at which the revolutionary process began to be reversed"; the leadership had always "preferred to settle the differences by expeditious administrative methods," and now the method reached its conclusion. This is the same movement, the same leadership, that Ignatyev's book presents as a barricade with only enemies on the far side. The white mercenaries at Luanda were tried in open court and some were shot; a year later the movement shot its own commanders — men with noms de guerre like Ho Chi-Minh and Van Troi, who had fought the Portuguese in the bush — and no book from Moscow would record it.

The frame, turned around

The house test for these volumes is a test of reflexivity: can a category the book applies to its enemies ever be turned on the book's own side? Here it must be applied with more care than usual, because the book's central category is largely sound and its own side was, in the main, in the right. Mercenaries and covert intervention genuinely were imperialism's weapon in Angola; the Cuban intervention genuinely was anti-imperialist; this is not the neat self-indictment that a philosophy textbook's ritual use of "opportunism" invites. The reflexive failure is narrower and it is real. The book's operative category is not "mercenary" but the barricade itself — the claim that "those who fought for an independent Angola" form a single bloc without internal antagonism. That category the author will not let bend. Political killing, the settling of disputes by the gun, the suppression of a current for its ideas: these belong, in the book's grammar, exclusively to the far side of the barricade, to the CIA and to Callan. When the MPLA did the same things — to Chipenda's people, to Andrade's, to the poder popular militants it was jailing in Luanda even as the book was being reported, and, the year after it closed, to Nito Alves's — the grammar had no words for it, and so it recorded nothing. The "secret weapon" turns out to name only the enemy's violence. The book has no name for the violence of the side it loves.

Behind this stands the deeper argument the whole tradition was formed to have, and it is the same argument the companion volume in this series, *USSR and Countries of Africa* (Progress, 1980), stages on the terrain of the Horn. Moscow's category for movements like the MPLA was "socialist orientation," the "non-capitalist road": the claim that a national-liberation front, led by radicalised petty-bourgeois and military cadre and guided by the Soviet Union, could carry a backward country over into socialism without a workers' revolution. Against exactly this, Trotsky's second thesis in *The*

Permanent Revolution (1930) states the counter-case: "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." What was at stake between Ignatyev's tradition and the one that answered him was never sympathy for Angola's liberation, which both sides shared, but whether a front that suppressed its own proletarian and intellectual wings and settled its arguments by firing squad was building socialism — or a one-party state whose "socialism" was, in José Maia's flat verdict, a party that "will not be a party of the workers and peasants, as is claimed; nor will it be Marxist-Leninist, despite the invocation of this term."

How to read it

Read *Secret Weapon in Africa* for its reportage, which is genuine and in places irreplaceable — an eyewitness account, by a competent and well-connected journalist, of the CIA's mercenary apparatus, of Pretoria's invasion, and of the fortnight in Luanda when a small movement with two salvoes of rocket ammunition waited for the Cubans to arrive. On the machinery of the imperialist intervention the book is a real source, and it has the honesty to convict the West from Western documents. But read its account of the MPLA itself against the Fourth International's contemporaneous Angola coverage — Ernest Harsch's despatches in *Intercontinental Press* through 1976 and 1977, and José Maia's balance sheet of November 1977 — because these came from people who stood with the MPLA against South Africa and the CIA and still refused to look away from what the movement did to its own. Their priorities were the mirror of Ignatyev's, and the contrast is itself instructive: he built a book around the Luanda mercenary trial, which the Trotskyist press barely noticed; they spent their Angola columns on the movement's internal life, which he could not see at all. The book asks to be trusted as the record of a just war. It was a just war; that is why the parts the book leaves out matter. A movement is not honoured by the suppression of its history, and the men the MPLA shot in the winter of 1977 were, most of them, revolutionaries who had fought the same enemy Ignatyev came to Luanda to watch defeated.

Philosophy in the USSR

Soviet philosophy describing itself for a Western audience - eleven senior philosophers including Ilyenkov and Lektorsky, each chapter signed, on dialectics, cognition and the natural sciences.

Petr N Fedoseyev

Introduction to the 1977 Edition

Eleven Soviet philosophers were asked to describe what their discipline was doing, and this is the answer they gave. That makes *Philosophy in the USSR: Problems of Dialectical Materialism* different from every other philosophy title in this series. Oizerman's *Main Trends in Philosophy* is a monograph on the history of philosophy; Dubrovsky's *Problem of the Ideal* is a technical argument about mind and brain; Sheptulin's *Marxist-Leninist Philosophy* is a textbook. This book is the profession's self-portrait, commissioned for export, and it can therefore be asked a question the others cannot: when Soviet philosophy narrates its own history, what does it say happened?

The answer is that almost nothing happened before about 1955, and that what did happen was a difficulty, in the passive voice, with no agent and no date.

The date and the commission

For once the spine is close to right. The Russian original and the Progress English edition, translated by Robert Daglish, both belong to 1976–77: the newest sources in the apparatus are Marx and Engels's *Collected Works* volumes 5 and 7 in the Moscow editions of 1976, and the most recent political citation is *Documents and Resolutions. 25th Congress of the CPSU* (Moscow, 1976), the Congress having met in February of that year. There is no five- or ten-year lag of the kind that makes so many Progress imprints misleading. This is a mid-Brezhnev book published in mid-Brezhnev.

The Foreword says what it is for, and it is worth taking at its word. The reader "will also be able to see for himself how wrong are the assertions that a gap exists between their ideas based on dialectical materialism and the problems of contemporary philosophy" — "their" being Marx, Engels and Lenin. And: "Hence the growing interest that Western scientists and technologists have acquired in materialist dialectics, an interest which the present volume seeks in some

measure to satisfy."

So the addressee is a Western scientist or a Western philosopher of science, and the charge to be rebutted is that Soviet philosophy has fallen out of the conversation. This is a détente-era book of respectability, and its authors are the discipline's senior people: P. N. Fedoseyev, Academician; T. I. Oizerman, corresponding member; and nine Doctors of Philosophical Sciences including E. V. Ilyenkov, V. A. Lektorsky, A. N. Leontyev, D. P. Gorsky, A. S. Bogomolov and V. Z. Kelle. It is not a committee product signed by an institute. Each chapter has a named author who can be held to it.

Weather

The self-description is Fedoseyev's, in the opening chapter, "Scientific Cognition Today, Its Specific Features and Problems". His organising theme is Lenin's call, in "On the Significance of Militant Materialism", for an alliance between Marxist philosophers and natural scientists, and his argument is that the alliance has worked. Twice, and only twice, he acknowledges that it has not always worked. First:

Whenever these principles were violated difficulties arose that inhibited the fruitful work of both philosophers and natural scientists.

And then, periodising:

As we have already noted, the alliance between natural scientists and Marxist philosophers has assumed different forms at different stages. In the 1950s inquiry into the philosophical aspects of the natural sciences concentrated mainly on well-known and generally acknowledged scientific theories, particularly the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics. [...] In this period also the difficulties that had accumulated in the preceding years were overcome and mutual understanding was re-established between philosophers and natural scientists.

That is the whole of it. History begins in the 1950s; the 1960s are "a new frontier"; the present is defined by the tasks "set by the 24th and elaborated at the 25th Congress of the CPSU". Before the 1950s there is a period in which difficulties accumulated, and they were overcome by nobody in particular.

Consider what is being described. Search the full text of this volume and the following words do not occur once: Deborin; Mitin; Yudin; Zhdanov; Lysenko; Stalin; 1931; 1947; Menshevizing idealism; Pod znamenem marksizma or Under the Banner of Marxism; purge; repression; cult of the individual. The single occurrence of "Alexandrov" is A. D. Alexandrov the mathematician, in a list of scientists, and not G. F. Alexandrov the head of agitprop. The word "genetics" occurs, but always as a term of art in epistemology — "genetic inference", "genetically initial" — except in one neutral aside about biology opening new avenues for research.

