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SOVIET SOCIETY

Socialism as Social System

Seven countries' scholars describe developed socialism as a settled and permanent order - coordinated by the Polish party's own institute, in the year the Polish working class rose against it.

Tadeusz Maciej Jaroszewski and Pavel Artemovich Ignatovsky

Introduction to the 1981 Edition

This book is a portrait of a society painted in the months that society began to come apart, by a committee one of whose members was on fire. Socialism as a Social System is a collective monograph, "written by an international team of scholars from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland and the Soviet Union," translated from the Russian and issued in English by Progress Publishers in 1981. It sets out to describe "real" or "developed" socialism as a finished and lasting kind of society — mature, stable, without antagonistic classes, morally and politically united. And it was coordinated, the front matter states plainly, "by the Institute of Basic Problems of Marxism-Leninism of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party." The Polish party's own theoretical institute managed a book proclaiming the settled harmony of socialist society during the very year its own working class rose against it. That is not a detail. It is the key to the whole volume.

What the book is, and when it was written

Date the text, not the spine. The English translation is copyright 1981, but the book behind it is a book of 1980. Its statistics run out at the close of the Tenth Five-Year Plan — repeatedly it reaches "between 1976 and 1980" and stops; its authoritative political reference is the 25th Congress of the CPSU, held in 1976, which it quotes as the last word. The 26th Congress met in February 1981; this book does not know it happened. Its horizon is Brezhnev's, and specifically Brezhnev's at the moment the formula of "developed socialism" had hardened into the reigning doctrine of the Soviet bloc — the idea that the USSR and its allies had left the improvised, transitional phase behind and entered a durable social order with laws of its own.

Who wrote it, and for whom? Not a single author but an editorial machine. The editors-in-chief were Professor T. M. Jaroszewski, a Polish philosopher of the ruling party, and

Professor P. A. Ignatovsky of the Soviet Union; the chapters were parcelled out to national research teams. The introduction, the economics, the account of the socialist community's "historical role," and the conclusion were prepared by Soviet teams; the Czechoslovaks wrote on the essence of socialism, the Hungarians on the political system, the East Germans on the "socialist mode of life." And the chapter titled "Socialist Humanism. Moulding the New Man" — the chapter on how socialism forms the moral character of its people — was written by the Poles. This was a commissioned, multilateral text, an official self-description of the bloc as a bloc, produced for export in the language of international circulation. It is meant to be read as the considered voice of seven ruling parties speaking together. That is exactly what makes its silences audible.

The doctrine, stated precisely

The claim at the centre of the book is that socialism is not a passage to somewhere else but a place to stand. "Socialism is an independent, prolonged phase of development," the authors write; "Mature socialism develops on its own foundations, on the basis of the economy, policy, social and class structure, culture and ideology adequate to it." The Marxist tradition had generally treated the period after a workers' revolution as transitional — a battleground between the old society and the new, its outcome not guaranteed. The doctrine of developed socialism closes that battleground. It declares the transition essentially over and the result secure: "The conception of the developed socialist society, elaborated by the combined efforts of the CPSU and fraternal communist and workers' parties, is a great creative contribution to Marxist-Leninist theory."

From this stem the book's load-bearing propositions, each stated without hedging.

On class: socialism has produced "the first non-antagonistic socio-class structure in human history." "Under socialism," the authors write, "there are no antagonistic contradictions between classes." Classes persist, but drained of their sting —

"classes in socialist society are not classes in the traditional sense, and, to a considerable extent, lose the classic characteristics and features of classes," so that "society becomes increasingly homogeneous." Where conflicts remain they are "non-antagonistic," resolvable in principle by good management: the socialist economy, they say, aims "at a conscious resolution of the non-antagonistic contradictions of the growth of the socialist economy." The book is careful, to its credit, not to claim that all friction has vanished; it quotes Engels — "if all contradictions are once for all disposed of ... world history will be at an end" — and concedes that "difficult problems of social development" persist. But the concession is bounded in advance. The contradictions that are admitted are the manageable kind. The one kind ruled out by definition is conflict between classes — and, with it, conflict between the working class and those set over it.

