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INTERNATIONALISM

The International Working-Class Movement: Problems of History and Theory, Volume 1

The birth of the workers' movement treated as a single international story - Luddism, Lyons, the Silesian weavers, Owen, Chartism and the founding of the First International - introduced by the head of the CPSU's International Department.

A. S. Chernyayev and others

Introduction to the 1980 Edition

Seven volumes were planned. This is the first, it runs to some 292,000 words, and it stops around 1870. Its subject is Luddism, the Lyons silk-weavers of 1831 and 1834, the Silesian weavers of 1844, Owen's communities, Cabet and Dézamy, Chartism, the League of the Just, the June days in Paris, and the founding of the International Working Men's Association. The publisher is the USSR Academy of Sciences, through its Institute of the International Working-Class Movement, a body set up in Moscow in 1966 to do exactly what its name says. The general editorial committee has twenty-one members. And on the title page, above every one of them: Introduction by Academician B. N. Ponomarev.

That is the fact to hold on to, because nothing in the volume's subject matter would lead you to expect it. Boris Ponomarev was a Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU and, for three decades, the head of its International Department — the office that ran Moscow's relations with every communist party outside the Soviet bloc. He is not a scholar who happens to hold rank. He is the rank, writing an introduction, and his introduction is not about the nineteenth century. It is about what the seven volumes are for.

Note the dates first. The Russian text carries a 1976 copyright; the English translation is Progress's, by Yuri Shirokov and Campbell Creighton, dated 1980. The internal evidence agrees with the earlier date. Ponomarev cites the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties of 1969 four times, Brezhnev's Following Lenin's Course in its 1975 Progress edition, and, as the freshest achievement he can name, "the successful completion of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe" — Helsinki, August 1975. The Twenty-Fifth Congress of February 1976 is not mentioned anywhere in the book. So this is a document of the high détente, written at the moment the CPSU believed the

terms of the world had been settled in its favour, and it reached English readers in 1980, four months or so after the Soviet Army entered Afghanistan and the settlement collapsed. A sentence like "a turn has been achieved from the cold war to détente, to relations based on the principle of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems" was already a period piece when the English edition was bound.

What is the commission? Ponomarev states it in his second and third pages, and he states it plainly enough that no paraphrase is needed. Marxist scholarship, he concedes, has done well on national labour movements, on the history of socialist thought, on the international organisations. What is missing is synthesis: "the demand for works summing up the international experience of revolutionary labour struggle at its different stages ... works interpreting the past in the interest of the present and future, has not been satisfied and continues to grow." Interpreting the past in the interest of the present and future. That is the brief, issued by the man with the authority to issue it, and it is at least honest. The seven volumes are not commissioned to find out what happened. They are commissioned to supply a usable past to the parties the International Department corresponded with.

The shape of that past is set out in the introduction's central passage, where Ponomarev divides the whole history into periods. Origins to the industrial revolution. The Paris Commune of 1871, opening the next period. The turn of the century and imperialism, when "two currents finally developed in the international working-class movement at the turn of the century: the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist, and the reformist, opportunist one." 1905. Then October 1917, at length. Then the founding of the Communist International in 1919, which gets exactly one sentence: "In 1919 the Communist International was set up, which was called upon to accelerate the formation of revolutionary parties, thereby giving the labour movement the ultimate weapon for victory over capitalism." And then, immediately, this:

The next period in the history of the international labour movement was ushered in by the rout of the fascist Axis powers in the Second World War (1939-1945).

Between those two sentences lie the years 1919 to 1945, and they are not a period. They are a hinge. What falls into the gap is the entire history of the organisation the seven volumes exist to celebrate. The word "Comintern" does not appear in this book. "Communist International" appears three times in 292,000 words, twice in the passage above and once in a doctrinal aside. There is no Third Period and no "social fascism"; no united front; no Popular Front except a single approving reference to the Seventh Congress; no Spain, no POUM, no Nin; no Molotov and no Ribbentrop; no dissolution of the International in May 1943, and no reason given for it, since it is not said to have happened. The name Stalin occurs zero times. So does Hitler's, except once as an adjective — "The defeat of Hitler Germany". The years 1933, 1936 and 1937 appear in this volume only as the imprint dates of books in the footnotes.

A companion introduction in this series made the same count on *The World Communist Movement* (1973) — Stalin, Hitler, Dimitrov, Cominform, 1943, 1937 all at zero across 158,000 words — and asked whether an Academy of Sciences volume seven years later would do better. The honest answer is that the question is partly unfair to this book and entirely fair to its introduction. Volume One ends in 1870; it has no business discussing 1937. Ponomarev's introduction, by contrast, is a survey of all seven volumes and runs from the sixteenth century to the year of writing, and it is there that the erasure operates. The two books share names on their mastheads. V. V. Zagladin, the International Department official whose presence fixed the institutional address of *The World Communist Movement*, sits on this book's general editorial committee. So does P. N. Fedoseyev, whom Intercontinental Press in April 1972 named in the same sentence as Ponomarev, pairing his Pravda article of 5 December 1971 with Ponomarev's in *Kommunist* as "a significant part of this 'ideological' buttressing work". This is not a coincidence of personnel. It is the same office.

One passage in the introduction is worse than silence, because it inverts. Explaining why reformism is dangerous, Ponomarev turns to Germany:

This was the case, for instance, in Germany in the period after the First World War, where the repeated stay of Social-Democracy in power (for more than ten years in all) was followed by the rapid sliding of the political situation

to the right, culminating in the government takeover by the Nazi party. This was made possible to no small extent by the myopic position of the then leaders of German Social-Democracy, who had concentrated their efforts on the struggle against the Communist Party and shut their eyes to the actual, mortal danger from the right.

Every clause of the indictment is true of the SPD leadership, and every clause is also true of the KPD, which is the party the sentence exists to protect. Concentrating one's efforts on the struggle against the other workers' party while shutting one's eyes to the danger from the right is a precise description of the line adopted at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in 1928, hardened at the Tenth Plenum of its Executive in 1929, and enforced on the German party from Moscow: that social democracy and fascism were twins, and that a united front against Hitler was therefore excluded in principle. The KPD polled just under six million votes in November 1932 and was destroyed within months of 30 January 1933 without a general strike being called. The charge Ponomarev levels at the SPD is the charge the anti-Stalinist left levelled at both parties while it could still have mattered, and the sustained version of it is in Trotsky's German writings of 1930–33, of which the 1932 pamphlet *What Next?* is the central text. Nothing in this book acknowledges that the argument was ever made.

The name Trotsky occurs exactly three times in 292,000 words, and only once as a man. In the chapter on the development of Marxism in the 1850s and early 1860s, the discussion of uninterrupted revolution turns aside to say that Trotsky "advanced the adventuristic scheme of progress by leaps over its developmental stages", and that his denial of socialism in one country was "tantamount to an appeal for the restoration of capitalism in Soviet Russia." That formula — dissent as a plea for capitalist restoration — is the formula of the Moscow Trials, printed by an Academy institute in a book about the eighteen-forties. The second occurrence, two paragraphs later, convicts the Chinese leadership of having "fully embraced the Trotskyite variety of 'permanent revolution'" and of using it "to justify the purge of sound proletarian forces opposed to Maoism" — the only place in the volume where a communist party is said to have purged communists, and, exactly as in *The World Communist Movement*, it is about China. The third is the chapter on the ideological struggle, where the "intolerance" charge against Marx, first made by Bakunin, is said to have had "their ranks reinforced by neo-anarchists, neo-Trotskyists, and Maoists".

More striking is the machinery that surrounds the name

without using it. Ponomarev devotes several pages to "left" opportunism, and gives it a checklist: ostentatious slogans, adventurism, "social orientation on the petty-bourgeois strata and the lumpen-proletariat", hostility to the organised mass of the working class. He then joins the two deviations at the hip: "Their most typical common platform is anti-communism and anti-Sovietism." Anyone who has read the Soviet polemical literature of the previous decade will recognise the apparatus. It was Ponomarev who built it. In *Kommunist* No. 18 for 1971 he published a twenty-one-page article, subtitled "Trotskyism — Weapon of Anti-Communism", over the designation Sekretar' TsK KPSS, and it set the directives that the specialist anti-Trotskyist authors of the 1970s then executed. The Fourth International noticed at once. George Saunders reviewed it in *Intercontinental Press* on 24 January 1972 under the heading "Ponomarev's Directives on How to Meet Growing Threat of Resurgent 'Trotskyism'", observing that "the Kremlin leaders have made a major move to upgrade the status of the anti-Trotskyist campaign", that the rank was displayed so that "no one will underestimate the importance of the article", and that the essay's real message was defensive: "The main thrust of Ponomarev's article can be paraphrased this way: 'The Trotskyists are not more to the left than we are.'" The same footnote lists a decade of prior Soviet attacks by Basmanov, Mikesin, Ognev and Suslov. The man who wrote that article wrote this introduction, four or five years later, in a calmer register and for a more respectable audience. The categories did not change.

Now set the introduction aside, because the book underneath it is a different thing altogether, and a reader told otherwise would be badly served.

Volume One is real historical scholarship, and in places it is excellent. It rests on primary sources — the *Northern Star* for 21 May and 9 July 1842, *The Times* for 3 and 4 May 1842, the *London Chartist Monthly Magazine*, *Chartist Tracts for the Times* (Leeds, 1850), *Der Bund der Kommunisten: Dokumente und Materialien*, and manuscript material from the Central Party Archives — and it argues with the international literature rather than ignoring it. E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* is cited a dozen times and treated as authoritative; on the Manchester massacre of 1819 the book says outright that "The progressive British historian E. P. Thompson quite reasonably said about the Peterloo events: 'There is no term for this but class war.'" Hobsbawm supplies the power-loom figures, the argument of "The Machine-Breakers" and the comparison in *Primitive Rebels*; Malcolm Thomis's *The Luddites* (1970) is cited beside Thompson on machine-breaking; George Rudé is used on the

social composition of the Paris crowds, Albert Soboul on the *sans-culottes*, Mathiez, the Hammonds, the Webbs, G. D. H. Cole, Jürgen Kuczynski, Norman Ware on the American industrial worker. Whatever else it is, this is not a book written by people who read only in Russian.

The Chartist chapters are the best thing in it. They are unsentimental in a way the introduction never is. Chartism is called "a kind of a prologue to the later history of the international working-class movement", but the chapter on Chartist ideology then says squarely that "The Chartists, however, could not explain scientifically the essence of capitalist exploitation", that they took the propertied monopoly of the suffrage to be the sole source of injustice, and that the social order they envisaged "was to incorporate many major categories of bourgeois society: private property, wage labour and capital, purchase and sale of labour power." It quotes the National Petition of 1842 promising "the security of property and the prosperity of commerce", and the Manchester mechanics' address asking for "security to capital" and "confidence and good-will betwixt employers and workmen". It also refuses the condescension that usually accompanies such findings: "The Chartists had never been maniacs obsessed with one idea. They supported the struggle against capital." That is a historian's sentence, not a functionary's.

There is one attribution worth querying. The book claims that "Chartism won a great achievement for the working class — the legislative institution of a 10-hour working day in June 1847", conceding in the same breath that the Act formally covered only women and young persons. The Act of June 1847 was the fruit of the Ten Hours campaign, a cross-class alliance that ran alongside Chartism and often against it, and its effect was largely defeated by relay working until the amending Act of 1850. The credit is real but it is not Chartism's alone, and the book's habit of collapsing every gain into the account of the proletariat as such is the one place where its politics visibly bends its evidence. A smaller instance: in the chapter on utopian socialism, the section on Russia runs to eight pages and the section on the United States to two, in a period when Russia's proletariat barely existed and America's did.

The volume's other genuine surprise is that it narrates a split honestly. After the defeats of 1848 the Communist League divided, and the book names the faction — "the Schapper-Willich faction" — and quotes Marx's own words against the minority from the Central Committee meeting of 15 September 1850: "The point of view of the minority is dogmatic instead of critical, idealistic instead of materialistic." It then follows the sequel through police testimony of

December 1853. Compare the Institute of Marxism-Leninism's unsigned preface to *The Hague Congress of the First International* (Progress, 1976), examined elsewhere in this series, which contrives across nine pages never to tell the reader that Bakunin was expelled. This book does not have that problem in Part Two, and where Bakunin is concerned it does not yet have the opportunity: the volume stops in 1870, two years short of *The Hague*.

What it does with Bakunin in the meantime is hostile but mostly factual. The account of the International Alliance of Socialist Democracy is accurate on the sequence — the open Alliance refused admission by the General Council because it claimed to be an independent international organisation, the Geneva section admitted once the Alliance was declared dissolved, the secret Alliance behind it, the Jura sections, the Chaux-de-Fonds congress of 1870 — and it concedes more than it had to. Bakuninism, we are told, "had a dual and contradictory character", expressing the state of mind of masses "rightless, and impoverished by the development of large-scale industry". What the account cannot allow is that Bakunin joined the International for any reason of his own: "Right from the start, however, he regarded the International's already formed organisation simply as a field for his activity." The motive is settled in advance, and the reader is spared the trouble of weighing it. The register that will govern Volume Two is visible in the later chapter, where the line runs from Bakunin's followers directly to "neo-anarchists, neo-Trotskyists, and Maoists" who "are trying to erect schisms and splits into a 'law' of the proletarian movements' evolution." One nineteenth-century quarrel, one twentieth-century enemies list.