"Mutual understanding was re-established between philosophers and natural scientists" is doing extraordinary work in that sentence. What had ruptured the understanding, in the years Fedoseyev will not date, was the destruction of Soviet genetics after the August 1948 session of the Lenin All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences; the condemnation of cybernetics as a bourgeois pseudo-science; the campaign against "idealism" in physics that came close to reaching quantum mechanics and relativity; and, in philosophy proper, Zhdanov's intervention at the philosophy conference of June 1947. Men lost laboratories, chairs, liberty and in some cases their lives. In this account they lost mutual understanding.

The evasion is not even consistent, because Fedoseyev then prints the roll of honour:

It should be mentioned that a major contribution to this work has been made by Soviet natural scientists such as S. I. Vavilov, A. F. Joffe, V. A. Fock, M. A. Markov, A. D. Alexandrov, N. N. Semyonov, N. P. Dubinin, V. A. Engelhardt, V. A. Ambartsumyan, A. I. Berg, S. L. Sobolev, and P. K. Anokhin.

Read that list against the history it is suppressing. S. I. Vavilov, the physicist who became President of the Academy of Sciences in 1945, was the younger brother of N. I. Vavilov, the geneticist Lysenko destroyed, who died in Saratov prison in 1943. N. P. Dubinin was one of the geneticists whose work was stopped in 1948 and who returned to the field only after Lysenko's fall. A. I. Berg was the admiral and radio engineer under whom cybernetics was rehabilitated in the USSR after

having been denounced. Fedoseyev's honour roll is, in substantial part, a list of the survivors of the events his periodisation declines to name. He is not concealing the people. He is concealing what was done to them.

And then there is Fedoseyev himself, whose position in this history is harder than that of a man merely looking away from it.

The Party's principal theoretical journal was called Bolshevik until 1952 and Kommunist — The Communist in the English of the period — thereafter; it is one journal and one editor's chair. Zhdanov's speech to the June 1947 philosophy conference, instructing the "philosophic workers" that criticism and self-criticism constituted "a new dialectical law", was printed in Voprosy filosofii no. 1 for 1947 and in Bolshevik no. 16 of 30 August 1947. Fedoseyev held that chair. He also lost it. Writing in July 1953, Michel Pablo noted the reappearance of his byline and explained what it meant. (The piece is "The Post-Stalin 'New Course'", Fourth International vol. XIV no. 2, whole no. 121, pp. 35–39; the issue carries the date March–April 1953, which cannot be right for an article discussing 25 June, and the reader should take the composition date as the reliable one.)

The most striking example in this sphere was undoubtedly the article by P.N. Fedoseev, which appeared in The Communist, June 25, 1953, principal theoretical organ of the Russian CP. Fedoseev had been removed from his position as editor of The Communist last December after a bitter criticism by M. Suslov, a Stalinist flunkey, who had accused him of having at one time propagated the ideas of N. Voznossensky.

Removed in December 1952; publishing again in the same journal by June 1953. N. A. Voznesensky, the economic planner whose ideas were the charge against him, had fallen in 1949 and was shot in 1950. Pablo's third footnote reads the signal as such: "Voznossensky was the economic brain of the Politburo until 1949 when he fell into disgrace. Fedoseev's rehabilitation may signify an early rehabilitation of Voznossensky himself."

What Fedoseyev then wrote, in the article Pablo is describing, is the position he still holds in the volume in front of us. He protested in 1953 against attempts to "fence off the Soviet people from the culture of foreign lands", and added that "the culture of any people, great or small, is viewed by us as a contribution to world culture". Six years earlier, G. F. Alexandrov had been broken for "servile adulation toward Western European thought". Fedoseyev was arguing, at the

first moment it became sayable, against the doctrine that had disgraced Alexandrov and very nearly ended his own career.

So the author of "the difficulties that had accumulated in the preceding years were overcome" was not a bystander to those difficulties. He was removed and restored by the same machinery, on a charge connected to a man who had been shot, and he knew precisely what he had survived. That is a hard thing to hold against him and an impossible thing to excuse. He had the standing to write the paragraph nobody else in this book could have written, and he wrote it in the passive voice instead. (What he cannot be accused of, on this evidence, is having handled or commissioned Zhdanov's text; nothing available here shows that, and it should not be implied.)

The two heretics

Trotsky is named three times in this book and Bukharin five, and every occurrence is in the same two paragraphs of D. P. Gorsky's chapter, "Social Practice and Scientific Knowledge". Gorsky is making a point in the theory of definition, using the trade union controversy of 1920–21 as his worked example, and he reports the positions straight:

Trotsky defined the trade unions as an administrative[-]technical apparatus for directing production and ignored the political function of the trade unions. Bukharin protested against the one-sidedness of all the definitions formulated by those taking part in the discussion and in his own definition combined elements from the various definitions that had been proposed.

(The bracketed hyphen is an editorial repair: the scanned text reads "administrativetechnical", a word broken across a line in the original setting.)

There is no epithet attached to either man — no "renegade", no "enemy of the people", no reference to what happened to Bukharin in 1938 or to Trotsky in 1940. They are simply two people who defined a thing badly, and Lenin defined it well. Readers of the more strident volumes in this catalogue, such as Basmanov's *Where Are Trotskyites Leading the Youth?*, should notice the difference in register. By 1977 an academic philosopher could mention Trotsky as an ordinary participant in a party debate, provided he mentioned nothing else. That is a real change from 1939, and it is a very small one.

The book's only direct engagement with the charge that Soviet philosophy had become doctrinal comes in G. A. Kursanov's chapter on truth, and it is a refusal:

So, the charges against Marxists-Leninists, accusing them of "dogmatism", "abstract approach", and "standard criteria", coming particularly from revisionists (from Bernstein to Garaudy) clearly have no foundation in the facts of Marxist theory.

The charge is disposed of by identifying its source. Bernstein and Garaudy make it; Bernstein was a revisionist and Garaudy was expelled from the French Communist Party in 1970; therefore the charge has no foundation. Nothing in the chapter examines whether Soviet philosophy had in fact been dogmatic between 1931 and 1953 — a question on which the evidence is not scarce.

What is actually in the book

A reader told only the above would be badly misled, and this series does not exist to mislead. Roughly two-thirds of *Philosophy in the USSR* is real philosophical work, and some of it is good.

The most important chapter is Ilyenkov's "The Concept of the Ideal", and readers of this series should know what they have in front of them. This is the position that David Dubrovsky spent a book attacking, and which our edition of Dubrovsky's *The Problem of the Ideal* (Progress, 1988) reproduces the other half of. Here Ilyenkov states it himself, in his own compressed prose, arguing from Capital: the value-form is "purely ideal" not because it exists in the head of the commodity-owner but on precisely the opposite ground, because it is distinct from the corporeal form of the commodity in which it appears. "In other words, the form of value is IDEAL, although it exists outside human consciousness and independently of it." He anticipates the obvious objection — that this is Hegelian hypostatisation, "quite unforgivable in a materialist" — and answers it. Ilyenkov was pushed out of his positions and killed himself two years after this book appeared. Dubrovsky's 1988 volume says only that he "died in 1979". This chapter is his voice while he still had one, and the two books should be read together.

Elsewhere the standard is high and the manner is unexpectedly open. S. T. Melukhin argues, against what a reader might expect from a chapter called "The Dialectical-Materialist Conception of Matter", that the universe as a whole may not be a system at all, because "the infinite universe has no common quality (or quantity), no common universal measure" — and that the known dialectical laws therefore cannot be assumed to hold across it. That is a Soviet philosopher declining to extend the doctrine where he thinks the argument will not carry it. A.

S. Bogomolov's chapter on dialectical contradiction works through the set-theoretic antinomies and Zeno's flying arrow, citing Alonzo Church, Fraenkel and Bar-Hillel, Łukasiewicz on many-valued logic and — a detail worth noting — A. A. Zinovyev's survey of many-valued logic, published by Moscow University Press in 1968. Zinovyev was stripped of his citizenship and expelled from the USSR in 1978, the year after this book went out in English; in 1977 he was still a citable Soviet logician. A. N. Leontyev's "Activity and Consciousness" is a statement of activity theory by its principal author, and it is read outside Russia to this day on its merits.