On the state: the dictatorship of the proletariat matures into "the socialist state of the whole people," a state that is "many times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic." On the party: it "develops into a party of the whole people, but even so, it fully retains its class character" — quoting Bulgaria's Todor Zhivkov, the party "gradually becomes the vanguard of the people, a party of the whole people." On society as a whole: among the "advantages of socialism" the authors list "the moral and political unity of the people." That phrase — moral and political unity — is the doctrine's emotional core. It asserts that in a developed socialist society the fundamental interests of every group coincide, that rulers and ruled want the same things, that opposition can only be error or enemy work from outside. The trade unions are described in this spirit: bodies that "perform their traditional functions protecting the interests of working people," schools of communism, belts of participation. There is no room in the picture for a union that workers might have to build against the state, because there is no interest the state and the workers could hold apart.

The formula is not new in 1981. "Moral and political unity" was already the boast of the Stalin period, the companion claim to the 1936 Constitution's announcement that antagonistic classes had been abolished and society welded into a friendly union of workers, peasants and intelligentsia. What the doctrine of developed socialism adds is not a new idea but a new permanence: the harmony once presented as the fruit of a completed construction is now presented as the settled character of a mature and lasting system. And notice the shape of the central propositions. That there are "no antagonistic contradictions between classes"; that the party of a class has become "a party of the whole people" while

somehow keeping "its class character"; that the state has grown into a "state of the whole people" — each of these is built so that it cannot be contradicted by any fact. If the party is the whole people's, then a part of the people rising against it is by definition not really the people but its enemies. If contradictions are non-antagonistic by nature, then an antagonism, when it erupts, cannot be reported as one. The doctrine does not describe a society so much as equip it with a vocabulary in which its own gravest crisis has no name.

The society that could not see itself

Here the date and the coordinating institute close together like a trap. The book was assembled under the direction of the Polish United Workers' Party's institute, and published in 1981. In August 1980 — as the manuscript was being finished, or barely after — workers at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk struck, occupied the yards, and on 31 August forced the Polish government to concede the right to form trade unions independent of the party. Within a year *Solidarność* had close to ten million members. Polish workers, the leading class of a socialist state by this book's own doctrine, had demonstrated in the plainest possible way that their interests and the party's were not identical — that they wanted, and had been denied, precisely the self-organisation the doctrine said they could not need. On 13 December 1981 the regime answered with martial law and interned the union's leaders: the leading class placed under curfew by the party that claimed to embody it.

A book proclaiming "the moral and political unity of the people" and the impossibility of "antagonistic contradictions between classes" was, at that exact moment, coproduced by the ruling party of the country where the largest working-class revolt in the history of the bloc was under way. Search the text for it and there is nothing. "Solidarity" appears dozens of times — always as an abstract virtue, "proletarian solidarity," "the fraternal solidarity of all working people," never the Gdańsk union of that name. Poland enters only as a supplier of good statistics: worker-deputies in the Sejm, pupils passing to the ninth form. The chapter the Polish team itself contributed is the one on "Moulding the New Man" — the formation of socialist moral character — written by functionaries of a party whose actual working class was, in those weeks, forming a moral judgement of its own and acting on it.

This is not a case of a book being overtaken by later events. It is a case of a doctrine constitutionally unable to register the event happening around it. The theory of moral-political unity does not merely fail to predict a workers' revolt in a workers' state; it forbids one from being conceived. If interests are

unified by the nature of the system, a strike against the system can only be sabotage, foreign subversion, or false consciousness — never what it plainly was in Gdańsk, a class asserting an interest of its own against a stratum that had appropriated the state. The "social system" this book anatomises is one that has removed from its own instruments the capacity to detect its deepest conflict. That is the finding, and it is the book's structure, not an accident of timing.