Where should a reader go for the other side? For the period this volume actually covers, sparsely — the anti-Stalinist left wrote less about Chartism than about anything else, and the archives that accompany this series contain almost nothing on it. Trotsky's fullest treatment, *Where Is Britain Going?* (1925), is not in them. What survives in fragments is worth having anyway, because it is the same judgement reached without the apparatus. In "Through What Stage Are We Passing?" (1924) he describes how "there developed in the second third of last century the stormy movement of the working class which is known as Chartism", and explains its failure by the maturity and world power of the British bourgeoisie, "crumbs from which it shared with the upper strata of the working class". In "The British Election and the Communists" (10 November 1931) he sets the English worker's deference against his insurrectionary capacity — a class that "drags in its thoughts" a load of "humiliation, conservatism, bigotry, conciliation" and

is "at the same time capable of grand revolutionary insurrections (Chartism, pre-war movements of 1911, movements following the war, the strike movements of 1926)". Three days earlier, in "Tasks of the Left Opposition in England and India", he wrote of the trade unions that "They gloriously participated in the Chartist Movement" and that "A number of trade unions entered the First International." Where the two traditions disagree is not about the facts of 1838 or 1848.

They disagree about what a revolutionary organisation may do to its minorities, and about whether history may be written backwards from the verdict. For the first, the honest place to start is the Hague documents themselves, which this series also republishes. For the second — for the specific charge that Ponomarev's book makes in passing about leaping over stages — the reply was published in 1928 and is in this series' library: *The Third International After Lenin*, chapter III, where Trotsky answers the Executive Committee of the Comintern for "condemning mechanically any 'skipping over the bourgeois-democratic stage' and by endeavoring to guide the historical process in accordance with circular letters", and asks the question the 1976 formula still cannot face: "If we are to understand by the bourgeois-democratic stage, the accomplishment of the agrarian revolution by means of a 'democratic dictatorship,' then it was the October Revolution itself that audaciously 'skipped' over the bourgeois-democratic stage. Should it not be condemned for it?"

One last negative finding, and it is not to the Fourth International's credit. The Institute of the International Working-Class Movement, its director T. T. Timofeyev, and this seven-volume edition are not mentioned once in *Intercontinental Press* across the whole run from 1968 to 1986, nor in *International Viewpoint*, nor in *Inprecor*. Ponomarev the polemicist was read and answered within weeks. Ponomarev the commissioning editor of a serious history of the nineteenth-century workers' movement went unnoticed. The polemics were easier to fight, and they were the part of the operation that mattered least.

Read Ponomarev's thirty-odd pages, then, as what they are: an unusually candid statement of what a state wanted a history to be for, signed by the official who wanted it. Then turn to page 41 and read the historians. They were working under him, they knew what could not be written, and within the years they were given — 1500 to 1870, where no faction had a stake and no one had been shot for a wrong answer — they did the job properly. It is the only volume of the seven where that was possible, and the reason it was possible is the reason the

introduction had to be written by someone else.

The Komsomol: Questions and Answers

The Komsomol explained to sympathetic young foreigners in a hundred questions and answers - admission, the Pioneers, the labour brigades, military-patriotic education - with an English stylist hired to make the case land.

D. Polyakova

Introduction to the 1980 Edition

This is a catechism. Progress Publishers issued it in English in 1980 under the title *The Komsomol: Questions and Answers*, and it is exactly what the title says: something over a hundred questions, grouped into six chapters, each followed by an answer of a paragraph to several pages. There is no single author. The title page credits five writers — Andrei Andreyev, Vladimir Krivoruchenko, Victor Moshnyaga, Dolores Polyakova and Stanislav Chibiryayev — with Polyakova as compiler, Alex Timofeyev as translator and Angus Roxburgh as style editor. That last credit matters more than it looks. Progress put a native English speaker over the prose because the book was not written for Russians. It was an export product, and knowing who it was exported to explains nearly everything else about it.

Start with the date, because the spine misleads. The English edition is 1980 and the Russian imprint carries the same year, but the book's evidence stops earlier. The current party congress throughout is the Twenty-Fifth, of 1976, cited four times; the Twenty-Sixth, of February 1981, is naturally absent, but so is any event of 1979 beyond a passing reference to that year's Supreme Soviet elections. The latest Komsomol congress discussed is the Eighteenth, of 1978, and the most recent anniversary celebrated is the League's sixtieth, of October 1978. The Tenth Five-Year Plan, 1976–1980, is described as in progress and its targets as still to be met; 1980 itself appears only as a date in the future, the year of Lenin's 110th anniversary and of school-building quotas yet to be filled. This is a manuscript written in 1978 or 1979 and published in English in 1980. The distinction is not pedantry. It means the book almost certainly went to press before Soviet troops entered Afghanistan in December 1979, and the authors cannot fairly be accused of concealing a war that had not begun. It also means the book was on the shelves throughout that war. The copy from which this text was digitised carries a Los Angeles Public Library date stamp of 13 May 1983.

Who is asking the questions? Not a Soviet teenager. The introductory essay addresses "the progressive and democratically-minded young people of the world," describes the campaigns of "young people in the capitalist countries," and worries that their protest "quite often" becomes "spontaneous and assumes politically immature forms." The imagined reader is a young Western or third-world leftist, sympathetic in principle, who has encountered hostile accounts and would like them answered. You can reconstruct that reader from the questions themselves, because several are transparently other people's accusations put into interrogative form. One chapter asks whether the All-Union March through the sites of military glory gives grounds "to claim that this is a form of 'para-military training' of young people," and answers that "there is absolutely no reason to allege" it, "as some bourgeois Sovietologists claim." Another concedes that critics "claim, in particular, that the mass participation of young people in shock-work construction projects is not based on enthusiasm but is a direct result of the 'pressure' applied by the Party and Komsomol organs," and replies: "But this is very far from the truth." The book is a briefing document for friendly foreigners on how to answer the other side.

That format produces one exchange which is worth the price of the volume:

Is it obligatory for young people to join the Komsomol? No, certainly not. The Komsomol is a voluntary organisation.

Hold that answer against the book's own arithmetic. Membership stands at "almost 38 million." "Some 60 per cent of the Soviet Union's younger generation are Komsomol members." "Over 140 million have passed" through it since 1918. A voluntary organisation containing three-fifths of everyone in its age band is a curious kind of voluntary. And the book states, without embarrassment, what the League was for at the top end: "The second Komsomol function is to be a reserve pool for the CPSU," and "of all public organisations operating in the Soviet Union, only the Komsomol has the right to recommend its members for CPSU membership." Over

thirteen million people, it records, joined the Party on a Komsomol recommendation. This is the career ladder, described accurately, in the vocabulary of vanguard training rather than of advancement.

The honest thing to say about the Komsomol is that both halves were true at once, and that the book gives you one half plainly and refuses to set it beside the other. It was a genuine mass organisation which did real things, and it was the ante-room to a career, and for most of the 38 million the two were not experienced as separate. The book cannot admit the second because it has assigned that motive to a different category altogether. The word "careerism" occurs four times, always as a vice: the moral code demands "intolerance of injustice, idleness, untruthfulness, careerism and money-grubbing," and Komsomol organisations combat "individualism and egocentrism, untruthfulness and careerism, tale-bearing and boot-licking." Careerism is a personal failing of narrow-minded individuals. That membership might be the rational precondition of a place at university or a promotion is never raised, and cannot be, because the question does not exist in the book's moral universe. The corresponding silence is total: the words "expel" and "expulsion" do not appear anywhere in the text. A book of a hundred questions about an organisation of 38 million never asks what happened to a member who was thrown out — which was, for anyone with ambitions, the end of them.

The deeper falsification is historical, and it takes two forms: an organisation that disappears, and a generation that is never named.

The Young Communist International is founded in this book with some ceremony. The Komsomol Central Committee, six weeks after the Comintern's establishment, "issued an appeal to convene the founding congress of the Young Communist International"; the YCI "was set up on 20 November 1919, with active organisational and political support from the Komsomol." It reappears in the 1930s, when winning young people from fascism "became one of the major tasks of the Young Communist International and the Leninist Young Communist League." Then it stops. There is no third mention. The narrative moves through 1942 and 1943 to the founding of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, and the organisation whose birth was described twice simply ceases to be referred to. The two occurrences of "disband" in the whole book both concern the Anti-Fascist Committee of Soviet Youth, wound up in 1956.

What is missing is that the YCI was dissolved in 1943

alongside the Comintern, a gesture to Moscow's wartime allies. It is instructive to check this against the companion volume in this same series, Victor Privalov's volume on the Young Communist International (Progress, 1971) — a book of sixty thousand words whose entire subject is the YCI. Its proportions are themselves an answer: some fifty thousand words carry the story from the nineteenth-century socialist youth movement as far as 1921, and seven thousand cover everything from 1922 to 1970 — so barely two of the detailed years are years in which the YCI actually existed. Privalov does mention the dissolution, once, in a sentence built to carry as little weight as possible:

Judging it inexpedient to maintain a single centre for the international working-class movement because this partly gave rise to bourgeois slander about "Moscow's interference" in other countries' internal affairs, the Executive Committee of the Communist International adopted a resolution on May 15, 1943, to disband the Third Communist International. This decision, approved by the Communist parties of the world and the Young Communist International, meant that the international communist youth organisation would also cease to exist as a section of the Communist International.

Even here the YCI does not act; it approves, and then ceases to exist as a subordinate clause of somebody else's decision. And the reason given is the offence taken by bourgeois slanderers. In the 1980 volume, aimed at a younger and less specialist reader, even that sentence has gone.

The second silence is heavier. The Komsomol of the 1920s was a real site of political argument, and this book knows it. It devotes a full question to the subject — "What opponents did the Communist Party have to fight while spreading its influence on the youth?" — and the answer catalogues the positions with some accuracy: the theory of "equal footing" between Party and League, the theory of Komsomol "neutrality," the "contracting parties" principle, and the "youth syndicalists" who wanted councils of young workers outside the League. These were genuine debates about whether a communist youth organisation was an instrument of the party or a political body in its own right, and they were argued out by people who believed the answer mattered.

The book resolves them by attribution. "It is a known fact that in his fight against the Communist Party and Leninism, Trotsky set the youth against the Party apparatus and the veteran Party cadre, hardened in the revolutionary struggle, calling the youth 'the Party's most sensitive instrument' and

referring to the students as 'the barometer of the revolution.'" Note the quotation marks, and note that they are unsupported. This is a heavily annotated book — 130 footnotes, 23 of them citing Lenin's Collected Works to volume and page. The two phrases attributed to Trotsky carry no reference at all. The reader is given words inside quotation marks and no way to find them, in a volume that documents Lenin scrupulously.

Then the opposition is filed: at the outset the Komsomol had to fight "the Trotskyites and other Right-wing opposition groups." The Left Opposition has been reclassified as right-wing, in a sentence that also disposes of the actual Right Opposition by never mentioning it. Bukharin's name does not occur in this book. Neither does Zinoviev's, nor Kamenev's, nor Stalin's except once in the name of a tractor works at Stalingrad.

Most striking of all: not one leader of the Komsomol before the living incumbent is named. Not Lazar Shatskin, who chaired the founding congress and helped build the YCI. Not Nikolai Chaplin, general secretary through the middle 1920s. Not Alexander Kosarev, who ran the organisation from 1929 to 1938 and whose name was attached to everything the book celebrates about the first five-year plans. Shatskin, Chaplin and Kosarev were all arrested and shot in the Terror. The book covers sixty years of an organisation and can name two of its officials: Boris Pastukhov, the First Secretary in post when it was written, and Leonid Brezhnev, who was not one. The generation that built the thing has been removed from the account of it, and the removal is seamless — a reader would not know there was anything to look for.

The reply was written at the time, and it is specific. Trotsky devoted a section of *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) to exactly this subject: chapter 7, "Family, Youth and Culture," part 2, "The Struggle Against the Youth." He is describing the Komsomol congress of April 1936:

Moreover, it soon became clear that this carefully sifted and selected congress was called at this time exclusively for the purpose of a political expropriation of the youth. According to the new constitution the Communist Youth League is now even juridically deprived of the right to participate in the social life of the country.

And on the reasoning offered:

"We have no need of any second party." This argument reveals the fact that in the opinion of the ruling circles the Communist Youth League, if it is not decisively strangled, threatens to become a second party.

His account of the result is the direct answer to this book's silence about its own leaders: "All who are outstanding and unsubmissive in the ranks of the young are systematically destroyed, suppressed or physically exterminated. This explains the fact that out of the millions upon millions of Communist youth there has not emerged a single big figure." Written in 1936, before Kosarev was taken.

Trotsky also set out the three courses available to a young person in that situation — "participate in the bureaucracy and make a career; submit silently to oppression, retire into economic work, science or their own petty personal affairs; or, finally, go underground." That first road is the one the 1980 volume denounces as "careerism" while describing its institutional machinery in detail. Writing on 16 April 1936 in the *Bulletin of the Opposition*, in the same weeks as that Komsomol congress, he put the political conclusion in a sentence: "Bonapartism is afraid of the youth; we must rally it to the banner of Marx and Lenin." The Fourth International's press continued the analysis into the war years; writing in *Fourth International* in August 1941, John G. Wright observed that "the Komsomols — the Russian YCL — were erased as a political organization in 1936," and in July 1941 that the League "has been purged more frequently and savagely than any other branch of the apparatus." By October 1943 Wright was reporting in the same journal that the village Komsomol, "reorganized so many times in the past, must be rebuilt from scratch" — and quoting *Pravda's* own account of a district in Tadjikistan where, of 52 primary Komsomol organisations, "more than half of them exist only on paper."

None of which means the book is worthless, and a reader told that everything here is a lie will be badly served. A great deal of what it describes was real, and some of it was admirable.

The material provision was not invented. Higher education was free and financed from the state budget; most students received state grants scaled to academic progress and material circumstances; accommodation in student hostels was, as the book says, "practically free" and canteen meals were subsidised. Workers taking evening or correspondence courses had their hours reduced by law, and were entitled to paid leave for examinations and four months' paid leave to write a diploma dissertation — provisions that would have sounded, to the Western apprentice this book was aimed at, close to fantasy. The sports grounds, the tourist camps in the Crimea and the Caucasus, the sanatoria, the subsidised holidays: these existed, and they were available to ordinary young people on terms unavailable to their contemporaries in Manchester or Detroit.