There is also a genuine curiosity of tone. Fedoseyev devotes a passage to the search for extraterrestrial civilisations and "the possibility of establishing contact with them", footnoted to Carl Sagan's *Communication with Extraterrestrial Intelligence* (CETI) (MIT Press, 1973); he raises the irreversibility of environmental damage and says plainly that "certain changes in the natural environment are irreversible and may permanently worsen people's natural conditions of life". These are not the preoccupations of a closed mind.

And the citation apparatus tells its own story. The footnotes of this book are dominated by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Hegel, Aristotle — and by Popper, Bradley, William James, G. E. Moore, Nicolai Hartmann, Max Born, Lucio Colletti, Raymond Aron, Daniel Bell, Werner Stark, Ernst Fischer. Soviet philosophers are cited perhaps half a dozen times in the entire volume: Akhmanov on Aristotle, Yanovskaya on Marx's mathematical manuscripts, Kopnin on Lenin and logic, Zinovyev, Rubinstein. A discipline that had been ordered in 1947 to purge itself of "servile adulation toward Western European thought" was, thirty years later, reading Popper in the original and arguing with him at length. That distance was travelled by the people in this book, and they are owed the credit for it — even as they decline to say what it was they travelled from.

The chapter that turns

The last chapter, V. Z. Kelle's "Ideology as a Phenomenon of Social Consciousness", is the one that undoes the volume, and it does so entirely by accident.

Kelle's problem is the classic one: Marx and Engels treated all ideology as illusory, so how can Marxism itself be an ideology and also be scientific? His solution is a mechanism, and it is stated with precision:

Thus the logical basis of the distortion of consciousness in ideology is the presentation of the particular (particular interests, aspirations, aims, etc.) as the universal, i.e., their definition as universal social interests and social being.

A class whose interest really is universal has no need of the operation. Hence "the proletariat, in contrast to previous classes, so Marx and Engels argued, requires no illusions as to its position or tasks and its class consciousness must and can be scientific." Illusory ideology, by contrast, "adapts itself to the level of mass consciousness and speculates on ignorance, prejudice and popular fallacies", and is "imposed upon the masses by every available means of suggestion".

The test is Kelle's own, and it is a good one. It asks: is there a group here presenting its particular interest as the universal interest? The answer his readers in Moscow could not print, and which had been in print abroad since 1936, is in chapter 9 of Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*. The Soviet bureaucracy, Trotsky wrote, "is in the full sense of the word the sole privileged and commanding stratum in the Soviet society"; it "enjoys its privileges under the form of an abuse of power. It conceals its income; it pretends that as a special social group it does not even exist."

A stratum that pretends it does not exist is a stratum performing exactly the operation Kelle describes. And its philosophy — a philosophy that dates the beginning of its own history to the 1950s, that renders a decade of coercion as accumulated difficulty, and that answers the charge of dogmatism by naming the accusers — is that operation in its purest form. Kelle supplies the instrument. He is not permitted to point it at the floor he is standing on.

The reply

The anti-Stalinist left did not review this book, and no useful purpose is served by pretending otherwise. A search of the complete English Trotsky, the *Bulletin of the Opposition*, the run of Fourth International from 1940 to 1956, Intercontinental Press, International Viewpoint and the collected George Novack finds not one mention of Fedoseyev, Oizerman, Ilyenkov, Lektorsky, Kelle or any other contributor. The tradition did not track Soviet academic philosophy as a field and did not read its monographs. What it tracked was the moments when the state broke into science, and those it caught while they were happening.

In September 1948 — fifteen months after the event — Raya Dunayevskaya, writing as "Freddie Forrest" in Fourth

International, gave over a section of "Stalinists Falsify Marxism Anew" to the philosophy conference, under the heading "Soviet Philosophy and Soviet Reality". "No Soviet philosopher," she wrote, "missed the significance of Zhdanov's appearance at their conference in June 1947." Zhdanov "spoke with the authority of the Polburo when he assigned the 'philosophic workers' their new task" — the misspelling is the printed text's — and she quoted the new task in full: criticism and self-criticism as "a new form of movement, a new type of development, a new dialectical law". The following year, in "Purge of Soviet Culture", Ernest Germain — Ernest Mandel — recorded that "even in philosophy, Alexandrov, although in charge of the agitation-propaganda section of the Russian CP, under whose direction the purge of the Russian intelligentsia was conducted, was severely taken to task for having shown a servile adulation toward Western European thought" in his history of philosophy. In January 1951 the same journal published R. H. Monroe and Joseph Hansen's two-part "The Lysenko Case", tracing the campaign back to "a Ukrainian plant breeder, T. D. Lysenko, and a professor of philosophy, I. I. Prezent" in the early 1930s.

That is the material Fedoseyev's paragraph is written over: three articles in one journal, published while the events were current, naming the people, the dates and the instruments.

The tradition does not come to this with clean hands, and an introduction that implied otherwise would be worth nothing. On 16 June 1933, two years after the Central Committee resolution that broke Deborin's school, Trotsky wrote "The Party in the Field of Art and Philosophy", and what he wrote was not a defence of philosophical liberty. He held that "philosophical activity lies between art and politics, closer to politics than to art"; that "In philosophy, the party itself occupies a distinct militant position, which is not the case—at least not to the same extent—in the field of art"; and that complaints about the "dogmatization" and "canonization" of dialectical materialism "do not deserve serious attention". He wanted liberty for the novelists and a line for the philosophers, and he does not appear to have registered what had been done in Moscow under that principle two years before.

But he added the sentence that makes the whole passage usable, and it is the standard this book fails:

But least of all does this signify that in the sphere of philosophy the party can act as if all questions have already been resolved for it, and that it has nothing to expect from the further development of scientific thought.

Authority in a live argument is one thing; authority over an argument that has been closed is another. George Novack, in *Is Nature Dialectical?*, described the closure with the image he took from Henri Lefebvre — a French Communist Party official assuring Lefebvre that the house of dialectical thought "is finished; there is nothing left to do but put up the tapestries" — and observed that under Stalin dialectical materialism "became scholasticised and ossified".

By that test Philosophy in the USSR splits down the middle, and the split is the reason to read it. In Ilyenkov's chapter, in Melukhin's refusal to extend the laws of dialectics past the evidence, in Bogomolov's antinomies, the house is manifestly not finished and nobody is hanging tapestries. In Fedoseyev's opening survey and Kursanov's dismissal of the dogmatism charge, the tapestries are already up and the argument is over. The same eleven men, between the same covers, in the same year.

The discipline could think about matter, truth, logic and the ideal. It could not think about itself. That is not a small limitation in a philosophy, and this is the book in which it can be seen most exactly, because this is the book where the discipline was asked to try.

INTERNATIONALISM

Recent History of the Labor Movement in the United States, 1918–1939, Volume One

Soviet Americanists on the US labour movement from 1918 to 1939 - the 1919 strike wave, the open shop, the Depression and the rise of the CIO - written against the doctrine of American exceptionalism, from hundreds of American sources.

G. N. Sevostyanov and others

Introduction to the 1977 Edition

The organising principle of this book is stated in its preface, in a single sentence: "A study of the basic stages of the class struggle of the proletariat is inseparable from the study of the history of its vanguard, the Communist Party." Everything else follows from that. This is a scholarly history of the American working class between 1918 and 1939 — the first of two volumes, the second carrying the story to 1965 and reviewed separately — written on the premise that the Communist Party of the United States was the vanguard of that class, and that the history of the one is the history of the other. The book is nineteen chapters and about a hundred and eighty thousand words long. It has a bibliography that runs to hundreds of American titles, and its authors, named in the front matter, worked from the American union press and the American secondary literature at first hand. It is a serious book. It is also, at its centre, an untrue one, and the untruth is of a particular and instructive kind.