The reply that was already in print

None of this required hindsight to see. The categories that make sense of Gdańsk had been set out forty-five years earlier, in Leon Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) — the book against which every Soviet account of Soviet society must be read, because it is the one that took the same object and reached the opposite conclusion by refusing the same evasions.

Trotsky's argument begins where this book refuses to look: with the Soviet bureaucracy as a distinct social formation. The apparatus that governs is not the working class in office, he wrote, but a privileged layer risen above it — "in the full sense of the word the sole privileged and commanding stratum in the Soviet society." Its relation to the nation's wealth is peculiar and unstable: "The means of production belong to the state. But the state, so to speak, 'belongs' to the bureaucracy." This is the exact conflict Socialism as a Social System declares abolished. Where the 1981 book sees "the moral and political unity of the people," Trotsky saw a society split between an unaccountable ruling stratum and the mass it commanded — the split that *Solidarność* would make visible to the world.

The point sharpens when the two books are set on the same ground. Socialism as a Social System rests much of its case on the socialist constitution and the harmony it proclaims. Trotsky had answered that move in advance, dissecting the 1936 "Stalin" Constitution that first announced the abolition of class antagonisms and the friendly union of workers and peasants. His verdict is the sentence this whole volume needs and cannot survive: "The equality of the rights of workers and peasants means, in reality, an equal lack of rights before the bureaucracy." A declared harmony that removes the citizen's power to say no to those above him is not harmony; it is the political form of subjection. The constitution, Trotsky concluded, "creates the political premises for the birth of a new possessing class" — the possibility this book treats as unthinkable stated as the live danger it was.

And on the trade unions — the institutions Gdańsk turned into the front line — Trotsky's description of what the bureaucracy

had done to workers' own organisations reads like a caption to this book's serene paragraphs. In the USSR, he wrote, there had disappeared "the democracy of the soviets, the trade unions, the co-operatives, the cultural and athletic organizations. Above each and every one of them there reigns an unlimited hierarchy of party secretaries." That is the reality behind the "school of communism" the 1981 authors praise: a union that has had the power to resist removed from it. Which is why, when Polish workers wanted a union that could actually defend them, they had to found one outside the party — and why the party's answer was internment. The book calls the Soviet-type union a protector of "the interests of working people." Poland was, in the same months, the empirical test of that claim, and it failed.

There is a test worth applying to any book of this kind, and it separates the traditions more cleanly than counting words or citations: can the categories the book uses to convict its enemies ever be turned on its own side? *The Revolution Betrayed* charges the Soviet bureaucracy with appropriating the state and expropriating the workers politically, and it names the mechanism, the stratum and the act — claims that could be shown false and that history was invited to test. Socialism as a Social System deploys "moral and political unity" and the "party of the whole people" precisely so that the reverse charge can never be levelled: by construction, the Polish party could not be in conflict with the Polish working class, because the two had been defined as one. When the conflict came anyway, the doctrine had no way to admit it except to reclassify the workers as enemies — which is, in the end, what martial law did. A theory that can only defend itself by declaring the facts hostile has stopped being a description and become an alibi.

Trotsky was equally clear that the state this book calls the crowning proof of maturity was in fact the mark of an unfinished and deformed transition. Marxism had held that a workers' state, its class enemies expropriated, would begin to wither — to hand its functions back to the people. Trotsky pointed at the opposite: a state that "at the end of its second decade of existence ... has not only not died away, but not begun to 'die away'," but had "grown into a hitherto unheard of apparatus of compulsion." Socialism as a Social System takes the same non-withering, ever-strengthening state and reads it as achievement — "the socialist state of the whole people," more democratic than any republic. The identical fact, opposite verdicts. One of the two readings had to answer to Gdańsk, and it was not Trotsky's.