So did the work. The student construction brigades began, as the book records, with physics students from Moscow University who went to northern Kazakhstan in May 1959; by 1976 some 533,000 students were spending their "labour semester" building things. The Baikal–Amur Railway was built, largely by young people, in conditions of real hardship. The literacy campaigns of 1929–32, in which Komsomol members were given a short training course and sent out as group leaders, reached tens of millions of people and are among the genuine achievements of the Soviet 1930s, whatever else was happening in those years. The publishing operation was substantial: Molodaya Gvardiya, whose objectives the Fifth Komsomol Congress set out in 1922, had by the 1970s issued over 14,000 titles and more than 700 million copies.

And the internationalism was not fraudulent in the young people who felt it. Komsomol members did volunteer for the International Brigades in Spain. Soviet students did work for solidarity with Vietnam, with Chile, with the liberation movements of southern Africa, and the book's account of the World Youth Festivals describes something that really did move hundreds of thousands of young people across the world. That a bureaucracy used these sentiments, and that it used them to legitimise a state which had shot the founders of the organisation professing them, does not make the sentiments false. It makes them a resource that was stolen. An introduction which sneered at the young reader who was moved by this book would be missing what the book is evidence of.

Which brings us back to the one word the volume uses four times and never applies to its own moment. "Internationalist duty" appears here in four settings: defending the revolution during the Civil War, aid to the young communist movement in the West, support for national liberation, and solidarity with the developing countries. By the time this English edition reached its readers, "internationalist duty" was the official formula under which Komsomol members were conscripted and sent to Afghanistan, where a great many of them were killed. The book contains no mention of Afghanistan, and, given its date, probably could not have. But it closes on a long passage about the international situation in which "detente was progressing" — published in the year detente ended, the year of the Moscow Olympics and the Western boycott, into a world its authors had finished describing just before it changed.

It is worth adding that the revolutionary left did not read that boycott as the West's friends of Soviet youth would have

wished either. Writing in *Intercontinental Press* of 2 June 1980, David Frankel counted the score with some relish: "President Carter calls a boycott of the Moscow Olympics—and two-thirds of Washington's NATO allies send their teams." A book like this one and a boycott like that one were arguing past each other, and both were about something other than the young people in whose name they spoke.

Read it, then, for what it is: the most complete statement available in English of how the Soviet state wished its youth organisation to be understood abroad, at the last moment when that state still expected to be believed. It is accurate about buildings, budgets and benefits, and it is silent in exactly the places where the history hurts. Read it beside chapter 7 of *The Revolution Betrayed*, and beside Privalov's volume in this same series, and the shape of the omissions becomes as informative as anything the authors chose to include.

Marxist Philosophy

The most approachable introduction to Soviet philosophy in English, by the expositor who went on to edit Pravda - and a text whose datable layers show what a revision made in spring 1980 still declined to notice.

Viktor Grigorievich Afanasyev

Introduction to the 1980 Edition

This is a first textbook. It says so on its first line — "This book is intended for those who are beginning to study Marxist-Leninist philosophy" — and it behaves like one throughout: eighteen chapters, each broken into numbered sections, each section broken into headed sub-sections, with worked examples about gold and about atoms, and a summary at the close of every argument. It runs to about 131,000 words in David Fidlon's clean and readable translation. Nothing in it is difficult. That is the point of it, and it is also the beginning of the problem.

The date, and what it terminates at

The spine says 1980 and the printer's key at the back reads '30–80'. But this book has layers, and they are not the same age.

Its doctrinal spine is older than 1980. The CPSU Programme it quotes on the withering away of the state is the Programme of 1961; the political framework throughout — the Peace Programme, "developed socialism", the comprehensive programme for raising the level of management — is that of the Twenty-Fifth Congress of February 1976, which is cited nine times and is the most recent Congress in the book. The Twenty-Sixth Congress, of February 1981, is absent, as one would expect. The 1977 Constitution is present, quoted from the Moscow 1977 English edition, so a revision pass was made after October 1977.

The topmost layer is later still and easy to date. A closing section of the chapter on national liberation, "India. Thirty Years Along the Road of National Liberation and Social Progress", opens on "On January 26, 1980 India marked the 30th anniversary of its Constitution", discusses the parliamentary elections "which took place at the beginning of 1980 and brought the Indian National Congress headed by Indira Gandhi to power", notes that in February 1980 the Bhilai agreement was twenty-five years old, and reports that

the two Indian Communist parties "condemned Peking's aggression in Vietnam" — the Sino-Vietnamese war of February 1979. So the last hand laid on this text was laid in the spring of 1980.

Hold that date against what the book says about the world. Détente appears seven times and always as something advancing: "there is a growing trend towards international detente and peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems." Afghanistan appears four times — as a country of socialist orientation, as a place where "the workers and employees of the Kabul housebuilding factory voluntarily turned up for work on their day off", and as one of the peoples whose "just struggle" against "imperialist provocations" the Indian communists support. In a book revised in the spring of 1980, the Soviet Army does not enter Afghanistan. Détente does not die. This is not concealment so much as inertia: the political furniture is that of 1976, and the 1980 additions were laid on top of it without disturbing it. Read it, therefore, as a mid-1970s book with a 1980 face — the summation of the Brezhnev settlement at the exact moment that settlement ran out.

Who wrote it

The volume itself will not tell you. There is no author's note, no biographical paragraph, no institutional affiliation on the title page; the front matter offers a translator, a designer, a request for readers' opinions, and a name rendered in Cyrillic — В. Г. Афанасьев.

The anti-Stalinist press can tell you, and it did so contemporaneously, which is worth pausing over, because for most of the philosophers in this series it cannot. In Intercontinental Press of 28 November 1977, Gerry Foley reported on the sixtieth-anniversary celebrations in Moscow and the Kremlin's decision not to let Santiago Carrillo, general secretary of the Spanish Communist Party, speak at the 3 November commemoration. When the international press made an issue of it, the explanation was fronted by the editor

of Pravda: Afanasyev "claimed that Carrillo had not been allowed to speak because he arrived late and that there was, of course, no intention to rebuff him or censor his views". The Spanish party's Secretariat rejected this on 7 November, pointing out that the arrival dates had been fixed in Madrid in October in discussions "with the Pravda editor himself", and that Carrillo's text had been in all the translators' booths on the morning of the third. (IP prints the initial as "M."; it was V. G. Afanasyev, who held the editorship of Pravda from 1976 to 1989.)

Eleven years later, International Viewpoint no. 146 of July 1988, reporting the Nineteenth Party Conference, names him in full and without ambiguity: "One of the leading 'reconstructors,' V. G. Afanasyev, the chief editor of Pravda, even argued that since in principle there could be no socialist opposition, the press would have to play the necessary role of critic." Gorbachev interrupted him from the chair. In International Viewpoint no. 128 of October 1987, in a survey of the rehabilitations then under way, the same man appears again: "Afanasyev, the editor of Pravda, questioned the opportuneness of rehabilitating Trotsky. He argued that the revolutionary leader's 'negative' features predominated over his 'positive' ones, although he did not deny the latter."

A warning, since the same article contains the trap: Yuri Afanasiev, the historian who became rector of the Historical-Archival Institute in January 1987, called publicly for the rewriting of the Party history manuals, and ended up on the social-democratic wing of the Democratic Platform, was a different man entirely. Both Afanasievs appear in that single October 1987 article, on opposite sides of the argument about Trotsky. Do not confuse them; the sources here are careful, and so should we be.

So: this elementary textbook of philosophy was written by the man who edited the central organ of the Soviet Communist Party. That is not an incidental biographical fact. It is the key to the book. What we have is not a scholar's introduction to a discipline but the discipline as the apparatus wished it to be transmitted — written by someone whose day job was deciding what four hundred million people would read the next morning.

Take the philosophy seriously first

Much of the exposition is good, and the series' credibility on everything that follows depends on saying so.

The account of quality and quantity is genuinely well taught.

Afanasyev takes gold, lists its colour, ductility, malleability, density, heat capacity, melting and boiling points and chemical inertness, and then draws the distinction a student actually needs: "Quality is manifested in properties. A property characterises a thing from one side only, whereas quality gives the general idea of an object as a whole." A page later he transposes the same point to society without strain. Whatever one thinks of the doctrine, this is a person who has taught a class.

The treatment of freedom and necessity is more than a slogan. He states the objection fairly — "bourgeois sociologists accuse Marxists of fatalism, of worshipping historical necessity and claiming that man is impotent in the face of social laws" — and answers it in the classical way: "Freedom does not abolish objective necessity, it signifies that man understands necessity and exploits it for his own ends. Man's activity is only free when it corresponds to objective necessity and his freedom consists not in imaginary independence from the laws of nature and society, but in knowledge of these laws and the ability to make them serve human needs." That is Spinoza through Hegel through Engels, correctly transmitted.

The section on consciousness and cybernetics is better than its reputation would suggest. Written when the Soviet discipline's earlier hostility to cybernetics was still in living memory, it welcomes the machines — "Some of them guide trains, aircraft or intricate production processes, others translate texts from one language into another" — and then makes an argument rather than a denunciation: that the machine is "the product of the astute mind and skilled hands of man who programmes its functions", that it relieves mental labour as ordinary machinery relieves physical labour, and that "however high the level which cybernetics may attain in its development, an automatic machine will never become a vehicle of human consciousness and will never replace man as a social being." One may think the conclusion overconfident. It is reasoned, it is not obscurantist, and it is a long way from 1950.

And the theory of truth is, for four pages, a competent piece of philosophical instruction. He distinguishes objective, absolute and relative truth; he grasps that they are aspects of one process rather than three kinds of proposition; he illustrates with classical and quantum mechanics; he insists that "There is no abstract truth, truth is always concrete." The summary sentence is one any teacher might use: "Man's knowledge is both absolute and relative: relative because it is not exhaustive and can be endlessly developed and deepened, revealing new sides of reality; absolute, because it contains elements of

eternal, absolutely exact knowledge."

And then the sentence that undoes it

Two paragraphs after that summary, the same section reads: "The fundamental theses of Marxist-Leninist theory, whose correctness has been confirmed by practice, are absolute truth. Although Marxist-Leninist theory is constantly developing, its basic principles cannot be refuted."

Everything the preceding pages established is withdrawn in a line. If human knowledge at each stage is relative, and absolute truth is approached only through an endless process, then a body of doctrine that "cannot be refuted" is not a scientific theory at all in the sense the chapter has just defined; it is a boundary drawn around a region of thought and marked no entry. The book has begun by promising the opposite: "Marxist philosophy is a creative, developing science and not a parcel of immutable, petrified principles taken on trust." It ends by declaring itself "the sole scientific theory and method of cognising and explaining reality."

George Novack put the difficulty exactly, and — as far as this editor can establish — without ever having read Afanasyev, since he was writing thirty-eight years earlier. In the winter of 1942 Novack delivered nine lectures on dialectics to members of the Socialist Workers Party, who were at that moment being prosecuted under the Smith Act. He opened by remarking on the oddness of the occasion: "Here are members and sympathisers of a revolutionary political party under government persecution in the midst of World War II, the biggest war in world history." In the seventh lecture he diagnosed the flaw in Hegel: "Hegel's thought was smitten by this inherent and incurable opposition between its claim to be a system of absolute truth and its dialectical method, which asserted that all truths were relative." That is Afanasyev's position precisely, and it is worse in Afanasyev's case, because Hegel at least built the system himself.

Novack's fifth lecture goes further and hits the form of this book, not merely its content. "Dialectical thinking, therefore, cannot be completely comprised in any fixed set of formulas, nor can dialectics be codified in the same way and to the same extent as formal logic." He does not conclude that dialectics has no laws — "Every logic must be capable of categorical determination and expression. If this were not so, these lectures of mine would be a senseless enterprise" — but he insists that a written constitution of dialectical logic "reflect the state of the dialectic at a given moment and from a specific and limited point of view". The demand for something more,

he says, comes from people "still enslaved to the formalism of academic life and thought": "They have a thirst for formalism, for fixed and final absolute expressions, which dialectics cannot quench."

Afanasyev's book is that thirst institutionalised. Its three laws and seven categories are laid out, in Novack's phrase for what the formalists demand, each "with fixed rank and proper title, like officers in the army hierarchy" — and the thing they are protected from is revision. And Novack had already named what happens to a logic when its laws are made unquestionable: in his third lecture, describing the laws of formal logic presented as absolute, he wrote that they "rule the world of thought in totalitarian fashion, exacting unquestionable obedience from all things", and that "In reality, formal logic goes hand in hand with religion and dogmatism." He meant it against Aristotle's heirs. It applies without modification to the book in your hands.

Who is not here

The counts are worth setting down, because a textbook's silences are its curriculum.

In 130,932 words on Marxist philosophy, published in Moscow in 1980, the name Stalin does not appear once. Not as a philosopher, not as a politician, not as a victim of anyone or a perpetrator of anything. Yet the "personality cult" is discussed at length — seven occurrences in a single passage of the chapter on the role of the individual in history — and is condemned in strong terms: it "belittles both the people's role as makers of history and the role of the Communist Party", it "fetters the development of the Party's ideological life", and "The personality cult and the consequent violations of the Leninist norms of Party and state life, of socialist law and democracy are deeply alien to the democratic nature of socialism." The passage closes: "That was why the CPSU condemned the personality cult and resolutely liquidated its consequences."

Whose cult? Which violations? Committed by whom, against whom, and with what result? The sentences are grammatically complete and historically empty. A cult with no object, violations with no agent and no victims, and a liquidation of consequences performed by an institution rather than by people. Twenty-four years after the Twentieth Congress, an official philosophy textbook could still discuss the crime without naming the criminal — and this in a chapter whose ostensible subject is precisely the role of the individual in history.

Trotsky appears once. Bukharin appears once. It is the same once: a footnote citing Lenin's "Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin", Collected Works, vol. 32. Neither man is mentioned in the body of the text, on any subject. They survive only inside the title of a work by someone else.