Take the date first, because the spine misleads. The English edition carries "© Progress Publishers 1977," but the text is older. It was produced under the Institute of General History of the USSR Academy of Sciences by a team of Soviet Americanists — G. N. Sevostyanov wrote the preface; I. M. Krasnov, Y. F. Yazkov, V. L. Malkov, N. V. Sivachyov, N. V. Kurkov, B. Y. Mikhailov and S. M. Askoldova the chapters — and the American secondary literature it cites effectively closes at the end of the 1960s. The great mass of the bibliography dates from 1968 and 1969; a stray title or two reaches 1972 and 1975, in the ordinary way of a translation desk swapping in whatever English edition was on the shelf. The living presences in the preface belong to the same moment: it opens on "troubled times for the United States," on students "organizing demonstrations," on a labour movement led by George Meany, "the present A.F.L.-C.I.O. President." Read it as a book of about 1969–70 — an

early-Brezhnev, détente-era work — dressed for export in an English jacket seven or eight years later. Its companion volume was dated the same way and reads the same way.

What was it for? The preface is candid enough about the polemical target: American historians who hold "that the Marxist-Leninist teaching on classes and class struggle is altogether inapplicable to the United States," the "theory of consensus," the doctrine of American "exceptionalism." Against them the book means to prove two things — that the United States was riven by class conflict its own academy would not describe, and that the Communist Party was the continuous revolutionary thread running through the conflict. The first proposition is largely true and the book documents it well. The second required the removal of certain people from the record, and it is in the removals, not in the arguments, that the book tells you most about the institution that commissioned it.

Begin with what is good, because a reader told that everything here is worthless will learn nothing, and because the falsifications matter only against a background of real work.

Soviet labour history of the United States had one structural advantage over much of what American departments were producing at the same date: it assumed that class conflict was the organising fact of American life and went looking for it. Applied mechanically that assumption distorts; applied to the strike waves of 1919 and 1933–37 it produced narrative history of subjects the American academy was then neglecting. The chapters on the postwar upheaval — the Seattle general strike of 1919, the great steel strike, the repression that broke the open-shop drives — are dated, sourced and readable. The book's statistical spine is honest: it gives A.F.L. membership falling year by year through the early 1920s, the strike totals mounting through 1933 and 1934, the union figures for the mine workers and the garment workers doubling in eighteen months. When the authors describe the San Francisco maritime

strike of 1934 — Bloody Thursday, the National Guard on the Embarcadero, the general strike that shut the city — they quote Hugh Johnson of the N.R.A. against himself at length, and the account holds up against any American narrative of the event.

The treatment of Black workers is better than the period's reputation, and better than a good deal of the American labour history then in print. The book sets the constitutional colour bars of the A.F.L. internationals against the wage data; it records the Communists who "marched into the cotton fields of Alabama, the very citadel of the Black Belt, and organized a sharecroppers union there in 1931," and follows that union from thirty members to twelve thousand, "90 percent of them Blacks," through the plantation terror of the mid-1930s — night raids, the burning of churches, strikers held "without a trial or investigation of any kind." This is real history, much of it drawn from sources an American scholar would not seriously work through for another generation. On the IWW the book is generous rather than sectarian: the Wobblies are "the most militant labor organization," their members conducted themselves "courageously" under the 1917–18 raids, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn is quoted mourning the organisation that "swept like a comet across the skies." The pre-1919 socialists — Debs, John Reed, Ruthenberg — are heroes here, their antiwar speeches quoted at length. None of this is erased. The erasures are elsewhere and later, and they are specific.

They are concentrated on the year 1934, and they are the heart of the matter.

Nineteen thirty-four was the hinge of the American labour decade. Three strikes that spring and summer broke the deadlock of the early Depression and made the industrial-union upsurge of the later thirties possible: the Toledo Auto-Lite strike, the Minneapolis truck drivers' strikes, and the San Francisco longshore and general strike. What made them decisive was not merely their militancy but their leadership: each was directed by radicals to the left of, and outside, the Communist Party. Toledo was led by A. J. Muste's American Workers Party and the Lucas County Unemployed League; Minneapolis by the Trotskyists of the Communist League of America — the Dunne brothers and Carl Skoglund, with James P. Cannon in support; San Francisco was the one of the three in which the Communist Party had genuine weight, and even there its influence was contested. This is not obscure knowledge. It is the settled account of the period in every serious history written since.

The book narrates all three strikes. It attributes the leadership

of two of them to the Communist Party and anonymises the third.

Toledo it gives to the Communists outright: "most of the labor unions in the city responded to the Communists' call for a general strike." The Auto-Lite plant is never named — it is "an auto electrical equipment plant" — and A. J. Muste, whose American Workers Party actually ran the strike through the Unemployed League, is nowhere near it. Muste is in the book, but quarantined: he appears earlier as head of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, "headed by social-reformists A. J. Muste, Sidney Hook, James Burnham," and later as the organiser of unemployed leagues in Ohio — never as the man who led the strike the book has just credited to his rivals.

Minneapolis is handled more carefully, because there the leadership could not be reassigned to the Party without inventing a Party presence that was not there, and so it is simply deleted. The book gives the strike in full and with evident sympathy — the "citizens' army" organised against it, the workers' own hospital, the two men killed on 22 May, the sixty-seven wounded and two dead on 16 July, Governor Olson's martial law, the surrender of the employers at the end of August. What it does not give is a single name. The union "was preparing for a strike"; "the central labor council sanctioned a strike"; the drivers won. Who organised the preparation the book so admires, who built the strike apparatus, who directed the fighting — this is left blank. Vincent, Miles and Grant Dunne, Carl Skoglund, Local 574: none appears here or in the book anywhere. The strike is orphaned so that it need not be fathered on the Trotskyists.

The contemporaneous answer to this was in print before the strike dust had settled, in the first issue of *The New International*, July 1934, in an article by the man who had helped direct the fight. James P. Cannon's "Minneapolis and Its Meaning" makes exactly the point the Soviet book spends its energy suppressing — that the outcome turned on who was in charge. "In other places, as a rule, the strike militancy surged from below and was checked and restrained by the leaders," Cannon wrote. "In Minneapolis it was organized and directed by the leaders." And: "Policy, method, leadership—these were the determining factors at Minneapolis which the aspiring workers everywhere ought to study and follow." The Progress volume, which believes above all in the determining role of leadership, cannot afford to say whose leadership it was. (The companion volume performs the sequel to this erasure: it writes the 1941 Smith Act prosecution of these same Minneapolis leaders out of the record entirely. This volume erases the strike; the next erases the trial.)

San Francisco, alone of the three, the book claims for the Party — "the San Francisco strike, to whose organization the Communists contributed greatly, was an exceptionally important action" — and here the claim has some purchase, since the Communists did have real influence on the coast. But set beside the treatment of the other two, the pattern is unmistakable. Where the Party led, it is named; where its rivals led, the leadership is either transferred to the Party or dissolved into passive verbs. The same Cannon article, incidentally, disposes of the Party's own record that year in one line: "Not a single of the 'red' unions affiliated to the Trade Union Unity League has succeeded in gaining recognition." The book presents the Trade Union Unity League as constructive labour organising. Its own contemporaries on the left thought it a wreck.

That brings us to the doctrine, and to the second kind of falsification, which is done not by an assertion but by a silence. The Communist Party of 1928–1934 was operating the Comintern's "Third Period" line: capitalism in terminal crisis, revolution on the order of the day, the socialists denounced as "social-fascists" and treated as the main enemy, and the trade-union field abandoned to a network of separate "revolutionary" unions — the Trade Union Unity League — in place of work inside the A.F.L. In 1935 the Seventh Congress of the Comintern reversed the entire line at a stroke, junked the dual unions, and proclaimed the Popular Front. This is one of the most consequential zigzags in the history of the American left, and it is the sort of thing a history of the American labour movement in these exact years is obliged to reckon with.

The book does not name it. "Third Period" appears once, and it refers to a phase of the C.I.O., not to the Comintern. "Social-fascism" does not appear at all. The Trade Union Unity League is described — its founding in 1929, Foster's stewardship, its programme — but as a straightforward drive to "organize the unorganized," with none of the sectarian doctrine that produced it and none of the damage it did. The 1935 turn to the united front then arrives as pure discovery: "The Seventh Congress of the Comintern worked out such a new political line in the summer of 1935," a line "calling for the establishment of a united front of the working class." A reader of this book would never guess that the "new political line" was the repudiation of the old one, or that the old one had branded as "social-fascists" the very socialists with whom the Party now sought unity.