The correction here is not a private opinion of one exiled

Marxist. It was the common property of the anti-Stalinist left, and readers of this series will find the same doctrine met from the same direction in neighbouring volumes of the Progress catalogue. Its companion titles execute the identical substitution of party for class in other fields — the Fundamentals of Political Economy (1980) and G. Chernikov's Fundamentals of Scientific Socialism (1988) state the theory as bedrock; and the closest sibling of all, *The Working Class and Its Allies* (1980), went to press in the same window and met the same Polish refutation, its central silence — that the socialist working class might want, and be denied, the self-organisation the book granted its Western counterpart — becoming within eighteen months the largest political fact in Eastern Europe. Socialism as a Social System is not an eccentric performance. It is one authoritative statement of a single, coordinated doctrine, and it inherits that doctrine's central blind spot in full.

What is worth keeping

A reader told that everything in a book is worthless learns nothing, and it would be false to say it here. Socialism as a Social System is not a work of scholarship in the sense of open inquiry — its conclusions are fixed before its evidence is gathered — but it is a valuable document, and parts of it are genuinely useful.

It is, first, the best single-volume statement in English of what "developed socialism" meant to the states that professed it, set down by their own theorists at the doctrine's high-water mark. Anyone trying to understand the self-image of the Soviet bloc in its last stable decade — what it thought it had built, what it thought socialism was — will find it here, stated fully and without the vagueness that afflicts many such texts. As an object of study, its very confidence is the evidence.

Second, the economic and social chapters carry a large body of real material on the bloc as it stood around 1980: the growth of social consumption funds, the extension of ten-year schooling, pension and wage structures, the mechanisms of economic integration among the member states. These figures are assembled to flatter, and must be read as advocacy, but they are not invented, and the book is a convenient compendium of the official numbers a critic will want to test against other sources. The chapter on economic integration in particular is a clear account of how the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was meant to work.

Third — and this is the book's quietest virtue — it does not claim perfection. It admits, in the chapter on the "new man,"

that "traits are still observable which run counter to socialist morality," that "non-antagonistic contradictions" persist and must be overcome. The admission is fenced off from the one contradiction that mattered, but it is there, and it distinguishes this text from the crudest triumphalism. The authors half-knew that a finished society is a contradiction in terms. They simply could not follow the thought to the place where their own social system was, that year, tearing.

How to read it

Read *Socialism as a Social System* as the considered self-portrait of a social order painted at the moment of its greatest confidence and on the eve of its crisis — a portrait made, remarkably, partly by the hands of the very party whose country was about to prove it false. Read its doctrine of moral-political unity and non-antagonistic contradictions for what it precisely claims, because the claim is stated more clearly here than almost anywhere else. Then read it against *The Revolution Betrayed*, which described the same society's real fracture line four decades before this committee declared it healed, and against Poland, which supplied the demonstration. The book's deepest interest is not what it says but what its saying it, then and there, reveals: a system that had built into its own theory the impossibility of perceiving its own crisis, published in the year the crisis arrived. Read it for the doctrine — and read Gdańsk in the margin.

PHILOSOPHY

The Making of the Marxist Philosophy

How Marx became Marx, traced document by document from the school essays to the Manifesto - the fullest Soviet study of the early writings, by a philosopher who later revised in public what he had defended in office.

Teodor Ilich Oizerman

Introduction to the 1981 Edition

The date on the spine is wrong by nineteen years, and Oizerman says so himself in his first sentence. "The first edition of this monograph appeared in 1962." What Progress issued in English in 1981 is the second Russian edition, and the preface dates that edition with some precision: it thanks Ye. P. Kandel and N. I. Lapin for reading the manuscript, it draws on the Institute of Marxism-Leninism biographies of Marx and Engels published for the anniversaries of 1968 and 1970, it registers the new Soviet edition of Chapter One of The German Ideology, and it records that the author attended the UNESCO conference on Marx in 1968. The most recent Russian scholarship it engages is from the early 1970s. The Progress dates that appear in the footnotes and bibliography — 1975, 1976, 1977 — are the translator's substitutions of English editions for Russian originals, and the book tells you so: the footnote to the Marx biography reads "Progress Publishers, 1977 (this is a translation of the second Russian edition, Moscow, 1973)". Strip those out and the text stops in the early 1970s.