Plekhanov appears zero times. This is the most eloquent absence in the book. Belinsky, Herzen and Chernyshevsky are all named and credited — "A big contribution to the theory of social development was made by Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky and other Russian revolutionary democrats of the 19th century" — but the first Russian Marxist philosopher, the man Lenin said one could not become a Marxist without reading, is not in the index of a Soviet Marxist philosophy textbook. Progress Publishers had issued his Selected Philosophical Works in the same decade and it sits elsewhere on this list.

Of the Soviet philosophical establishment: Deborin — 0. Mitin — 0. Yudin — 0. Zhdanov — 0. Lysenko — 0. The phrase "Menshevizing idealism" — 0. The journal *Pod znamenem marksizma* — 0. The Institute of Philosophy — 0. No Soviet philosopher of any period is named anywhere in the book.

And the dates. "1931" occurs once, as the publication year of Lenin Miscellany XI. "1947" occurs once, as the year of Indian independence. "1936" occurs once, as the year of Pavlov's death. "1937" occurs once — as a base year for a statistical comparison of industrial output. That is what 1937 is in this book: a denominator.

What is offered in place of a history

The chapter "The Rise and Development of Marxist Philosophy" contains the book's only attempt at the history of its own discipline, and it consists of two sentences:

After Lenin, the philosophy of Marxism has been developed by his associates and pupils, prominent leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the fraternal communist and workers' parties. Marxist-Leninist philosophy has been further developed in the decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenary Meetings of the CPSU and other Marxist parties and in the resolutions of international meetings of Communists.

That is the whole of it: 1924 to 1980, fifty-six years, with no philosopher named and no event described. Earlier the same chapter has declared that "The Leninist stage in the

development of philosophy covers a period from the end of the 19th century to the present day" — one undivided block, eighty years long, with no internal history at all. The subject of the sentences is not a person and not even a school but a set of committees; philosophy is developed in decisions.

Readers of this series will recognise a familiar manoeuvre from other volumes — the purge rendered as weather, a thing that came about with no one doing it. Compare F. V. Konstantinov's *Development of Revolutionary Theory* by the CPSU, published by Progress in 1971 and also on this list. Konstantinov at least approaches the subject: "But towards the beginning of the 1930s (in some cases even earlier) serious errors and distortions came to light in the work of the journal and in the school of A. M. Deborin, who headed the journal." Errors that came to light, of their own accord — that is the weather. But he goes on, and further than one expects: "The personality cult damaged the development of Marxist theory and philosophy. It fettered theoretical thinking, pushing it into dogmatism and reducing it to commentary."

Afanashev does not manage the weather. He does not reach it. On the history of Soviet philosophy his 1980 textbook says strictly less than a Progress volume of nine years earlier, and what it substitutes is a list of Party bodies. When a book has nothing to say about the past of its own field, one should ask who would have been embarrassed by the saying. In 1980 the answer includes the author.

The state, and a phrase forty-five years old

The chapter on the state gives the Brezhnev-era doctrine in its finished form: "With the completion of socialist construction the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat turns into a state of the whole people—the political organisation of the whole people in which the leading role is played by the working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party." Dictatorship and all-people's state, he explains, "are not qualitatively different types of state. In point of fact they are stages in the development of a socialist-type state."

The reply was written before the doctrine was. In 1936, examining the constitution that first made this move, Trotsky called it what it was: "This is a matter, to put it briefly, of juridically liquidating the dictatorship of the proletariat. Where there are no capitalists, there is also no proletariat — say the creators of the new constitution — and consequently the state itself from being proletarian becomes national." And he drew out the consequence the doctrine will not draw: "when the bearer of dictatorship becomes the people, freed from class

contradictions, that can only mean the dissolution of the dictatorship in a socialist society – and, above all, the liquidation of the bureaucracy." (The Revolution Betrayed, ch. 10, "In the Mirror of the New Constitution".) Afanasyev's book, forty-four years later, keeps the first half of the argument and quietly drops the second: the state of the whole people has arrived, and the apparatus is stronger than ever. His own chapter concedes as much in its opening line on the withering away: "The fact that it is necessary to strengthen and develop the socialist state does not mean that it will exist for ever."

Trotsky's chapter 3 answers that too, and answers a resolution of 1935 which had proclaimed the "final and irrevocable" triumph of socialism together with an "all-sided reinforcement" of the dictatorship: "the very necessity of 'reinforcing' the dictatorship – that is, governmental repression – testifies not to the triumph of a classless harmony, but to the growth of new social antagonisms." It is worth noting that Afanasyev, writing in 1980, reaches for the identical adverbs. Real freedom, he says — mankind's age-old dream — "has struck root here finally and irrevocably."

The same instinct runs through his treatment of contradiction under socialism, which is otherwise one of the more honest passages in the book: he affirms, against a long tradition of denial, that contradictions do exist under socialism, quotes Lenin's "Antagonism and contradiction ... are not one and the same thing", and gives a real example about the enlargement of agricultural co-operatives. Then the resolution: "The method of disclosing the contradictions of socialist society lies in criticism and self-criticism", which cannot itself resolve anything; resolution belongs to "the competent organisational and educational work both of the Party and the Government". And as for those whose interests "run counter to the interests of society" — "These individuals are re-educated by the efforts of the people and the Communist Party, while penalties are imposed on the more incorrigible ones."

That clause sits in a chapter on the laws of dialectics. It is the whole book in miniature: an argument about the structure of reality that terminates, without any change of tone, in a note about what is done to people who disagree. The man who wrote it had, three years earlier, explained to the world's press why Santiago Carrillo's microphone had been switched off.

The enemy

One more measure of the book's age. Its chapter on "The Unscientific Nature of Contemporary Bourgeois Sociology" promises an "endless number of trends and schools" and

names two men: Arnold Toynbee, credited with reviving the "historical cycle" theory and with holding that history's aim "is to set up the kingdom of God", and Oswald Spengler. Toynbee died in 1975; Spengler in 1936. Talcott Parsons, Raymond Aron, Daniel Bell, Herbert Marcuse, Karl Popper, Max Weber — none of them is in the book. The living opponent is not engaged, is not quoted, and is not named.

Set beside it T. I. Oizerman's *The Main Trends in Philosophy*, also in this series, which reads Popper in the Hutchinson edition and quotes him accurately, reconstructs Husserl's epoché, and gives Sartre his due in a footnote. Oizerman was a scholar and argued like one, and he was working in the same country under the same constraints. The difference between the two books is not the political line, which is identical. It is that one author had read his adversaries and the other had been told about them.

How to read it

As an artefact this book is close to ideal for its purpose: it is exactly what the Soviet state, at the end of the Brezhnev years, wanted an ordinary reader in Delhi or Lagos or Manchester to understand Marxist philosophy to be. Clear, orderly, patient, thoroughly taught, and sealed. Read the chapters on dialectics for the teaching, which is often skilful; read the theory of truth up to the sentence where it stops; read the whole of it for the shape of the silence, which is the most informative thing about it.

And then read the nine lectures Novack gave in 1942 to a party under indictment, which cover much of the same ground and reach the opposite conclusion about what a philosophy is for. There is no better demonstration of the difference between studying dialectics because your life may depend on thinking clearly, and administering it because it is your ministry.

A History of Old Russian Literature

A genuine university survey of Russian writing from the eleventh to seventeenth centuries - the chronicles, Monomakh, The Lay of Igor's Host, Avvakum - by a scholar candid about an archive that is almost entirely monastic.

Vladimir Kuskov

Introduction to the 1980 Edition

Every other book in this series was written to argue.

Vladimir Kuskov's was written to teach. A History of Old Russian Literature is a university textbook: a survey of the writing of the eleventh to seventeenth centuries — the Primary Chronicle, Ilarion's Sermon on Law and Grace, Vladimir Monomakh's Instruction, the lives of Boris and Gleb, The Lay of Igor's Host, the tales of the Time of Troubles, the Life of the Archpriest Avvakum — issued by Progress Publishers in Moscow in 1980 for readers learning the subject. That fact governs everything about how it should be read, and it sets it apart from the doctrinal and foreign-policy volumes the series usually examines. Its material is not the Revolution, or the Party, or the Cold War. It is a thousand years of monastic and princely manuscripts whose entire visible content is Orthodox Christianity, written down four to nine centuries before Marx was born.

That is the interesting thing about it, and the difficult thing. A Marxist-Leninist textbook on this material faces a problem no other book in the catalogue faces: how does dialectical materialism narrate a literature that is, on its own surface, wholly religious? Kuskov states the difficulty himself, and states it honestly. Of the surviving parchment manuscripts from the eleventh to fourteenth centuries, he writes, "only twenty do not deal with religious concerns" — twenty out of roughly fifteen hundred. Books "were stored and copied primarily by monks," who had little reason to preserve secular texts, so that "the overwhelming majority of surviving Old Russian works are religious in character." He even concedes the distortion this introduces into his own object of study: "As a result Old Russian literature appears more ecclesiastical than it may, in fact, have been." This is not a man hiding his sources. It is a scholar telling the reader, on the first pages, that the archive is a church.

Dating the book

The spine reads 1980, and for once there is little reason to argue with it. Unlike several Progress titles, which front an old Russian text in a new jacket, this one carries no earlier-edition notice and no large lag. The imprint code is '014(01)-80'; the latest scholarship it cites is recent to the printing — the thirty-first volume of the Transactions of the Department of Old Russian Literature (1977) and the 1979 Moscow edition of Marx and Engels's Precapitalist Socio-Economic Formations. (A single late token, an "April 20, 1986" attached to a letter from Mamin-Sibiriyak, who died in 1912, is a scanner's corruption of 1896 and no evidence of date.) The manuscript therefore closed around 1979 and appeared in English in 1980. The book itself does not state Kuskov's own post; it names D. S. Likhachev as head of the Old Russian section of the Pushkin House and A. N. Robinson as leader of the Gorky Institute group, but leaves its author's affiliation unstated, and this introduction will not supply one.

What the book was for is easier to answer than usual. This is not export polemic; it is pedagogy. It reads like what it is — a course, complete with periodisation, per-chapter source lists, and a conspectus of the scholarly debates a student is expected to know.

The frame, and how it is built

The ideological apparatus is thin, concentrated, and detachable, and it is worth setting out precisely, because the rest of the book does not depend on it. It has three components.

First, a licence. The book opens not on a chronicle but on Lenin, quoted from his 1920 speech to the Third Komsomol Congress: "Only a precise knowledge and transformation of the culture created by the entire development of mankind will enable us to create a proletarian culture." This is the standard warrant under which a state calling itself the heir of October could publish, and teach, a thousand years of Orthodox writing at all: the cultural heritage is to be critically assimilated, not

discarded. Medieval literature, Kuskov writes, "can be most instructive and is of profound educational value as the natural historical point of departure for Russian literary development."

Second, an instruction to the reader about what to do with the religion. It comes in a single, revealing sentence. The historical vision of Old Russian literature, Kuskov writes, is medieval: events are "explained in terms of Providence from a religious perspective," its heroes are princes at the summit of feudal society. "By discarding the religious casing, however, the modern reader will easily discern the living historical essence of Old Russian literature whose true creator was the Russian people." Everything the frame needs is in that sentence. The religion is a "casing" — Marx's own word for the Lay, which Kuskov quotes: "Christian-heroic in character though heathen elements are still very much in evidence." Peel it away and underneath is "the people," retrojected as the "true creator" of texts that were, on the evidence Kuskov has just given, composed by monks for princes. The move is performed openly, and hedged with as much care as it can bear: the literature "expressed and defended the interests of the feudal ruling class," and only "insofar as the progressive forces of feudal society reflected the interests of the state and these interests coincided with the interests of the people" can one "speak of Old Russian literature's affinity with the people." That is a heavily qualified claim, and to Kuskov's credit he does not pretend it is more.

Third, an engine to run the casing off, and here the workhorse is not Lenin but Engels. The genuinely medieval phenomena that a class analysis must account for — the urban heresies, the great seventeenth-century schism — are handled through Engels's thesis that medieval class conflict wore religious dress. The town heresies, Kuskov quotes Engels, "were directed primarily against the clergy, whose wealth and political station they attacked," demanding "a cheap church" as the modern bourgeoisie demands cheap government. And the schism, the Raskol, is subsumed under Engels's most useful sentence: "Although the class struggles of those days were clothed in religious shibboleths, and though the interests, requirements, and demands of the various classes were concealed behind a religious screen, this changed nothing at all." Religion as shibboleth, screen, casing: the vocabulary is consistent, and it does one job — it converts a literature of faith into a document of class without having to deny that the faith was real.

The scholarship is real

None of that would matter much if the book underneath were

worthless. It is not. This was one of the strongest fields in Soviet letters, and it was strong partly because its subject was safely distant — a scholar dating a fourteenth-century manuscript is under less pressure than one narrating 1937. Kuskov's book is a competent, sometimes fine, transmission of that scholarship, and the reader should be told so plainly.

The philology is the real thing. Kuskov lays out, without fear or favour, the rival reconstructions of how the Tale of Bygone Years was composed — Shakhmatov's, Likhachev's, Rybakov's — and reports Likhachev's arresting thesis that Russian chronicle-writing arose out of the eleventh-century struggle to secure the Kievan church's independence from Byzantine tutelage. He explains textology and palaeography properly: why the original of almost no work survives, why scribes edited as they copied, how recensions are distinguished, how watermarks and letter-forms date a manuscript. He is scrupulous about the material history — parchment giving way to paper, uncial to semi-uncial to cursive — and about how much has simply been lost to fire and invasion. The name that recurs, some seventy times, is Likhachev's, the towering figure of the field, and Kuskov leans on him honestly and cites him by title and page. The per-chapter bibliographies are real bibliographies. Where the book reads the Lay of Igor's Host as poetry — its imagery, its lament, its "golden word" — it is doing literary criticism, not agitation; and it is not cheating when it notes that Marx himself admired the Lay and read its message as a "call on the Russian princes for unity." Marx really did. The frame, for once, has a genuine root in its own tradition.