Here again the contemporaneous record supplies what the book removes, and it does so in the same July 1934 issue of *The New Internationalist*. Arne Swabeck, quoting the American

party's own convention theses, records that the Party had proclaimed "the open Fascism of the AF of L" and had drawn from it the conclusion that its "most fundamental task in mass work is the building of the revolutionary unions of the Trade Union Unity League." He records that the 1930 thesis had classed together, as varieties of Fascism, "the AF of L, the Socialist party and the Muste group." This is the doctrine under which the Party greeted the Toledo and Minneapolis strikers — led by "the Muste group" and by expelled Trotskyists — as enemies. The Progress book credits the Party with Toledo and mourns the sectarianism nowhere. It cannot, because to name the Third Period as sectarian error would be to concede that the Party's line was not the ripening of an objective process but an instruction from Moscow, reversible overnight when Moscow reversed it.

The one place the book does confront a Comintern reversal is the "Negro question," and the way it manages the confrontation is the tell. In 1928 the Sixth Congress of the Comintern imposed on the American party the doctrine of "self-determination in the Black Belt" — the position that Black Americans constituted an oppressed nation entitled, in the Southern counties where they formed a majority, to a separate state. The book quotes the theses: "In those regions of the South in which compact Negro masses are living, it is essential to put forward the slogan of the right to self-determination for Negroes." And then, writing forty years on and after the Soviet position had itself changed, it repudiates the line: "The self-determination slogan stemmed from an incorrect definition of the Negro population as a nation having the right to create an independent state." It blames the adoption on individuals — "the Pepper group," "some American Communists" — and it credits the Party with correcting itself, noting that when "the Communist Party withdrew the slogan of national self-determination" this helped it establish closer unity with Black organisations.

Every clause of that is arranged to protect one proposition: that the Party is the subject of its own history, adopting errors through wayward individuals and shedding them through its own maturing wisdom. What the arrangement cannot say is that the 1928 slogan was Comintern doctrine, defended by the Party for years against its own better organisers, and that it was dropped not because the Party grew wiser but because the line changed — the same mechanism, exactly, as the Third Period and the Popular Front. When the Party is wrong, in this book, the error is a named man's deviation. When the line reverses, the reversal is the Party's insight. The one thing that never happens is that the Party receives an instruction and obeys it.

This is what makes the book a document of its doctrine rather than a history of its subject, and it is worth naming the test precisely, because the point is not that the book uses hard words about Cannon or Muste. It does — Cannon and his supporters are "expelled from the Party as splitters and disrupters," Muste is a "social-reformist," Norman Thomas's socialists show their "opportunist essence" — but so did the anti-Stalinist left use hard words about its opponents; harsh language is not the finding. The finding is that the book's central category, the Party-as-vanguard, is one that can never be turned on the Party itself. The Party's opponents deviate, split, betray, adapt; the Party errs only through infiltrators and is always, in the end, the continuous revolutionary thread — "the consistent fight of the Communist Party of the United States all through its history," as the book puts it. No act the Party performed — not the sectarianism that isolated it from the 1934 strikes, not the overnight reversals dictated from abroad — is ever allowed to count against the thread. A history whose organising category cannot be applied to its own protagonist is not a history. It is a theology with footnotes, and the footnotes, to repeat, are often real.

The construction shows even at the point of origin. "The Communist Party of the United States was founded on September 1, 1919," the book states — one date, one vanguard. Its own narrative a few pages earlier says otherwise: the left wing of the Socialist Party, expelled and splitting, held two rival founding conventions on consecutive days in Chicago, one founding "a new party to be called the Communist Labor Party of America" on 31 August, the other proclaiming the Communist Party of America on 1 September, both built overwhelmingly out of the foreign-language federations, and "Attempts to bring the two communist conventions together" failed. The party the book traces as a single continuous thread began as two threads, underground, speaking mostly languages other than English, and did not securely unify for years. The book records the facts and then, in its framing, quietly resolves them into the one clean birth the vanguard thesis requires.

So the honest way to read this book is to take the research and discard the vanguard. The chapters on the 1919 upsurge, on the wage and membership statistics, on the sharecroppers and the plantation terror, on the discrimination fought inside the A.F.L., on the sit-down strikes of 1936–37 and the founding of the C.I.O., are the work of historians who did the reading and cited their sources. The chapters and passages that touch the Party's rivals and the Party's own zigzags — the 1934 strikes, the Trade Union Unity League, the Black Belt line, the silent passage from Third Period to Popular Front — are the work of

the same historians writing under a constraint they could not name, and must be read against the record.

The record is available and, for once in this series, it is contemporaneous. The New International began publication in July 1934 — its early volumes, before the 1940 split that took the magazine away from the Fourth International's own tradition, carry the American Trotskyists writing in the moment — and its very first issue contains both Cannon's account of the Minneapolis strike he helped lead and Swabeck's dissection of the Party's Third Period line, quoted above by volume, number and date. For the strikes at book length, the American reader should go to James P. Cannon's *The History of American Trotskyism* and to Farrell Dobbs's *Teamster Rebellion*, the account of Minneapolis by one of its organisers; neither is in the present editor's hands to quote, but both are named here so the reader can find them. What this volume removed, those books restore: a strike, a leadership, a party, and the small awkward fact that the decisive year of the American labour decade was opened not by the vanguard this book was written to celebrate, but by the people it was written to forget.

USSR State Industry During the Transition Period

How Soviet industry was actually administered from 1917 to 1932 - the Supreme Economic Council, the trusts, the syndicates, the credit reform - reconstructed from the state economic archives.

Y. Avdakov and V. Borodin

Introduction to the 1977 Edition

Y. Avdakov and V. Borodin's USSR State Industry During the Transition Period is, on its face, a work of institutional economic history: a close study of how the Soviet state built the machinery to run its factories between the October Revolution and the abolition of the Supreme Economic Council in January 1932. It follows the offices, statutes and reorganisations — the Supreme Economic Council and its chief committees, the trusts, the syndicates, the credit reform, the shift from economic councils to branch People's Commissariats. It is drawn, as the authors say, from "a study of documents in the Central State Archive of the USSR National Economy and in the Central State Archive of the October Revolution," and much of what it reconstructs from those documents is genuinely useful and available in English almost nowhere else. It is also, in a way its administrative surface is designed not to show, a book about the greatest economic argument in the history of the transition — an argument it settles by pretending it never happened.

The date, and the commission

The spine reads 1977, and unusually for this series the text is close to its cover date. The latest events and citations reach into the early 1970s — 1974 is the newest year cited — so the Russian original was written in the mid-1970s and the English translation, by Jane Sayer, followed promptly. This is a Brezhnev-era book, and it reads like one.

It is worth asking who commissioned it and why, because the authors tell you in their first two pages and the answer is not "the Western reader." Avdakov and Borodin open by insisting that their study of the 1920s "is not only of historical significance." The reason is contemporary: "In recent years, much has been written in bourgeois literature about the economic reform in the USSR and the other socialist countries. Bourgeois critics try to prove, for example, that the idea of production amalgamations has been borrowed from the

capitalist world. In fact, this idea appeared immediately after the Great October Socialist Revolution." The tell is the word amalgamations. Throughout the book the 1920s trusts and syndicates are held up as the ancestors of "present-day production amalgamations." In 1973 the Soviet government had reorganised industry around exactly such bodies — the *proizvodstvennye ob"edineniya*, the production and industrial associations that were the centrepiece of the mid-1970s management reform. Avdakov and Borodin's history is written to give that reform a Leninist pedigree: to show that the large multi-plant association is not a borrowing from the capitalist corporation but a native Soviet form present at the creation. The 1920s are being combed for precedents to a decision already taken in the 1970s. This is a genuine work of archival scholarship pressed into service as a genealogy.

That double character — real research, instrumental purpose — runs through the whole volume, and the reader who wants to use it has to hold both facts at once.