So this is a book conceived under Khrushchev, revised under Brezhnev, and sold to English readers a decade after it was finished. That matters, because 1962 and 1974 are two different weather systems, and both are legible in the prose. The subject — how Marx and Engels became Marx and Engels between 1835 and 1848 — is one of the very few in Soviet philosophy where the thaw actually opened something, because the archive was opening at the same time: the second Russian and German editions of Marx and Engels, the Grundrisse, the new text of The German Ideology, and behind all of it the 1844 Manuscripts, which had been in print since 1932 and had been the property of everybody except the Soviet philosophical establishment for thirty years.

Teodor Ilyich Oizerman (1914–2017) was a real philosopher and this is a real book. He worked at the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences, became a full Academician, and was among the best-informed people alive

on the formation of Marx's thought. He outlived the state by twenty-six years and used the time to revise in public a good deal of what he had defended in it. What is in front of you is 185,000 words of close reading: the school essays, the letter to his father of November 1837, the doctoral dissertation on Democritus and Epicurus, the Rheinische Zeitung articles, the Kreuznach notebooks, the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher, the 1844 Manuscripts, The Holy Family, the Theses on Feuerbach, The German Ideology, the Poverty of Philosophy, the Manifesto. It is organised chronologically and argued from the texts.

What the scholarship is worth

A great deal, and the point of this series is lost if that is not said first and said concretely.

Oizerman does the thing that separates a scholar from a compiler: he changes his mind in print and shows his working. There is an article, "Luther as Arbiter Between Strauss and Feuerbach", published pseudonymously in Ruge's Anekdoty in 1843, which David Ryazanov attributed to Marx and printed in the first MEGA. Oizerman reviews the attribution, sets out Ryazanov's reasoning fairly — that the style fits, that Feuerbach would not have praised himself so extravagantly, that Feuerbach did not think it worth polemicising with Strauss — and then concedes the case is broken by a letter of Feuerbach's to Ruge. And he adds: "In the first edition of this monograph I also held that the article had been written by Marx." A doctrinal writer does not do that. He also disputes Ryazanov on the continuity of the League of the Just after 1839, and disputes him on the evidence rather than on his standing.

The reading of the 1844 Manuscripts is genuinely good. He treats alienated labour as an economic discovery, not an anthropological mood: "The concept of alienated labour is undoubtedly central to the MSS." He tracks Marx's derivation of private property from estranged labour, quotes the passages on species-being and on the "historical necessity of private

property", and insists — correctly, and against a great deal of what was written about these pages in both hemispheres — that the manuscripts already contain the argument that alienation is abolished by a determinate change in property relations rather than by a change of heart. The word "alienation" occurs 217 times in this book. Whatever else the Brezhnev-era Soviet academy did with the young Marx, it did not hide him.

The chapter on the Theses on Feuerbach is careful about what the first thesis actually says, and about the fact that Engels only published them in 1888. The treatment of Engels's 1841 anti-Schelling pamphlets is better than most Western accounts because Oizerman takes Schelling's "positive philosophy" seriously enough to explain what Engels was against. There is an honest running acknowledgement that Marx and Engels held positions in 1843 they abandoned in 1845, and that "On the Jewish Question" is "not quite free of Feuerbach's anthropologism". He is not smoothing the road.