So the honest verdict is the one the house style demands: where Kuskov does philology, he does honest work, and a student who read this book learned a great deal that was true. The pressure is only at the joints — the introduction, the conclusion, and any sentence that must connect the medieval to the modern.

Avvakum, and the limit of the method

The best place to watch the method strain is the seventeenth-century schism, because there the book's two obligations pull hard against each other. Avvakum, the Old Believer archpriest who refused Patriarch Nikon's liturgical reforms and was burned at the stake in 1682, wrote the *Life of Archpriest Avvakum, Written by Himself* — a founding masterpiece of Russian prose. Kuskov cannot not celebrate it. He calls Avvakum "the most talented writer of the second half of the seventeenth century" and renders his defiance with unmistakable sympathy: "Neither torture nor exile nor

persecution nor the promise of material blessings made by the boyars and the tsar in return for renouncing his faith could force Avvakum to give up the struggle." He quotes Avvakum denouncing the tsar himself, and dwells on the sincerity of a man who, "condemned to death, ... has no reason to be cunning and has nothing to hide."

But a religious martyr who dies defending the old rite against a state-imposed reform cannot be left as a hero, and so the movement he led is filed, by Engels's licence, as something else. The schism was "really" anti-feudal class struggle in religious dress — and its backward-looking content damns it: the Old Believers "saw their ideal in the receding life of the past," "actively opposed everything new and gradually became a bulwark of reaction," and "attempted to turn back the clock of history." The writer is rescued; the cause is condemned; the Engels quotation is what makes the two verdicts compatible. It is a genuinely deft piece of ideological carpentry, and it is worth pausing on the irony it cannot see. In 1980 the reanimation of old, pious, pre-Petrine Russia was not a dead antiquarian matter — it was the living material of Solzhenitsyn (absent from this book, as one would expect of a medieval survey) and of the "village prose" writers, whose romance of the vanished countryside the authorities half-tolerated and half-feared. A textbook that condemns nostalgia for old Russia as "reaction" was, without meaning to, taking a side in a very contemporary quarrel.

The category that never turns around

There is a sharper thing to notice, and it is the reflexivity question this series always asks, put in the terms this particular book allows. Kuskov describes, at length and with scholarly relish, the machinery by which the medieval Church suppressed the texts it disliked. He explains how the official church "established the canon of Holy Scriptures" and "began to list apocrypha circulated by heretics among 'false' or 'repudiated' books"; he notes "the first Index of 'false' books"; he credits the nineteenth-century scholar Pypin with the first study of the Apocryphal and Forbidden Books of Old Rus. The suppression of dissenting writing is, in other words, one of his running subjects.

And in a book published in Moscow in 1980, in the country of Glavlit, the word censorship does not occur once. Not of the Church's Index, not of the tsar's decree that had the archpriest Avvakum burned at the stake "for greatly abusing the house of the tsars," not anywhere. The machinery is described; the category is withheld; and at no point is the medieval

suppression of heretical writing permitted to rhyme with the present. This is not a slip, and it should not be over-read as a hidden confession — a philology textbook has no occasion to editorialise about 1980, and its silence on the present is exactly what one expects. But the shape is worth naming, because it is the shape this series keeps finding: the description is free, the category is not. Kuskov can tell you precisely how the Orthodox Church listed and condemned the writings it feared, and how the state dealt with the writer who defied it. He cannot call it what a Soviet reader, in 1980, would instantly have recognised it to be, and the essence of the thing — the suppression of dissenting writing as an act a state can perform — never once escapes the seventeenth century to touch the twentieth. Error is admissible in these books; the category is not.

The reply

Here honesty requires an admission. The Fourth International and the wider anti-Stalinist left never wrote about medieval Russian literature as such; the Primary Chronicle and the Igor Tale were simply not their subject, and no amount of searching our archives will conjure a reply to Kuskov's philology that does not exist. The silence in the reply corpus on his actual material is a gap in our holdings, not a finding about the book, and it should be stated as such rather than papered over.

But Kuskov's frame is another matter, because the frame is not medieval at all. The decision to teach a thousand years of Orthodox literature as the deep patriotic heritage of "the Russian people" belongs to a specific and datable political turn — the Stalinist rehabilitation of the national past, of the family, and of a truce with the Church — and that turn was described, as it happened, by Trotsky. In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), the chapter "Family, Youth and Culture" records the very détente whose distant fruit this textbook is. The old militant atheism, Trotsky wrote, had been called off: "In relation to religion, there is gradually being established a regime of ironical neutrality"; the anti-church campaigns of "people of the type of Yaroslavsky" had "degenerated into buffoonery and mischief," and "The storming of heaven, like the storming of the family, is now brought to a stop." In the same chapter he named the cultural nationalism that would, in time, make a Progress textbook of Orthodox chronicles thinkable, and he named its mechanism: "And since the Kremlin is the residence of the authorities, and the outlying territories are compelled to keep step with the center, bureaucratism inevitably takes the color of an autocratic Russification, leaving to the other nationalities the sole

indubitable cultural right of celebrating the arbiter in their own language." Russification for the centre; for everybody else, the right to applaud it in translation. A book that gathers the medieval Church's literature under the banner of the Great Russian nation is standing, whether it knows it or not, at the end of the road Trotsky mapped in 1936.

And the movement did watch the road being travelled. Kuskov's textbook is the respectable, licensed edge of a broad Russophile revival that the Fourth International's press was tracking through the 1970s. Ted Harding surveyed it for *International*, the theoretical journal of the British IMG, in the spring of 1973, and that September Intercontinental Press reprinted him for a world readership: "Russian nationalism/Slavophilism... is becoming a major influence among the upper strata of Soviet society. This current is reactionary through and through. It is racist and chauvinist. It attacks the regime for 'betraying traditional Russian values,' and attacks Marxism as a 'foreign transplant.' It rejects the October Revolution as 'un-Russian,' and eulogizes the 'mystical qualities of the Great Russian soul.'" (Ted Harding, "Emerging Opposition Currents in the Soviet Union," *Intercontinental Press*, vol. 11, no. 32, 17 September 1973, p. 1030, reprinted from *International*, second series, vol. 2, no. 1, Spring 1973, p. 24.) Its emigrated extreme was Solzhenitsyn, whom the same paper described two years later as having "turned to religion" and to "Great Russian nationalism, and an utterly Utopian vision of returning to a preindustrial society" (vol. 13, no. 27, 14 July 1975; "preindustri- al" de-hyphenated).

Set that beside Kuskov and the coordinates come clear. On one point the reply and the textbook simply agree: both call backward-looking nostalgia for old, pious Russia a reaction — Kuskov condemns the Old Believers for wanting to "turn back the clock of history," the Fourth International condemns the Slavophile dreamers' "utterly Utopian vision of returning to a preindustrial society." An introduction that pretended Kuskov was wrong to file antimodern religious romanticism as reactionary would be doing tribalism, not criticism; he was right, and our own tradition said the same. Where they part is on the nation. The Marxists of the reply held that "the reassertion of Russian nationalism" was itself the reactionary core of the bureaucratic degeneration (*Intercontinental Press*, vol. 14, no. 14, 12 April 1976; "reas- sertation" de-hyphenated). Kuskov built his entire method on the opposite premise — that "the Russian people" and the Great Russian nation are the redeeming hero beneath the "religious casing." The scholarship is his; the nation is the state's; and that, not the dating of any chronicle, is where the introduction and conclusion of this

book have to be read against the grain.

What it is worth

Read it, then, for what it is: a genuine work of scholarship wearing a thin and removable ideological coat. The frame is honest enough to announce its own detachability — the reader is instructed to strip away the "religious casing" and find "the people" beneath. One can accept the invitation and reverse it. Strip away the materialist casing that Kuskov added, and beneath it is what he was really transmitting: a careful, learned, often loving account of the manuscripts of medieval Rus, the debts to Likhachev and Shakhmatov acknowledged, the sources listed, the Igor Tale read as the poem it is. The frame belonged to 1980. The philology belongs to the reader. It is the rare volume in this series where the second is by far the larger part.

SOVIET SOCIETY

Where Human Rights Are Real

An American Communist's on-the-spot account of Soviet social provision at the end of the 1970s: the free clinics, the few-rouble rents, the schools, the absence of destitution. Progress Publishers' answer to the Helsinki argument, with a new critical introduction by Dmitry Chasovennikov.

George Morris

Introduction to the 1980 Edition

Begin with the date, because everything about this book follows from it.

The Helsinki Final Act was signed on 1 August 1975 by thirty-five states including the Soviet Union. Its third "basket" committed the signatories to respect for freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, and to the freer movement of people and information across the blocs. Moscow had wanted the conference for a decade, principally to secure Western recognition of the post-1945 borders; it got that, and paid for it with a text that Soviet citizens could then quote back at their own government. They did. The Moscow Helsinki Group was founded in May 1976 by the physicist Yuri Orlov to monitor Soviet compliance. Ukrainian and Lithuanian groups followed that November, Georgian and Armenian ones in 1977. Orlov, Alexander Ginzburg and Anatoly Shcharansky were arrested in 1977 and tried in the summer of 1978; Shcharansky received thirteen years. On 22 January 1980 Andrei Sakharov was seized in a Moscow street, stripped of his decorations and deported without trial to Gorky, a city closed to foreigners. That July the Olympic Games opened in Moscow, boycotted by sixty-odd countries over the invasion of Afghanistan five weeks before Sakharov's exile.

This book is Progress Publishers' answer to that argument, in English, in that year. Its Russian title translates as "There, where human rights are real" — the "there" is the point. The whole volume is a preposition aimed at a Western reader.

Except that the year on the spine is not the year of the text, and the difference decides what the book can fairly be accused of. The narrative closes in the winter of 1978–79. The latest events reported in the author's own voice are Alexei Kosygin's announcement of a record 230-million-ton grain harvest on 4 November 1978, the October 1978 issue of Senior Citizen News, and the report of the US Civil Rights Commission of 12 February 1979 on school segregation. The year 1980 does not

occur anywhere in the book. Everything later than early 1979 sits in footnotes signed "— Ed.": the population of Baku "according to the 1979 census"; George Meany's retirement and Lane Kirkland's election at the AFL-CIO convention of November 1979; the release on 14 December 1979 of the last of the imprisoned Wilmington Ten; and a revision of the Bureau of Labor Statistics family budgets that carries "the almost 11.5 percent increase in the cost of living, by government figures, for the year 1979". That last figure cannot have been written before January 1980. The scanned front matter carries no printing history, so the date has to be argued from the text — and the text argues for an American manuscript finished in early 1979 and reopened by a Moscow editor in the first weeks of 1980, who chose to add US inflation statistics rather than a line about Gorky.

This settles what the silences mean, and it narrows them. A manuscript closed in February 1979 cannot be convicted of failing to mention Sakharov's deportation, the invasion of Afghanistan or the Olympic boycott: none of them had happened. The silence about those belongs to the revision rather than to the draft, and as findings go it is a small one — nobody expected a Progress editor to insert Gorky. The absences that count are the ones the author had in front of him, in Moscow, and left out.

There the count is severe. He was resident while the Helsinki movement was being arrested. The word "Helsinki" occurs once in about sixty thousand words, and it names a city where Soviet engineers were helping to design a metro. The name Sakharov occurs four times, and every one of them belongs to Professor Alexander Sakharov, a criminologist at the All-Union Institute for the Study and Work of Means of Crime Prevention, whom the author interviewed about juvenile offending. Andrei Sakharov appears twice, spelled "Sakharoff", inside quotation marks, in a single paragraph about the credulity of the Moscow press corps. Shcharansky appears exactly once, transliterated "Scharansky", as a subordinate clause. Orlov, Ginzburg and Grigorenko do not appear; neither do Solzhenitsyn, Bukovsky, Plyushch or

Medvedev. Neither do the words censorship, psychiatric, samizdat, purge, or Gulag. "Stalin" occurs once, inside "Stalingrad".

The author is not an official of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism. He is George Morris, for many years the labour correspondent of the American Communist Party's *Daily World*, and before that of the *Daily Worker*; a man who went to Moscow in March 1928 as, in his own words, "a youth representative in the United States delegation, headed by William Z. Foster, to the Fourth Congress of the Red International of Trade Unions", lived there in 1929–30, returned in 1959, 1966 and 1970, and was resident as his paper's Moscow correspondent for the two years spanning the 25th Party Congress, the 16th Trade Union Congress and the adoption of the 1977 Constitution. That is the commission. Progress had no shortage of Soviet academics who could recite the constitution. What it wanted, and what it could not manufacture, was a foreign eyewitness — an American trade-union journalist who had seen both systems and would say, in idiomatic English, that he had looked and it was true. The book's genre is the friendly traveller's report, a form with a long and not always creditable history, and it is subtitled *Impressions of the USSR*.

What the book counts as a right

Set the omissions aside for a moment, because the positive case is substantial and a reader who dismisses it learns nothing.

The book's core is a chapter-by-chapter walk through the rights enumerated in the 1977 Constitution, and the list is not trivial: Article 40, the right to work, meaning guaranteed employment at not less than a state minimum; Article 41, the right to rest, with a working week capped at forty-one hours and paid annual leave; Article 42, free medical care; Article 44, the right to housing at low rents; Article 45, free provision of all forms of education; Article 35, equal rights for women with paid maternity leave and reduced hours for mothers of small children; Article 52, freedom of conscience. Morris asks, of the health system, "what human right could be more important than the government's guarantee of the best available health care treatment and rest at no cost as an obligation to all citizens?" It is a fair question and the liberal tradition has never answered it well.

The underlying argument is older and better than its packaging. It is that a right which costs nothing to grant and delivers nothing to the propertyless is a formality; that the

freedom to sleep under a bridge is not freedom; that unemployment, eviction and untreated illness are unfreedoms as real as arrest. Marx made it in *On the Jewish Question* in 1844, and the point survives every criticism this introduction will make of the state that later appropriated it. Morris's sharpest pages are those where he sets the enumerated Soviet rights against the American constitution's silence on work, housing, health and childcare, and against the concrete texture of American life in 1978 — the Bureau of Labor Statistics budgets, the wage figures falling behind inflation, the absence of a national health bill.