What the book teaches

The doctrine is orthodox and, within its frame, clearly argued. The Revolution abolishes private ownership of the means of production; the Supreme Economic Council (SEC, the VSNKh) is created in December 1917 as "a planning, regulating, managing and supervising agency"; nationalisation proceeds not as a spasm of the Civil War but as the deliberate economic content of the proletarian dictatorship. The book is careful and often persuasive on the institutional detail: how the chief committees of the pre-revolutionary war economy were captured and turned; how "chief administrations" for nationalised enterprises displaced the older regulatory "chief committees"; how the tangle of Plenary Board, Bureau and Presidium was resolved in favour of the Presidium; how, after the tenth Party Congress and the turn to the New Economic Policy, industry was recast around self-accounting trusts and, above them, the syndicates that handled supply and sales.

On NEP the authors are more concrete than most Progress

volumes dare to be. They take *khozraschot* — cost-accounting, rendered here as "self-financing" or "self-sufficiency" — seriously as an economic principle rather than a temporary retreat, defining it as "a method for the planned running of socialist enterprises based on economic independence and commodity-money relations." They reconstruct the credit reform of 1930 and, remarkably, criticise it: they describe the doctrinaire attempt to abolish money and the market, "setting the plan in opposition to the market," as a distortion that had to be "decisively rejected." A reader looking for the mechanics of how a nationalised industry was actually administered — the flow of authority from Council of Labour and Defence down through the SEC Presidium to trust and enterprise — will find here a level of granular reconstruction that the polemical literature rarely reaches. The stated task is honestly executed: "showing how the socialist system of industrial management took shape along with the building of the socialist economy."

The debate that is not here

And yet the transition period had a defining argument, and this book about the economics of the transition does not contain it.

The 1920s industrialisation debate was the last open, high-level economic controversy in Soviet history. Its central question was where the resources to build socialist industry would come from in a backward peasant country with no colonies to plunder and no foreign capital to borrow. On one side stood the Left Opposition and its foremost economist, Yevgeni Preobrazhensky, whose *The New Economics* (1926) argued that the state sector would have to fund its own expansion by pumping a surplus out of the private, largely peasant, economy — a process he named, provocatively, "primitive socialist accumulation," by deliberate analogy with the primitive accumulation Marx had described at the birth of capitalism. Against this stood Nikolai Bukharin, who warned that squeezing the peasant would break the *smychka*, the worker-peasant alliance on which the regime rested, and who urged that the country would move towards socialism at a snail's pace on the back of a prosperous peasantry, enriching the countryside so that its growing demand pulled industry forward. This was not a marginal quarrel. It engaged Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev on the Left; Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky on the Right; and it was conducted with real economic sophistication by a generation of Soviet economists — Preobrazhensky, Vladimir Bazarov, Vladimir Groman, Nikolai Kondratiev, the planners of Gosplan and the Commissariat of Finance — who built the categories of development economics that the rest of the world would later

rediscover.

Search Avdakov and Borodin for any of it. Preobrazhensky appears zero times. Primitive socialist accumulation appears zero times; so does socialist accumulation as a named concept, and Bukharin's snail's pace in any form. Bukharin himself — a member of the Politburo, the Party's leading theorist for most of the decade the book covers, the author of the economic line that actually governed NEP until 1928 — appears zero times. Kondratiev, Bazarov, Groman: zero. The economists who made the debate are not named, criticised, or refuted. They are simply not there.

Trotsky appears exactly five times, and the manner of his single substantive appearance is the key to the whole procedure. He surfaces not over industrialisation but over a narrower, older question — whether the nationalisations of 1917–18 were driven by economic necessity or political expediency. The authors report that "L. Trotsky, for example, considered that nationalisation was a measure not of economic expediency, but of political necessity," that Kamenev supported him, and that in doing so "the Trotskyites and other unexposed enemies of the Party and the socialist state were in fact opposing the policy of building a socialist economy." A page later Trotsky and Kamenev are folded in with "bourgeois 'specialists' on Soviet affairs." That is the sum of it. The most consequential economic thinker of the Opposition is admitted to the book only as an enemy of a proposition about 1918, and then bracketed with the class enemy. The debate that actually bore his name — the argument over tempo, over the five-year plan, over the source of accumulation — is nowhere.

The erasure is not a matter of omission alone; the book performs the omitted argument in its own voice, stripped of authorship. In its closing glossary, defining "Socialist Industrialisation of the USSR," it states plainly: "The main sources for socialist industrialisation were the incomes of nationalised industry and the accumulations of agriculture, the banking system, internal and foreign trade." The accumulations of agriculture. That is Preobrazhensky's thesis — surplus pumped from the peasant economy to build heavy industry — reproduced as settled fact, with its author unmentioned and the word he coined for it suppressed. The same entry describes the collectivisation that supplied those "accumulations" as "voluntary co-operation of the peasants' holdings." The violence of 1929–33, the deportations, the requisitioning, the famine that killed several million in Ukraine, Kazakhstan and the Volga — the historiography still contests the exact toll, with credible estimates ranging into the millions — all of it disappears into the word voluntary. The

book thus commits both halves of the operation at once: it adopts the Left Opposition's economic answer and it launders the Stalinist method of executing it, while naming neither.

It is worth being precise about the shape of this silence, because the book is not silent about opposition as such. It names the oppositions of 1918–21 freely — the "Left Communists," the anarchists, and above all the Workers' Opposition, which earns its own glossary entry as "an anti-Party anarcho-syndicalist group that emerged in 1920" that "was routed by the Communist Party." These were the safe targets: currents defeated early, associated with figures who were mostly not later elevated to the summit of the state, and so available to be condemned without embarrassment. The oppositions the book cannot name are the ones of the middle and late 1920s — the Left Opposition, the United Opposition, the Right — because to name them is to name Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Preobrazhensky and Trotsky, men the Party had raised to its highest offices and then, within a decade of the events described, shot or driven to suicide or murder in exile. The glossary that finds room for the Workers' Opposition of 1920 has no entry for the Left Opposition, for socialist accumulation, or for a single one of the economists who theorised the transition. The selection is not random. The book will condemn the opposition it can afford to remember and erase the opposition it cannot.

There is one further silence the reader should register, because it is the darkest. In reconstructing the planning apparatus of the late 1920s, Avdakov and Borodin necessarily walk past the men who staffed it. Many of those men were shot. The Gosplan and Finance Commissariat economists — Groman and Bazarov among them — were tried in the fabricated "Menshevik trial" of 1931 and destroyed. Kondratiev, whose name is now attached to the long waves of the world business cycle, was imprisoned in 1930 and executed in 1938. Preobrazhensky was shot in 1937; Bukharin in 1938 after the last great Moscow show trial. A history of Soviet industrial administration in the 1920s is, whether it wishes to be or not, a history of a cohort that the regime it praises later murdered. The book's silence on that fact is not neutral. Trotsky, who watched it happen, caught the mechanism exactly when he noted that the very engineers and economists who drew up the cautious first five-year plan "were some years later severely judged and punished by law as conscious saboteurs acting under the direction of foreign powers" — punished, he added drily, for having faithfully executed the Politburo's own line.

The reply that was made at the time

The case against this account was not composed in hindsight; it was made by the losing side while the argument was still live, and it can be read today. The indispensable text is Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), whose second chapter, "Economic Growth and the Zigzags of the Leadership," is a direct history of the industrialisation debate written by one of its principals. It records what Avdakov and Borodin cannot: that the demand for a five-year plan and for rapid industrialisation came from the Left Opposition, in 1923, and was "met with mockery"; that the ruling coalition of "Stalin, Molotov, Rykov, Tomsky, Bukharin" spent five years fighting "the advocates of 'super-industrialization' and planned leadership"; that Stalin "thundered against the 'fantastic plans' of the Opposition," insisting industry must not "rush ahead, breaking away from agriculture." And it records the reversal: when the peasant grain strike of 1928 forced the leadership's hand, "the fundamental elements" of the new plan were, in Trotsky's phrase, "borrowed in toto from the platform of the shattered Left Opposition." The men who had proposed the policy were expelled and, later, killed; the policy was adopted, at a tempo so reckless that, as Trotsky put it, "opportunism, as has often happened in history, turned into its opposite, adventurism" — the Politburo leaping from Bukharin's "tortoise tempo" to a rate that shattered the currency and the peasantry alike. Where Avdakov and Borodin present a smooth institutional unfolding of "the socialist system of industrial management," *The Revolution Betrayed* gives the record of a leadership that ridiculed the correct policy, adopted it under duress without acknowledgement, and shot its authors.