And the engagement with Western scholarship is by name, at length, and from the primary texts, in four languages. Althusser's *Pour Marx*, Marcuse's 1932 *Die Gesellschaft* article, Landshut and Mayer's 1932 edition, Hendrik de Man in *Der Kampf*, Fromm, Hyppolite, Calvez, Hook, Tucker, Rubel, Cornu, Schuffenhauer, Sass, Monke. He quotes Althusser approvingly — "I believe Louis Althusser is right to emphasise the following" — on the point that the Hegel Marx argued with was the Hegel of the Young Hegelian movement, not the Hegel of the library shelf. Two hundred pages later he calls him "clearly wrong" about the 1844 Manuscripts, and the reason he gives is a good one, borrowed from A. I. Malysh: wage-labour and surplus-value "are not merely not analysed in the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, but are not even mentioned". You may think Oizerman has misread which side of the coupure Althusser stood on; the passage he quotes is the temptation Althusser sets up in order to demolish it. But he had the book, in French, and he argued with it. That is not nothing, and it was not always available.

How he handles alienation, and where the argument turns

The book's polemical spine is the young Marx problem, and it is worth watching closely, because Oizerman handles it with more skill than force and the place where skill gives out is exactly the place where the politics starts.

His position is not the crude one. He does not say the 1844 Manuscripts are a Hegelian embarrassment to be quarantined;

he calls them, for all their "immaturity and incompleteness", a work of revolutionary communist humanism. Nor does he say there is no discontinuity. His formula is that both errors are the same error: "the efforts to contrast Marx's early writings and the mature Marxist works, and those to obscure the qualitative distinctions between them ultimately square with each other." One camp turns Marx into an economist who abandoned his humanism; the other turns him into a Hegelian who never had anything else. Both, he argues, are trying to detach the philosophy from the communism. Against Marcuse he plays Marcuse's own later retraction, from *Reason and Revolution*: Marx's early works "are in every respect only preliminary steps leading to his mature theory, steps whose importance should not be over-rated". It is a fair hit.

And then the argument stops being an argument. "That is why their concentration on the young Marx is a specific form of struggle against Marxism." Note the slide: from some interpretations of the early works are wrong to interest in the early works is an act of war. And note who is called as the witness. Oizerman appends a footnote quoting the West German scholar Dieter Henrich — the printed text has "D. Heinrich" — to the effect that "The return to the young Marx is a requirement of the Marxist opposition which is aimed against Lenin. It is the password of Ernst Bloch and his followers and also of the French Marxists outside the party and many Polish, Hungarian and Yugoslav intellectuals." Oizerman's comment: "It is indicative that the contrasting of Marx's early writings and of mature Marxist works is presented as a struggle against Leninism, a valuable admission which reveals the ideological meaning of the revisionist 'Back to Marx' slogan."

Read that twice. A Soviet Academician has taken a hostile Western critic's political map of Marxist heterodoxy — Bloch, the unaffiliated French, the Poles, the Hungarians, the Yugoslavs — and adopted it as his own, in a footnote, without a word of independent argument. In 1961, when Henrich wrote, and in 1974, when Oizerman reprinted him, those were not abstract categories. Bloch had left the GDR in 1961. The Polish and Hungarian names meant Kołakowski and Lukács, and the Hungarian ones had 1956 behind them. The Yugoslav ones meant the Praxis group, whose journal was suppressed and whose professors were suspended in Belgrade in the years between this book's two editions. Oizerman does not mention any of that; he does not need to. The footnote does the work. It converts a philological disagreement about the periodisation of Marx's development into a register of political tendencies, and the register was not maintained by philosophers.

This is the genre's hard limit, and it is worth naming exactly. Everything in this book that is a claim about the texts is arguable, and much of it is right. Everything in it that is a claim about who is entitled to read the texts a particular way comes from outside philosophy and is not argued at all.

The names that are not here

Word-boundary counts, so you can weigh them. Trotsky: zero. Stalin: zero. Zhdanov: zero. Deborin: zero. Lukács: zero. Korsch: zero. "Western Marxism": zero. Dunayevskaya: zero. 1931: zero. The phrase "personality cult": zero.