Much of the social provision he describes was also real. Employment was guaranteed. Rents were negligible: a Rustavi gas worker's five-room cottage with a garage at fifteen roubles a month is the kind of detail a propagandist does not invent, and Soviet housing costs did run at a few per cent of household budgets. Medical care was free at the point of use and doctors did make house calls. Childcare places numbered in the millions. Education through university cost nothing. The book's summary of what this meant subjectively — that people were not "plagued or worried by money problems, the next month's rent, meeting college costs for children, job insecurity, medical bills, fear of retirement, vacation costs" — is the honest heart of it, and it is why so many former Soviet citizens told pollsters in the 1990s that they had lost something.

The volume is also, in places, more candid than its title suggests. On housing, Morris quotes the union officials Makarov and Obekunov saying flatly that "the housing situation in the Soviet Union is still serious", records that Moscow's average living space had been three square metres per person as late as the early 1960s, and notes that post-war blocks were badly built. On consumption he concedes that "the Soviet press features many complaints over the lack of certain products or the difficulty of buying them because of inadequate supply", and that Western industrial workers were better off for housing space, food, fruit and textiles. A book that admitted nothing would be worthless as evidence. This one admits enough to be used, carefully, as a source on what Soviet social provision actually looked like from inside a Moscow flat in 1977.

Where the argument is won by redefinition

Then come the political rights, and the method changes. It is not denial. It is redefinition, conducted in the open, and the openness is what makes the book valuable.

Morris quotes Article 50 in full: the Constitution guarantees

"freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly". He then quotes the rest of the article, the part usually left out of Soviet propaganda for foreigners, which requires those freedoms to be exercised "in accordance with the interests of the people and in order to strengthen and develop the socialist system". He treats this qualifier not as an embarrassment but as the superior clause — as the mark of a constitution that has rejected "the hypocrisies of bourgeois constitutions". He reinforces it with Mikhail Georgadze, Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, at a press conference: "There is no freedom in general, or democracy in general. Socialist democracy is the democracy for the working people." Earlier the book puts it in its own voice: "The idea of allowing organizations opposed to socialism to function is out."

Who decides what strengthens the socialist system? The book does not ask. But it has already answered, by quoting Article 6, which for the first time wrote the leading role of the Communist Party into the fundamental law. The rights of Article 50 are conditional on a judgement, and the judgement belongs to a body that is not elected in any contested sense and not removable by those whose rights are conditional upon it.

One article is missing from the walk-through, and it is the one the book's longest chapter is about. Article 72 of the 1977 Constitution retained the right of every union republic freely to secede from the USSR. Morris tours the fifteen republics from the Baltic to the Pacific, quotes Article 34 on equality before the law and Article 36 on the drawing together of the nations at length, and answers Lithuanian émigré claims about the "Soviet yoke" head-on. Article 72 is never mentioned; the words secede and secession do not occur in the book. This is not personal to him. V. S. Semyonov's *Nations and Internationalism*, issued by Progress in 1979 and a full theoretical treatise on the national question, has the same zero in the same place. Two books, a year apart, on the same subject, silent on the only constitutional provision that would have given the republics a right against the centre.

The electoral chapter shows the mechanism with unusual clarity, and does so almost inadvertently. Turnout in 1974 was 99.98 per cent. Morris asks the obvious question — "Why such stress to turn-out almost every vote in absence of a contest?" — and reports the answer, that the campaign is an education and a mobilisation, that "the casting of the ballot becomes a vote of confidence". He then writes the sentence on which the whole system turns: "Contests do take place in Soviet elections, but most are at the nominating stage." A contest at the nominating stage, adjudicated by a conference of representatives after which, as the book puts it, "The losers

usually withdraw", is not a contest the electorate can enter. And in a passage of unintentional bleakness, the book dates the trend it is proud of: ballots not cast, it says, have been declining steadily "since 1937 when 96.7 percent of the eligible voters voted". The year is offered as a baseline for civic enthusiasm.

The same redefinition governs labour. The trade unions get a whole chapter and it is the most interesting in the book, because Soviet unions really did administer housing queues, sanatoria, holiday vouchers and disputes over illegal dismissal, and Morris documents that at first hand. But on the one power that makes a union a union, the text is unambiguous: "The Soviet trade unions have no need of strikes to get results," because workers, management and courts "are of the same class"; therefore "strikes are pointless—as senseless as cutting off your nose to spite your face."

That sentence has a date, and so does its refutation. On 26 January 1978 a group of Soviet workers held a press conference in Moscow to announce that they intended to form an independent trade union, and in early February they launched the Association of Free Trade Unions of Workers in the USSR. Its organiser, Vladimir Klebanov, had worked sixteen years as a foreman at the Bazhanova coal mine in the Donetsk region and had first tried to start a miners' union there in 1960, when the local authorities called it "anti-Soviet activity" and stopped him. The dossiers his group compiled, summarised in *Intercontinental Press* of 8 May 1978 as "The Three-Year Battle of a Dissident Workers Group", documented dozens of cases of workers who had exposed corruption or unsafe conditions and been demoted, dismissed, or committed to psychiatric hospitals. The association was crushed. In October 1978 a second was founded, the Free Inter-Trade Association of Workers, SMOT, which began with a hundred members and doubled within two months; Marilyn Vogt reported its emergence, and three trials of individual worker dissidents in August 1978, in the issue of 21 April 1980. These are the people who on this book's account had no need of strikes, because "the law is always on the side of the workers and their unions".

And the dissidents are handled by attribution of motive rather than description of conduct. They are "a few dozen contacts of the Central Intelligence Agency, or misfits within Soviet society objectively useful to the CIA" — which is not an accusation of anything, since being objectively useful requires no act at all, and nothing could count as evidence against it. They "have no base in the Soviet Union and have nothing in common with the society in which they are citizens."

Shcharansky's conviction "of treason and espionage" is recorded without a word about the evidence, and used as a set-piece against an American Indian march on Washington the same day. The chapter ends: "Human rights is truly an issue, but not in the USSR where its human rights Constitution is practiced as the law of the land."

The book has supplied the instrument for testing that claim, and it is worth turning. Morris quotes Article 49 in full: "Officials are obliged, within established time-limits, to examine citizens' proposals and requests, to reply to them, and to take appropriate action. Persecution for criticism is prohibited. Persons guilty of such persecution shall be called to account." That is a standard, and a testable one. He applies it, with dates and figures, to the United States — the segregation findings of February 1979, the Wilmington Ten, the asbestos employers who concealed for years what they knew about cancer among their workers, the Labor Department's own series showing real wages falling. Every charge against the American state is cashed out into a specified act that could be shown not to have happened. Not one is turned the other way. In sixty thousand words there is no Soviet instance of persecution for criticism, no official called to account, no complaint that failed. Klebanov's dossiers were exactly the material Article 49 exists to cover, and no such material can appear in a book constructed like this one, because the criterion has been defined so that the state it defends cannot fail it. A standard that can only ever find fault abroad is not a standard.

There is a precedent the book never mentions. The Constitution of 1936, which the 1977 text explicitly continues, was likewise proclaimed the most democratic in the world, and its Article 125 guaranteed freedom of speech, press and assembly in almost the same conditional formula — in conformity with the interests of the working people and in order to strengthen the socialist system. It was adopted on 5 December 1936. Zinoviev and Kamenev had been shot in August. Bukharin, who worked on the drafting commission, was shot in March 1938. The qualifier was not decorative then and it was not decorative in 1980.

The reply that already existed

None of this had to wait for hindsight. The anti-Stalinist left answered it as it was being made, and answered it without conceding the Cold War's terms.

The clearest statement is by Ernest Mandel, published in Hamburg in June 1976 and translated in Intercontinental Press

of 13 September 1976 as "The Fight for Soviet Democracy". Mandel begins by rejecting Sakharov's politics outright — he had moved "away from his socialist convictions toward openly procapitalist views" — and then writes: "However, while I reject Sakharov's political position, I unconditionally support his right to advocate these views freely and openly in the Soviet Union. I support his courageous campaign in defense of the human and civil rights of all Soviet citizens. I maintain, along with him, that there can be no real soviet democracy as long as dissident views cannot be openly printed and propagated. As Rosa Luxemburg put it so cogently, democracy is always freedom for dissenters." He goes on to argue that the penal-code articles on "antisoviet agitation" are themselves unconstitutional, since they gut the freedoms the constitution grants — precisely the reading of Article 50 that Morris rules out. Mandel had made the structural case in the same paper five months earlier, in "Brezhnev and Soviet Democracy" (12 April 1976). Readers who want the dissidents in their own voices can find them in the same archives: the long interviews with Leonid Plyushch and Zhores Medvedev in Inprecor No. 47–48, 1 April 1976, and the appeal for the Crimean Tatar Mustafa Jemilev in Inprecor No. 44, 19 February 1976.

The particular cases were reported week by week as they happened. Marilyn Vogt covered Yuri Orlov's twelve-year sentence, handed down after a three-day closed trial on 18 May 1978, in Intercontinental Press of 29 May 1978, and the sentencing of Shcharansky, Aleksandr Ginzburg and the Lithuanian Viktoras Pyatkus in the issue of 24 July 1978, under the heading "Free Shcharansky, Ginzburg, Pyatkus!". That report does the thing this book says cannot be done: it defends them while refusing Washington's sponsorship, quoting Andrew Young's admission to Le Matin that American prisons hold political prisoners too, and arguing that the imperialist governments' embrace of the dissidents "only lends credibility to the Kremlin's charges that the dissidents are agents of imperialism and makes it easier for the Stalinist rulers to crack down on advocates of democracy."

When Sakharov was seized, the answer came within a fortnight, and in the same weeks that the Progress editor was updating American inflation figures. David Russell's "Sakharov Exile—Attack on Rights of Soviet Masses" appeared in Intercontinental Press of 4 February 1980. It opposes Carter's Olympic boycott outright as "an act of hostility not only against the Soviet government, but also against the Soviet workers"; it records that Sakharov had campaigned as a member of Amnesty International for the imprisoned Black activist Martin Sostre and against torture in Uruguay; it says plainly that it disagrees with him about

Afghanistan and thinks the way to answer him is to debate him. Then it makes the argument neither government would make: "by denying Sakharov the right to express his opinions, the Stalinist regime was issuing a warning to every single Soviet citizen that no expression of differences with the government will be tolerated. That is an attack on the rights of the Soviet workers and peasants, not on incorrect political ideas."

The reply is not that social rights are worthless. It is that they were held as a gift. A right to housing administered by a factory committee you cannot vote out, a right to work in a plant where striking is defined as absurd, a right to speak exercisable only in ways the Party judges to strengthen the system — these are provisions, and provisions can be withdrawn by whoever provides them. What had been abolished was not property in the means of production only; it was the political capacity of working people to control what they collectively owned. That is the whole content of the word "bureaucracy" in this tradition, and Trotsky had already described its origin in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936): scarcity produces the queue, the queue produces the policeman, and the policeman does not go away when the goods arrive.

The test came in the very year this book reached English readers, and not in Moscow. In August 1980 the shipyard workers of Gdańsk struck and won. The United Secretariat of the Fourth International, in a statement of 25 September 1980 printed in Intercontinental Press on 27 October, listed what they had taken: "the right to organizations of its own, the right to strike, the partial lifting of censorship, access to the mass media, greater religious freedom, the liberation of political prisoners persecuted for their solidarity with the strikers, and the admission by the bureaucracy of the existence of exorbitant material privileges." Every item on that list is something this book had explained that workers under socialism had no need of. Polish workers were not CIA contacts or misfits. They were the class in whose name Article 50 was qualified, and the first thing they did with their power was to demand the rights the qualification denied them.

Read *Where Human Rights Are Real* for what it genuinely records — a health service, a housing programme, a school system, an absence of destitution that the countries lecturing Moscow had not matched and mostly still have not. Read it also as the record of why those things did not survive. When the system that provided them collapsed in 1991, the free clinics, the guaranteed jobs and the fifteen-rouble rents went with it, at speed, and hardly anyone was in a position to defend

them, because for sixty years nobody had been permitted to organise, publish, strike or vote in their defence. Rights nobody may argue about are not owned by anyone. That is the argument this book cannot make, and it is the one its title raises.

INTERNATIONALISM

Unity, Solidarity, Internationalism

How the world communist movement was supposed to hold together, by the Central Committee academy's own authority on it - and a book revised twice in the year Poland had ten million people in an independent union.

Boris Moiseevich Leibzon

Introduction to the 1981 Edition

The book is called Unity, Solidarity, Internationalism. It went to English readers in 1981, the year Poland had ten million people in an independent trade union, the Soviet army was in its second winter in Afghanistan, the Italian party was two years from the strappo, and the two largest communist parties on earth had not been on speaking terms for two decades. Boris Leibzon set out to explain how the world communist movement holds together. He wrote 81,000 words and the word Solidarność does not appear in any spelling.

That is not quite the indictment it looks like, and getting the date right is the first job. The spine says 1981; the text is substantially a 1979 manuscript. The evidence is in the footnotes. Leibzon cites thirty-five sources datelined 1979 — World Marxist Review for March and April 1979 alone carry more than a dozen of his references — and then, across the remaining 400 pages of his own apparatus, exactly one source from 1980 (Pravda, 1 January) and three from 1981, of which two are the same document: the Central Committee Report to the 26th Congress, and Pravda of 28 February 1981 reprinting it. The last world event narrated in the book is China's attack on Vietnam in February 1979. The Conclusion's peroration on the arms race is grafted onto a Congress that met from 23 February 1981; everything under it was written before the Gdańsk shipyard gates closed.