For the specifically economic questions, the reader should turn to Preobrazhensky's *The New Economics*, the theoretical statement of the case for planned industrialisation funded by the state sector's accumulation. It is the book whose central argument Avdakov and Borodin silently reproduce in their glossary. Trotsky's own contemporaneous critique of the 1929–30 turn — that it was correct in direction but catastrophic in its unplanned violence — is set out in his 1930 essay "The New Course in the Economy of the Soviet Union," written from exile as the collectivisation drive began. Read alongside the present volume, these establish what the archival surface conceals: that there was a road not taken, that it was proposed by named people on economic grounds, and that the regime chose to erase the proposal along with those who made it.

What to keep

None of this is a reason to discard the book. Its polemical frame is thin and its silences are grave, but its research is not fraudulent, and a reader who is warned about the frame can extract real value from the substance.

The institutional reconstruction is the genuine article. Avdakov and Borodin worked in the economic archives of the Soviet state, and their account of the administrative history of Soviet industry — the internal evolution of the SEC from a universal economic authority into, in effect, a Commissariat of Industry; the mechanics of the trust and syndicate systems under NEP; the composition of the chief committees and the class conflicts fought out inside them; the credit reform of 1930 and its failure — is detailed, source-based, and in English hard to find elsewhere. They cite serious specialist scholarship, including A. V. Venediktov's standard study of Soviet state industry, and they are willing, within limits, to record institutional failure: the "serious defects" of the self-financed amalgamations of 1929–30, the over-centralisation, the doctrinaire attempt to abolish market categories that had to be reversed. On the plumbing of the Soviet planned economy in its formative years — how orders actually flowed, who actually answered to whom — this is a competent and informative technical history. Used as a description of institutional forms rather than as an account of the politics that shaped them, it repays reading. The task is to read the machinery it documents while supplying, from outside it, the argument it was written to bury.

The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution, 1905-1907

Lenin's patient statistical study of Russian landholding, written after the defeat of 1905 - the Prussian road against the American road - seized by the censor in 1908 and unpublished until 1917.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

Introduction to This Edition

Lenin wrote this book in November and December 1907, in the wreckage of a defeat. The revolution of 1905 had been beaten back; in June 1907 Stolypin's coup dissolved the Second Duma and remade the franchise; the peasant risings that had shaken the countryside were over. Out of that quiet Lenin produced the most patient and statistical thing he ever wrote — not a pamphlet of the barricades but a book of land returns, a settling of accounts with the two years just past. Its ostensible subject is narrow: a quarrel inside the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party over the wording of its agrarian programme, the choice between nationalisation of the land (the Bolshevik demand — transfer to a democratic state), municipalisation (the Menshevik demand — transfer to local authorities), and the peasants' and Narodniks' own instinct for outright division among the tillers. (The Narodniks were Russia's agrarian populists; a *dessiatin*, the unit throughout, is about 2.7 acres.) The book's own fate was harsher than its subject. Printed in 1908, it was seized at the press and destroyed by the tsarist censor; a single mutilated copy survived, and the work was not published until 1917, when Lenin added the Postscript that closes it — written on 28 September, five weeks before he took power. This is the Progress Publishers edition, its text that of Volume 13 of the Collected Works.

What is strong in it is the refusal to argue from principle. "This is the course, and the only course, that a Marxist should take," Lenin writes at the outset, "unlike the petty-bourgeois socialist who proceeds from 'abstract' justice" — the course being to start from who owns what. And what they owned is the book's hammer-blow: a few tens of thousands of noble landlords held tracts to rival the holdings of ten and a half million peasant households. From that concentration Lenin builds his central figure, the "two ways" in which serfdom can be abolished in "a bourgeois country." One is the Prussian road — "the feudal-landlord economies slowly evolving into

Junker-bourgeois economies," the peasant mass pauperised, capitalism arriving from above through the landlord's estate; "that is the path that the Black-Hundred landlords, and Stolypin, their minister, have chosen." The other is the American road, the "American type of bourgeois development as against the Prussian type" — the feudal estates broken up, a free farming peasantry, "the most rapid development of the productive forces." Nationalisation, Lenin insists with disarming candour, is a demand of this second, bourgeois revolution, not yet of socialism: "At best, the revolution can have no other result than the one I have drawn." Few revolutionaries have been so exact about the limits of their own maximum programme.

Where it is weak is where the wager shows. The whole edifice rests on the peasantry behaving as a revolutionary-democratically and reaching, through its own struggle, for nationalisation. History was less tidy. When the peasants finally settled the land question themselves in 1917, they did it by seizure and equal division — the Socialist-Revolutionary programme Lenin had spent this book arguing against — and Lenin, in power, ratified their choice in the Decree on Land rather than impose his own. The 1917 Postscript already registers the shift: under the pressure of the war, he now writes, nationalisation is "a step towards socialism," no longer only the last word of the bourgeois revolution. The specific programmatic quarrel of 1907 was overtaken almost as soon as it could be printed. What was not overtaken was the book's governing intuition — that in Russia, and in every country like it, the agrarian question was not a provincial appendix to the revolution but its axis: "The essence of this question is the struggle of the peasantry to abolish landlordism and the survivals of serfdom."

Did the state that canonised the book keep faith with it? Here the reflexive turn is almost unbearable. Lenin's method throughout is to insist that the transformation of the countryside must come through the peasants' own movement, from demands "expressed with at least some degree of

freedom." Two decades later the state that printed his collected works did the opposite. The forced collectivisation of 1929–33 drove the peasantry into the kolkhoz at gunpoint, set out to liquidate the kulaks as a class, and produced the famine of 1932–33 that killed millions in Ukraine, the Volga and Kazakhstan. And the sharpest indictment of it lies in this very book. Lenin's portrait of the Prussian road — serfdom abolished "by forcibly keeping the masses down to a pauper standard of living," the peasant coerced from above so that a propertied power may modernise the land — describes Stalin's collectivisation far better than it ever described Stolypin. The muzhik who called the new collective farm a return of serfdom was reading Lenin's own category correctly. The road not taken was Lenin's last one: the New Economic Policy, the tax in kind, the smychka or worker-peasant alliance he spent his final years defending. That the book was reprinted as a classic of "the agrarian question" while the actual Soviet countryside — the passport-less peasant, the requisition, the mass grave — went unmentionable is the measure of the distance between the revolution and the apparatus that embalmed it. Trotsky named that apparatus in *The Revolution Betrayed*; the crushing of Bukharin and the Right for warning against exactly this violence was its political precondition. The degeneration lay not in Lenin's wager but in the bureaucracy's usurpation of it, and in the isolation and backwardness that made the countryside the regime's first victim.

Read back from that betrayal, the living core of the book is unmistakable. Its insistence that the peasant question is the hinge of revolution in an agrarian country was vindicated far beyond Russia — in China, in Vietnam, across the colonial and post-colonial world, wherever the land question and the national question fused into a single revolutionary charge. That fusion is the theory of permanent revolution: the democratic tasks of the agrarian revolution can be carried through only by a workers' movement leading the peasant majority, and pressed on into socialist ones — a thread Trotsky and Ernest Mandel carried forward against both imperialism and its Stalinist mirror. And the book leaves a warning its publisher could not heed: the peasant question can be solved with the peasants or committed against them, and the difference between the two is the difference between a revolution and a second serfdom. Lenin's own answer, before the icon was cast, was the alliance and not the whip. That is the Marxism worth keeping — concrete, self-critical, and clear that the land is won for the tillers or it is not won at all.

Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume II

The circulation of capital - turnover, fixed and circulating capital, and the reproduction schemes whose arithmetic later underwrote Soviet planning. Assembled by Engels from fragments Marx never finished.