Some of those are unremarkable — this is a book about the 1840s, and no one expects a chapter on the Left Opposition. Others are not. A study of the making of Marxist philosophy that discusses the reception of the 1844 Manuscripts at length, and names Marcuse, Landshut, de Man, Fromm and Althusser as the interpreters who matter, cannot name Lukács or Korsch, whose *History and Class Consciousness* and *Marxism and Philosophy* (both 1923) posed the whole question of Hegel in Marx before the Manuscripts were published, and were condemned by the Comintern for it. That absence is not a scholarly oversight. It is the shape of what could be printed.

And two presences are sharper than any absence.

M. B. Mitin appears in the honour roll of Soviet scholars who advanced the subject in the 1920s and 1930s, alongside Adoratsky, Fedoseyev, Svetlov and Sitkovsky, cited for *Issues in Materialist Dialectics*, Moscow, 1936; the accompanying footnote also cites Fedoseyev and Svetlov from *Pod znamenem marksizma*, the journal A. M. Deborin edited until January 1931, when a Party resolution condemned his school as "Menshevizing idealism" and the young philosophers who had denounced it — Mitin among them — inherited the institutions. Deborin does not appear in this book at all. Mitin's 1936 volume is offered as ordinary scholarship, and 1936 is offered as an ordinary year.

David Ryazanov appears seven times, as the authority he was: founder of the Marx-Engels Institute, editor of the first MEGA, the man who put the 1844 Manuscripts into print in 1932 — that is, the man without whom this book's central subject would not exist as a subject. Oizerman disagrees with him twice, courteously, on evidence. He does not mention that Ryazanov was removed from the Institute and expelled from the Academy in 1931, exiled, and shot in 1938. Nobody expects a Soviet monograph of 1974 to say so. But the reader of a republished text is entitled to know that the scholarly

apparatus of this book rests on an edition whose editor was killed, in a chapter that argues at length about who is trying to detach philosophy from politics.

The one moment when the present intrudes is the introduction's claim that the progress of the Soviet Union "in building a new exploitation-free and oppression-free society is, indeed, a fact that no anti-communist propaganda can detract from", and a Brezhnev quotation near the close, from *Following Lenin's Course*, warning of philosophical systems that "did not pass the test of time, fell to dust and perished ignominiously upon coming into contact with life". These are seams, not arguments. They are also, in a book about the 1840s, the only places where the twentieth century is allowed in.

The reply

There is no contemporaneous reply to cite, and the honest thing is to say so. A search across the English *Biulleten' Oppozitsii* (1929–41), the ETOL run of Fourth International (1940–56), the collected English Trotsky, Intercontinental Press (1968–86) and International Viewpoint (1982–2003) does not find Oizerman's name once. The anti-Stalinist left tracked the moments when the state broke into science — Zhdanov's appearance at the philosophy conference of June 1947, reported by Raya Dunayevskaya as "Freddie Forrest" in Fourth International in September 1948; the disgrace of Alexandrov the following year, reported by Ernest Germain, who was Mandel; the Lysenko affair, covered at length by R. H. Monroe and Joseph Hansen in 1951 — but it did not review Soviet monographs, and it did not follow Soviet Marx-scholarship as a field. That is a real gap in the tradition and not a point in its favour.

What the tradition did produce is a treatment of exactly this question, arrived at independently, from the other side of the line — and the interesting thing about it is how far it agrees.

George Novack's essay "Alienation", collected in *Understanding History*, was written in 1959 (he notes that the 1844 Manuscripts "did not appear in their first complete English translation until this year"). Its target is what he calls the "new socialist humanists": the intellectuals who, "impelled by the revelations at the 20th Congress and by the Polish and Hungarian events of 1956", went back to the young Marx looking for the theoretical origin of Stalinism. Novack thinks they have gone the wrong way. He grants the concept its due — "it must be admitted that the theory of alienation is by no means foreign to Marxism" — reconstructs its passage from

Hegel through Feuerbach with real care, and then says the young-Marx enthusiasts "have not gone forward to genuine Marxism, as they mistakenly believe; they have landed behind it", back among the "true socialism" of Hess and Grün that the Manifesto had already ridiculed. On the periodisation he is nearly word for word with Oizerman: "The younger Marx, swayed by Feuerbach's humanism, analysed capitalist relations by counterposing what is dehumanised to what is truly human. The later Marx viewed them in terms of class oppositions."