Two details show a hand did pass over the manuscript later. Josip Broz Tito, quoted from the 1976 Berlin conference, is introduced as "the late Josip Broz Tito" — Tito died on 4 May 1980. And the 26th Congress citations could not have been added before late February 1981. So this is not a book that simply predates the Polish August. Someone touched it after Tito's death and again after the 26th Congress, had the opportunity to say something about the largest independent workers' movement in the history of the Soviet bloc, and inserted a death-notice and a Congress reference instead. The nil return on Poland 1980 is a finding about the revision, not about the original draft — which is a narrower claim than it

first appears, and a sharper one.

Leibzon himself is identifiable from the book's own back cover: "Professor Boris Leibzon of the Moscow Academy of Social Sciences is a leading Soviet authority on the international communist movement." The Academy of Social Sciences was the CPSU Central Committee's own graduate institution, and Leibzon was a Comintern historian working from party archives. That is the commission: the movement's official historian, writing the official history of its cohesion, for export.

Which makes the comparison with his previous appearance in this series unusually informative. In 1977 Leibzon co-wrote *The Revolutionary Vanguard* with Mikhail Basmanov, the Soviet apparatus's professional answerer of Trotskyists. That book is 92,620 words. It uses the vocabulary of opportunism — opportunism, opportunist, opportunists, opportunistically — 81 times, a rate of 8.75 per 10,000 words against a corpus average across the 195 Progress volumes held here of 1.55. It names Trotsky 131 times, and ten of those sit within 120 characters of an opportunism word. It never once writes the name Stalin.

Leibzon alone in 1981 inverts almost all of it. The opportunism family drops to 23 occurrences, 2.84 per 10,000 — a threefold fall, and now within sight of the catalogue average. Trotsky appears once, as "leftist, anarchist and Trotskyite elements" whom Peking is accused of trying to activate. Not one opportunism word in the book stands within 120 characters of Trotsky's name. And Stalin, absent from the 1977 volume entirely, is here — once, as a man rather than a battle:

Stalin's personality cult and unjustified repressions, which also involved foreign Communists staying in the Soviet Union, did great harm to the communist movement.

The sentence is footnoted to Suslov. Khrushchev's name does not occur in the book, and the 20th Congress is mentioned exactly once, inside a quotation from Togliatti about

polycentrism. The CPSU's own reckoning with Stalin reaches this book only through a dead Italian's aside. Still: the machinery the 1977 draft in this series identified — the sorting of the world by the "vanguard" test, powered by a Trotskyist bogey — is largely dismantled here. Whatever else Leibzon is doing in 1981, he is not writing Basmanov's book. The enemy has been swapped. Maoism carries the polemical load now: Maoist 22 times, Peking 16, Chinese 20.

The 1977 draft observed that Santiago Carrillo's name did not appear in *The Revolutionary Vanguard*. That holds — I checked it against the misspellings too, and Carrillo, Eurocommunism and Euro-communism all return zero there. In 1981 he appears, and the manner of his appearance is the best thing in the book. Leibzon quotes "Eurocomunismo" y Estado — the book Moscow's *New Times* denounced by name in June 1977 — and quotes it for the defence. Carrillo is produced as a witness that the CPSU never gave orders:

I do not recall a single change of position, a single important political decision, which, since that dissolution, was co-ordinated by our Party with the CPSU in advance.

(The footnote prints the author as "Carillo" and the title as "Euro-communismo"; both are scanning damage and I have corrected them silently here. A word-boundary search on the correct spelling returns nothing, which is a warning worth passing on: the false nil was mine before it was anyone else's.)

The same conscription is performed on the others. Berlinguer appears six times and is friendly in all six — at Berlin in 1976, saying "the demand for internationalism resounds more compulsively than ever"; in an October 1978 communiqué agreeing that differences need not hinder co-operation. Marchais appears twice, both times constructively proposing new forms of collective meeting. Eurocommunism itself is named once, and buried:

the bourgeois and reformist press made no secret of the fact that life had dashed its hopes

for it. This is a real change of method from 1977, and it deserves to be named as one. The earlier book argued against the Eurocommunists through proxies — Garaudy, Fischer, *Il Manifesto* — men their own parties had expelled, so that the dispute could be conducted without admitting it existed. The 1981 book abandons the proxies and instead absorbs the principals. Berlinguer, Marchais and Carrillo are all quoted, none is answered, and each is made to testify to a unity he was in the process of leaving. It is a more confident technique and a more dishonest one.

Now the silences that count, by the rule that an absence is evidence only where the author had the fact and a reason to use it.

Czechoslovakia 1968. The book has a chapter section defending the term "socialist internationalism" against a specific charge, and the charge is worth stating in full because Leibzon states it honestly:

in the 1970s, the communist press in some European countries came up with statements that the "socialist internationalism" concept was formulated only in 1968 to designate a special type of internationalism allegedly "superior" to the internationalist relations among the other Communist Parties.

That is the accusation that the doctrine Western journalists called the Brezhnev Doctrine was invented to license the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Leibzon's reply is entirely bibliographic. The term was first used in the Declaration of the 1957 Moscow Meeting, therefore it was not invented in 1968; and "Socialist internationalism is not some superior type of internationalism, but the very same proletarian internationalism". A political charge about tanks is met with a citation to a document. Five Warsaw Pact armies crossed the frontier of a fellow socialist state in August 1968, and in a book about the principles governing relations between communist parties the event does not occur. Warsaw Pact returns zero. Invasion returns zero. The word 1968 appears eight times, and the only one that touches the Prague Spring is this:

the Hungarian and Czechoslovak Communists note that one of the reasons for the crisis phenomena in Hungary (1956) and in Czechoslovakia (1968) was the influx of petty-bourgeois elements into their Parties.

Two crushed revolutions, twelve years apart, explained as a recruitment problem. This is the same manoeuvre the 1977 volume performed, and the 1981 version is thinner: Leibzon has dropped even the long Husák quotation his co-authored book used to pad it out. The finding replicates and it deteriorates.

Afghanistan. Named once, and the sentence is a fossil of the manuscript's real date:

The victory of the democratic people's revolution in Afghanistan

— the Saur coup of April 1978, praised for producing a sense

of community with the world liberation struggle. Of the December 1979 entry of Soviet troops there is nothing. This is worth stating carefully, because a sibling brief in this series once predicted that a Soviet foreign-policy book of the early 1980s could not name Afghanistan and was refuted by a book that named it twenty times and defended the intervention explicitly. Leibzon does not defend it and does not deny it. He wrote before it and did not go back. In a volume whose whole subject is what one socialist state may do about another's internal affairs, that is the omission with the most weight on it.

Yugoslavia 1948. The Cominform's expulsion of the Yugoslav party — the first and most consequential rupture in the postwar movement — is mentioned once, and not in Leibzon's voice. It survives only inside a parenthesis in a Togliatti quotation, "the break (in 1948) with the League of Communists of Yugoslavia", offered as one reason the Information Bureau underperformed. Leibzon uses the neutral name "Information Bureau" fifteen times and "Cominform" twice. The anti-Titoist campaign that followed, and the show trials it produced across Eastern Europe, are absent: Rajk, Kostov, Slánský all return zero. So do executed and executions; the single occurrence of shot is metaphorical, inside a quotation from Jaurès.

Which brings me to the passage that concentrates the book's whole method into four lines, and which I think is the most important thing in it. Leibzon reports, accurately, the statement of February 1956 in which five parties reviewed the Comintern Executive's decision to dissolve the Communist Party of Poland:

That decision was declared unjustified and the data, on the strength of which it had been adopted, fictitious and doctored by provocateurs.

Every word of that is true. The KPP was dissolved in 1938 on fabricated evidence. What Leibzon does not write is that the party's leaders were summoned to Moscow and shot, that the fabricators worked for the Soviet security organs, or that the Comintern Executive was executing an instruction. He records the forgery and deletes the forger. And then he tells the reader what the episode means: the 1956 statement "was seen by the Communist Parties as a step in strengthening trust among the Parties, ensuring respect for their sovereignty". A national section of the International was destroyed and its leadership liquidated, and the lesson is a confidence-building measure. The fact is admitted, the agency is deleted, the moral is administrative. Once you have seen that shape you see it everywhere in the book.

None of which makes it a worthless volume, and I want to be precise about what is good in it, because the credibility of everything above depends on it.

Leibzon is a real archival historian and roughly the middle third of this book is institutional history that is genuinely hard to obtain in English. He gives the composition of the Comintern Executive as fixed by the First and Second Congresses, and the sixteen countries and regions granted full voting powers. He reconstructs the whole diplomacy of the 1957, 1960 and 1969 international meetings: the 26-party commission set up after the Romanian congress and sitting from 1 to 22 October 1960; the Karlovy Vary conference of 24–26 April 1967 with its attendance and, more usefully, its list of absentees — Yugoslavia, Romania, Norway, Iceland, the Netherlands, Albania; the drafting subgroup of eight parties for the Berlin conference and the number of times its editorial commission met. He records that Mao endorsed the 1957 Declaration in public at Moscow University and disparaged international meetings at Tsingtao on 20 July 1957 in a speech the Chinese press did not print. Whatever one makes of the framing, this is a scholar using archives, and the anti-Stalinist tradition has no comparable narrative of these bodies.

More than that: he states the real problem honestly, and section 3 of this series' brief obliges me to say so. How does an international movement bind its members without one party commanding the rest? That was the Fourth International's problem too, and it has never been comfortably solved by anyone. Leibzon's answer is drawn from Lenin on the Stuttgart Congress of 1907:

Formally, the decisions of the international congresses are not binding on the individual nations, but their moral significance is such that the non-observance of decisions is, in fact, an exception

— and Leibzon's own gloss is that even under the Comintern, whose decisions were formally binding, Lenin stressed "not the organisational, but the moral aspect" of that obligation. That is a serious reading, and it is close to right. He then reports, with real fairness, the procedural argument at the Budapest consultative meeting and the 1969 Moscow meeting about whether decisions must be unanimous. He gives the case against unanimity in the words of the Argentine communist Rodolfo Ghioldi, who said the meeting "does not represent a single centre, though this does not mean that it is being conducted anarchistically, or that the minority can impose its opinion on the majority". And he reports the mechanism the

parties settled on:

when a Party disagrees with a draft decision, its dissenting opinion is written into the protocol, the Party having the right to sign only that part of the document with which it agrees.

That is a genuine institutional invention and Leibzon is right to be interested in it. A reader who wants to understand how the 1969 document came to be signed in fragments will learn it here and almost nowhere else.

The trouble is what the argument cannot survive contact with. A doctrine of purely moral international discipline is a fine thing in a movement of parties out of power. It becomes something else when one of the parties commands the largest army in Europe and has twice used it inside the movement's own territory. Leibzon's book never puts those two facts in the same room. The moral-obligation theory is developed at length in chapter III; the tanks are not in the book at all.

The answer from the other side of the split is locatable, contemporaneous, and unusually well matched to this particular volume. On the Comintern's inner history — the years Leibzon spent in the archives — Trotsky's *The Third International After Lenin* (1928) is the direct ancestor of this critique, and it attacks precisely Leibzon's claim that the Comintern fostered its sections' independence. Trotsky's account of the "Bolshevization" of 1924 is that "A revolver was held at the temples of the leading organs of the communist parties with the demand that they adopt immediately a final position on the internal disputes in the CPSU without any information and any discussion" (ch. II, part 4), and that the Executive Committee was repeatedly reconstructed by the CPSU leadership "in complete disregard of the statutes of the Comintern" (ch. IV, part 1) — the same statutes Leibzon quotes. Trotsky's underlying objection is the one Leibzon's title raises and never confronts: that "the national orientation of the proletariat must and can flow only from a world orientation and not vice versa. Herein lies the basic and primary difference between communist internationalism and all varieties of national socialism" (ch. I, part 1).

On the Sino-Soviet split, which is chapter II's real subject, the Fourth International's own assessment was adopted at its Eighth World Congress in June 1965 and printed as "The Sino-Soviet Conflict and the Crisis of the International Communist Movement", *International Socialist Review* vol. 27 no. 2 (Whole No. 175), Spring 1966, pp. 76–85. It is not a partisan document for either capital. It criticises Peking on five named counts, beginning with "Peking's campaign to

rehabilitate Stalin", and it makes the point Leibzon's institutional narrative is designed to obscure — that the pro-Peking bloc was internally various "despite the facade of monolithic unity". Two hostile analyses of the same object, arriving from opposite directions, tell a reader more than either alone.

On the 1969 Moscow meeting, which Leibzon's contents page calls a "Major Victory of Internationalism", the contemporaneous report is "Moscow Conference Deepens Split with Peking", *Intercontinental Press* vol. 7 no. 24, 23 June 1969. The same issue prints something Leibzon's chapter has no room for: the appeal of 1 June 1969 from ten Soviet civil-rights activists — several of them party members, one the wife of the imprisoned Major General Pyotr Grigorenko — addressed to the delegates then assembling in the Kremlin. It opens: "We are appealing to the international conference of Communist and workers parties in regard to the revival of Stalinist methods in our country." On 6 June, while the conference sat, five Crimean Tatars and Pyotr Yakir's twenty-year-old daughter demonstrated near Red Square and were arrested. Leibzon devotes a chapter section to that conference. None of this is in it.

And on Poland, where the book's silence is loudest, *Intercontinental Press* covered the August strikes weekly and from inside. See Ernest Harsch, "Polish Workers Score Major Victory", and Jean-Yves Touvais, "How the Polish Strikers Are Organizing", with the full text of the 21 Demands of the Gdańsk strikers, in vol. 18 no. 33, 8 September 1980; Gerry Foley's "Free Unions Open New Stage in Workers' Struggle" and "35 Years of Struggle for Workers' Democracy and Socialism", together with "Kremlin Blames 'Antisocialist Elements'", in vol. 18 no. 34, 15 September 1980; and the interview with Anna Walentynowicz, the crane operator whose sacking began the Gdańsk strike, in vol. 19 no. 21, 8 June 1981 — she is the worker whose sacking, in *Intercontinental Press's* words, "precipitated the Gdansk strike of August 1980". (These scans carry a systematic b→h substitution; I have corrected it silently where quoting.) The point is not merely that Leibzon is silent. It is that an independent trade union of ten million members in a socialist country was the single most searching test the doctrine of socialist internationalism had ever faced, and this book — revised, demonstrably, while it was happening — declined to take it.