Karl Marx

Introduction to This Edition

If the first volume of *Capital* became a scripture, the second became a quarry. Volume One Marx finished with his own hand and sent into the world in 1867; Volume Two he never finished at all. He left it as a heap of manuscripts — some fair copies, most fragments, the earliest written before Volume One was drafted and the latest broken off by illness — and after his death in 1883 it fell to Engels to make a book of them. What you hold is the result of that labour of love and reconstruction, first published in German in 1885 and revised in 1893, and here in the English of Progress Publishers, Moscow, in the translation of I. Lasker. It is, of the three volumes, the least read and the most consequential in ways its readers rarely notice, because the arguments buried in its driest chapters became, half a century later, the theoretical charter of an entire economic order.

Engels was candid about what he had done, and his honesty is the right place to begin. "It was no easy task," he writes in the 1885 preface, "to put the second book of *Capital* in shape for publication, and do it in a way that on the one hand would make it a connected and as far as possible complete work, and on the other would represent exclusively the work of its author, not of its editor." He tells the reader exactly how far his hand went: "changing the style only in places where Marx would have changed it himself and interpolating explanatory sentences or connecting statements only where this was absolutely necessary." No other volume of *Capital* comes to us so visibly through a second mind, and it is worth holding that fact steadily — not as a stain on the text, for Engels's editing was scrupulous and self-denying, but because a book already shaped once by an editor is a book especially easy to shape again, and the Soviet apparatus that reprinted it would shape it a second time, by deciding which of its lessons were doctrine and which were forgotten.

The subject of the volume is the circulation of capital — not the hidden abode of production where Volume One found the secret of surplus-value, but what happens to that surplus once

it is made: how capital moves through its forms and comes home enlarged. Part One follows the metamorphoses of capital through its circuits, money-capital becoming productive capital becoming commodity-capital and money again, the famous shorthand $M—C \dots P \dots C'—M'$ in which each stage is both a resting point and a passage. Part Two takes up turnover — the difference between fixed and circulating capital, the time a capital takes to complete its round, the way that time governs how much capital a business must advance. Then, in Part Three, the volume rises to its great theme: the reproduction and circulation of the aggregate social capital. Here Marx asks how a whole capitalist economy renews itself year after year — how the total product, divided between a Department I that makes means of production and a Department II that makes means of consumption, must exchange across and within the two so that everything produced finds its buyer and its use, and how, in expanded reproduction, a part of the surplus is turned back into new capital and the system grows. These reproduction schemes are the summit of the book and one of the most original things Marx ever did.

What the volume does supremely well is to make visible a truth the textbooks of his day, and ours, prefer to hide: that value must not only be produced but realised. A commodity crammed with surplus-value is worth nothing to its owner until it is sold, and the sale depends on someone, somewhere, having both the need and the money to buy. By tracing the circuit as a whole, Marx shows that capitalist production is a chain of purchases and sales any link of which can break — that a general glut, an interruption of the metamorphosis, a failure of one department to buy what the other has made, is not an accident visited on the system from outside but a possibility written into its normal working. The reproduction schemes were the first serious model of an economy as a circuit, in which one sector's output is another's input and the proportions between them must come right or the whole seizes up. Every national-income account, every input-output table, every modern argument about the balance between investment and consumption is a descendant of these chapters, whether or

not it knows its ancestry.

It is an honest introduction that also says where the volume is weak, and its weaknesses are partly Marx's and partly the manuscript's. It is genuinely difficult — arithmetical, provisional, circling back on itself, the work of a man thinking aloud rather than expounding a finished result. Its schemes are deliberate abstractions: two classes only, no foreign trade, a given technique, money that behaves itself. Marx built them to isolate a question, not to photograph a real economy, and read as photographs they mislead. And on the deepest question they raise — whether an economy growing by expanded reproduction tends of itself toward balance or toward breakdown — Marx left no verdict, only the machinery for posing it. That silence is why the same chapters could be quarried, within a generation of their publication, for opposite conclusions: Tugan-Baranovsky read them to prove that capitalism could expand without limit so long as the proportions were kept, and Rosa Luxemburg read them to prove that it could not accumulate at all without an outside to sell to. Both built on Volume Two; the volume itself refused to settle their quarrel, and the honest reader should feel the pull of the unfinished argument rather than pretend Marx had closed it.

Which brings the sharp question this driest of texts puts to the state that canonised it: was that state consistent with the book it reprinted? For no part of Marx's work was put to more direct use in the Soviet Union than the reproduction schemes of Volume Two — and none was more thoroughly turned inside out. In the great industrialisation debate of the 1920s, Soviet economists reached straight for Part Three. Preobrazhensky built his theory of "primitive socialist accumulation" on the problem of how a backward economy could pump the surplus needed to build Department I; the engineer-economist G. A. Feldman, in 1928, drew a two-sector growth model directly out of Marx's two departments and showed that the long-run rate of growth depended on the share of investment devoted to making the means of production. Out of this came the doctrine that governed every Five-Year Plan: the preferential growth of Department I, of heavy industry over consumption, dressed in the authority of Capital, Volume Two. A set of equilibrium schemes that Marx had built to analyse how capital reproduces itself became the algebra of forced accumulation in a state that called itself socialist.

The inversion is exact, and worth naming precisely. Marx's schemes describe how capital reproduces itself by pumping a surplus out of living labour and realising it through exchange; the Soviet state used the same schemes to pump a surplus out

of its own workers and, above all, its peasants — collectivisation as "primitive socialist accumulation" extracted from the countryside at a cost in famine and coercion that Preobrazhensky, who theorised the extraction, cannot have wanted and did not survive. The realisation problem that Marx had shown to be built into the circuit was "solved" by command, and returned in the form the command economy could not admit: chronic shortage, the queue, the warehouse of unsaleable goods, the disproportions between the departments reappearing not as crises of overproduction but as permanent scarcity of the things people actually needed. Meanwhile the volume's deepest lesson — that production is pointless until its product is realised in use, that output for its own sake is a fetish — was precisely what plan-fulfilment measured in gross tonnage was built to ignore. The book whose whole burden is that value must find its way to a human need was made the warrant for an economy that produced steel to make machines to make more steel.

And the debate that might have kept the volume honest was closed the way such debates were closed. The Bolshevik economists who argued reproduction and planning theory with real freedom in the 1920s — Preobrazhensky, Bukharin, the whole brilliant generation — were shot in the purges; Feldman's model was buried and rediscovered only decades later in the West. To cite Volume Two became compulsory and to think with it became dangerous, which is the unfailing signature of reification: a living argument frozen into an icon so that no one need argue any longer. This is no charge against Marx, and none against the revolution that first raised his work to a banner. A backward and encircled country genuinely did face the problem Volume Two anatomises — how to build the means of production from a low base — and the tragedy is that a real problem was answered by a bureaucracy that had usurped the workers' power and could brook no rival reading of the texts it recited. It was Trotsky, in *The Revolution Betrayed*, and after him Ernest Mandel, whose *Marxist Economic Theory* takes the reproduction schemes seriously as living tools, who did what the manuals forbade: they turned Marx's analysis of realisation and disproportion on the Soviet economy itself, and asked whose surplus the plan was pumping and why its proportions never came right.

So what is Volume Two worth now, past the state that mined it and the plans it was made to justify? It is worth exactly what it always was and was never allowed to be: not a planners' handbook, not the charter of Department I, but the anatomy of capital in motion. Its object has not gone away. Value must still be realised, and our world of gluts and idle capacity and demand propped up by debt is the realisation problem Marx

traced through the circuit, playing out on a global scale he could only glimpse. The proportions between the departments still have to come right, and still do not; the crises still arrive where the metamorphosis breaks. Read as Marx wrote it and Engels assembled it, this most forbidding of the three volumes is a workshop for seeing the disproportions and the breakdowns of the economy we actually live in — and, turned homeward as Trotsky turned it, the measure of how far a "planned" economy that still extracted surplus, still deferred the consumer, and still fetishised output remained a distorted mirror of the very thing Marx set out to dissect. The living current in this book is simply Volume Two put back to work.