Leibzon's Conclusion ends where the manuscript really ended, in 1979: "In response to China's aggression against socialist Vietnam, most of the Communist Parties at once took a clear-cut stand by condemning the aggressor." He offers it as

proof that "communist unity has deep roots". In the December of the year this translation carries, martial law was declared in Poland, and it was that — the one event the book had been revised past and declined to mention — which brought Berlinguer to declare the propulsive force of October exhausted, the rupture the Italian party called the strappo. Within a decade the movement whose cohesion this book set out to explain had ceased to exist. The publisher's own blurb promises that "The author does not shun sharp political issues." He was a better historian than that sentence suggests and a more careful one than his 1977 collaboration allowed. He shunned exactly three: the tanks in Prague, the troops in Kabul, and the shipyard in Gdańsk.

ARTS & LETTERS

Dmitry Shostakovich: About himself and his times

Everything Shostakovich got into print between 1926 and 1975 - articles, congress speeches, interviews, programme notes - arranged by year and footnoted to the page it appeared on. The public voice, complete and checkable. New critical introduction by Dmitry Chasovennikov.

Dmitry Shostakovich

Introduction to the 1981 Edition

The compilers of this book tell you exactly what they have done, in one sentence, and the sentence is worth more than the two hundred pages of commentary that surround it: "The compilers have included only material intended for publication by Shostakovich himself, more or less ignoring his personal correspondence." That is the whole volume. Dmitry Shostakovich: About Himself and His Times is not a memoir and does not pretend to be one. It is an anthology of everything a Soviet composer was able to get into print between 1926 and his death in 1975 — newspaper articles, congress speeches, radio interviews, concert-programme notes, obituary tributes — arranged strictly by year, each item footnoted to its source in Pravda, Izvestia, Sovetskaya Muzyka, Literaturnaya Gazeta or a provincial evening paper. L. Grigoryev and Ya. Platek supply, for each year, a short chronicle of premieres, prizes, tours and illnesses. Shostakovich supplies the rest.

The compilers are candid about why the letters are missing. They quote Shostakovich on Chekhov: "I am very sorry that Chekhov's correspondence with Olga Knipper has been published, much of it being so intimate that one would rather not see it in printed form." One can respect the scruple and still notice that in the Soviet case it removes the only body of evidence in which the man says what he thinks. The letters to Isaak Glikman, published later, are a different Shostakovich altogether. What remains here is the public voice — and the public voice of a Soviet artist between 1936 and 1953 was not a voice he owned.

What 1981 was for

Six years after his death, and two after Solomon Volkov's *Testimony* appeared in New York in 1979, presenting itself as memoirs dictated to Volkov in the composer's last years, Moscow published a large collection of Shostakovich talking about himself. The timing is not a coincidence, and the book does not admit the connection. Volkov is not named anywhere

in it. Neither is *Testimony*. There is no preface acknowledging a dispute, no rebuttal, no footnote. The reply is the book's existence and the book's method: every item sourced, every date given, nothing that Shostakovich did not put his name to in a Soviet publication.

That method is a real strength and should be said so. As documentation of what was printed under his name, this is a careful and useful compilation, and it can be checked. The dispute over *Testimony* remains genuinely open. Laurel Fay showed in 1980 (*The Russian Review*, vol. 39 no. 4) that the opening page of each chapter reproduces the opening of an article previously published under Shostakovich's name in the USSR, and that the pages he is said to have signed were precisely those pages; Allan Ho and Dmitry Feofanov mounted a long defence in 1998; the argument has not been settled, and this introduction does not settle it. But the reader should see what the two books are doing. *Testimony* claims to give the private man. This volume gives the public record and implies that there was nothing else to give. Both claims are too strong. The truth is that the public record exists, is here, is verifiable — and cannot be read as though it were testimony freely given.

January 1936

Here is how the book handles the most famous week of his life. From the chronicle for 1936: "While he was there he read an article in Pravda entitled 'Cacophony Instead of Music', which harshly and unfairly criticised the opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. The composer returned immediately to Leningrad." (The article, of 28 January 1936, is usually rendered in English as "Muddle Instead of Music"; the volume's translators have chosen a different word.) It is unsigned in Pravda and unattributed here. The commentary does not say that Stalin had attended a performance two days earlier and left before the end, does not say the article was understood at once as a death sentence, and does not say what happened to the opera — which disappeared from the Soviet

stage for a quarter of a century.

What it says instead is this: "Shostakovich took the unfair criticism very badly, but did not let it lead to depression or a decline in creativity. On the contrary, even under these conditions he sought to analyse his work carefully, to spot his own strengths and weaknesses and to extract a grain of sense even from such groundless and unjustifiably severe criticism."

That last clause is the compilers' governing idea, announced in their introduction, and it deserves to be named for what it is. Their Shostakovich is a man who profits from being denounced. It is a way of describing terror as pedagogy.

Then the Fourth Symphony. The chronicle: "In December the Leningrad Philharmonic, under Fritz Stiedry, prepared the symphony for its premiere, but at the last minute — after the final rehearsal — the composer decided to call off the performance." Decided. It is a sentence with the pressure taken out of it. And the book then, without meaning to, supplies the correction. In *Sovetskaya Muzyka* No. 9 of 1956, in a long autobiographical piece written on his fiftieth birthday, Shostakovich wrote: "My Fourth Symphony, which has not been performed by an orchestra, was also a failure, although I am pleased with one or two parts of it." Five years later the chronicle for 1961 records: "By agreement with the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, the composer returned to the music, but found no reason to change anything."

Not one note. A man who calls a work a failure in print and then restores it unaltered was not telling you, in print, what he thought of it. This is the most important thing the volume demonstrates, and it demonstrates it against itself.

1937, and the people who are not in it

The chronicle for 1937 opens: "This year marked the start of a period of renewed creative and public activity in Shostakovich's life." It covers the premiere of the Fifth Symphony on 21 November, Alexei Tolstoy's rhapsody in *Izvestia* — "Glory to our age for showering the world with such an abundance of great sounds and thoughts!" — a piano concerto in Tbilisi, film scores, and a new teaching post. "In short, he was entering a period of maturity and flourishing."

The Terror is not mentioned. Not the word, not the fact, not one name. Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky, who appears repeatedly in the earlier chronicles as the composer's protector — it was Tukhachevsky who, learning of Shostakovich's "material straits", had the Leningrad command find him work

— was shot on 12 June 1937, five months before the Fifth Symphony was played. The book contains a warm and evidently sincere memoir of him, published in Marshal Tukhachevsky (Moscow, 1965), in which the friendship "lasted more than ten years and was terminated by his tragic death". That is the whole account of the execution. Vsevolod Meyerhold, in whose flat Shostakovich lived while writing *The Nose*, was arrested in June 1939 and shot in Moscow in February 1940. The chronicle for 1940 concerns the Piano Quintet, its rapturous reception, and its nomination for a Stalin Prize. The late recollection of Meyerhold printed here ends on the director's "constant aspiration to move forward, to keep searching, and always to say something new." How he stopped is not stated.

Something else is missing from 1937, and its absence is instructive in the other direction. The Fifth Symphony is universally known by a subtitle — "a Soviet artist's practical creative reply to just criticism" — that appeared in the press around the time of the premiere and has been quoted ever since as though he coined it. It is not in this book. A volume that reprints his published statements for that period item by item, with citations, does not include the most quoted sentence ever attached to his name. Its authorship has never been established, and the compilers, who had the files, evidently could not source it to him.

1948

On the Zhdanov decree the volume gives more than one expects, and less than it should. Andrei Zhdanov is not named in the book at all. The chronicle records the Central Committee's music conference of January 1948, the resolution of February on Muradeli's *The Great Friendship*, and then this. The resolution, "as well as setting out some correct basic principles", contained "unfair and inexcusably harsh appraisals of the work of several major composers, including Shostakovich" — judgements "which were the result of the conditions surrounding Stalin's personality cult and of his subjective views in the sphere of art", and which "were rectified by a resolution of the Party's Central Committee on 28 May 1958".

This is the post-1956 formula operating exactly as designed. The decree was wrong in its "appraisals" but sound in its "basic principles"; the error belongs to a personality rather than to a system; a later resolution fixed it; the file is closed. Nothing is said about what the decree did — the removals from the conservatoires, the works struck from the repertoire,

the public confessions demanded and given. Of Shostakovich's own speech the compilers say only that "as always, he strove to derive benefit from any well-meant criticism, while at the same time renouncing none of his compositions".

Then they print him. From the First All-Union Congress of Composers, April 1948: "...There have been many serious faults and failures in my work, although throughout my career I have thought about the people who listen to my music... I have always heeded criticism directed against me, and tried in every way to work better and harder. Now too, I am paying heed to criticism, and shall continue to do so in the future."

And the following year, at the peace conference in New York to which Stalin personally dispatched him, the book prints his address to the arts section, including this: "The other is formalism, by which we mean art that is devoid of love for the people, anti-democratic art in which form overrules content, art which results from a pathologically disturbed, pessimistic perception of reality and from a lack of faith in the powers and ideals of man."

A year after being condemned as a formalist, he was made to stand in Manhattan and condemn formalism. In 1952 he was made to attack the American critic Olin Downes in print for misreading Prokofiev. The reader who is tempted to hold any of this against him should remember what the alternative was for a man whose patron had been shot, whose friends had vanished, and who is reliably reported to have kept a packed bag by the door. Nothing in this record is evidence of what he believed. All of it is evidence of what was extracted.

What the anti-Stalinist left said at the time

It said the obvious thing, immediately, and it was right. George Sanders, in "Josef Stalin, Music Critic" in the *American Fourth International* (vol. 9 no. 2, March–April 1948) — within weeks of the decree — noted that "the entire document fails to criticize a single specific work by any of these figures", the only named composition being an opera by an obscure Georgian whose sole performance had been "a private affair attended by Stalin and other officials". His conclusion: "The composers involved and several not even mentioned in the decree confessed their crimes and thanked the Central Committee for its 'stern but fatherly care.'" Ernest Mandel, writing as Ernest Germain in "Purge of Soviet Culture" in the same journal (vol. 10 no. 11, December 1949), set the music purge inside the wider post-war purge of the intelligentsia and recorded the consequences the 1981 volume omits. The denunciation of Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturian,

Myaskovsky, Shebalin and Popov, he wrote, "was joined with their removal from the positions as secretaries of the Union of Soviet Composers or professors in the Moscow Conservatory. Their works were withdrawn completely or in part from operatic and concert repertoires." He set against it the Central Committee's own letter On Proletcult of December 1920, which promised not "to chain the initiative of the workers' intelligentsia in the field of artistic creation", and Trotsky's warning in *Literature and Revolution* against party bodies ruling on questions they were not competent to decide.

The sharpest verdict came from inside the country. In a 1951 symposium of Soviet émigrés published in the same journal (vol. 12 no. 5, September–October 1951), a participant identified as Babenko was asked how people in the USSR regarded Stalinism, and answered: "Shostakovich, the composer, was accused of formalism which he 'repented' at once. Of course everybody understood this as a proper formality but in their minds or in a limited circle they know this is merely a demand imposed by the Stalinist regime." Ordinary Soviet listeners had worked out in 1948 what the compilers of this book still could not print in 1981.

The later silences, and what is genuinely here

Two more. On 14 September 1960 "a general meeting of the Party organisation at the Composers' Union accepted him as a candidate member of the Communist Party" — one sentence, presented as an honour, with no hint of the pressure that those close to him have consistently described. A few lines later the same chronicle records that in Dresden that summer he wrote a quartet "to be dedicated to the victims of fascism and war". The Eighth Quartet stands there in the compilers' own paragraph, doing all the commentary that is needed.

And the Thirteenth Symphony. The chronicle notes only that he began it in hospital and that it "was premiered at the Moscow Conservatoire on 18 and 20 December" 1962. The book prints his own announcement of it, movement by movement, "1. Babi Yar" first — which in a Moscow book of 1981 is not nothing. What it does not print is what happened next: the withdrawal after two performances, the revision of Yevtushenko's lines about the Jewish dead of Kiev, the years of unofficial disfavour. The volume's own chronology gives the Leningrad premiere as 13 December 1966. Four years, unexplained.

None of which touches the music, and none of it should stop anyone reading the book. There is real value in it, and it lies almost entirely in the passages where nobody was watching.

The long recollection of the Leningrad Conservatoire — the unheated classrooms of 1919, Glazunov keeping the place alive, Steinberg's four-hand analyses, Sokolov's missed lessons and the student who walked to his house instead — is a first-rate account of a musical training. So is the description of preparing the Fifth with Mravinsky: "Mravinsky subjected me to a veritable interrogation about every bar and every thought, demanding an answer to his every doubt." So is his flat statement on programme music, which cuts against decades of Western commentary: "In my case, as with many other composers of instrumental works, the programme always precedes the composition of the music" — followed by the working titles of the Seventh's four movements. The memoirs of Meyerhold and Mayakovsky are vivid and unforced. The Tukhachevsky piece is moving whatever it leaves out. And there are moments when he pushes back in the open press, in his own idiom, and they are worth marking: "All too hastily, any sign of experimentation is stigmatised as formalism, a term often applied to something which is not quite understandable or not to someone's taste... The arbitrary interpretation and misuse of the concept of formalism often discredits the creative search of a composer in the eyes of the public, obstructing this search or even putting a stop to it altogether."

Read it, then, as the compilers describe it and not as they intend it: "only material intended for publication by Shostakovich himself". That is a definition of a body of evidence, and it is the wrong body of evidence for the question everyone wants answered. The gap between the documents in this book and the man who signed them is not a flaw in the compilation. It is the compilation's subject, and it is the measure of what was done to him.