Two men, one in Moscow and one in New York, defending the mature Marx against an anthropological reading of the 1844 Manuscripts, using much the same evidence. The disagreement is entirely elsewhere, and it is in Novack's third paragraph, which Oizerman could not have written in any decade of his working life:

Although the social soil is different, similar sentiments are widespread in the anticapitalist countries dominated by the bureaucratic caste... Despite the official propaganda that they have at least become masters of their own destinies, the people know that the powers of decision in the most vital affairs are exercised, not by them, but by bureaucratic caliphs.

That is the whole distance between the two books. Novack can defend the mature Marx and concede that alienation is a live description of Soviet life, because he holds — following Trotsky's analysis in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), of the bureaucracy as a privileged stratum sitting on a workers' state — that the October revolution produced a society whose own estrangements are a fit subject for materialist analysis. Oizerman cannot concede it, because his introduction has already declared the society exploitation-free. So alienation, in his book, is a category that stops working in 1917. It is available for capitalism, for the history of philosophy, for Hegel, for Feuerbach, for anything at all except the room the author was writing in. And once you cannot apply the category to yourself, "the return to the young Marx" really does become an enemy manoeuvre, because the only people with a live use for it are outside.

For the method rather than the politics, the counterweight is Novack's nine lectures of 1942, revised and published as *An Introduction to the Logic of Marxism* (5th ed., Pathfinder, 1971), delivered to a party facing federal prosecution during the war. Lecture VII, "The Marxist Revolution in Logic", covers precisely Oizerman's ground — the Young Hegelians, The Holy Family, The German Ideology — and covers it in a few thousand words rather than several hundred pages, but

with the same conviction that the sequence can be reconstructed: in these writings, Novack says, "we can trace with unusual clarity and definiteness the successive stages in the evolution of the logic of Marxism." Read the two together and the difference is not in the scholarship. It is that one of them is allowed to ask what happened next.

How to read it

As a study of Marx and Engels between 1835 and 1848, this is among the more useful books Progress ever exported, and readers who want the documentary detail — the notebooks, the correspondence, the periodisation, the German secondary literature — will find it here in a density that few English-language accounts match. It has no serious rival in this catalogue and it does not deserve to be shelved with the catechisms.

Read it, then, as a scholar's book with a censor's floorplan. The rooms are well built and you may walk through most of them freely. The doors that are locked are all on the same corridor, and they all lead to the same place: the twentieth century, and the question of what the philosophy Oizerman describes so carefully was made to do after it won.

Oizerman's own last sentence about Marx and Engels is that "By the mid-1840s, Marx and Engels already regarded their theory not as a dogma but as a guide to action." He believed that. The institution that commissioned the book had settled the matter the other way, and had shot the man who edited its sources.

INTERNATIONALISM

The International Working-Class Movement: Problems of History and Theory, Volume 2

The Commune to 1904 in one continuous history by eighteen named authors - the Anti-Socialist Law, the founding of the Second International, the Bernstein debate, and the first workers' movements outside Europe.

V. V. Zagladin and others

Introduction to the 1981 Edition

Volume Two runs from the Paris Commune to the eve of the first Russian revolution — the Russian title on the reverse of the English title page reads *Rabochee dvizhenie v period perekhoda k imperializmu (1871–1904)*, the workers' movement in the period of the transition to imperialism. It is 273,000 words, and it is not a collection: it is a continuous, jointly written history, with a basic team of eighteen named authors, a further twenty-odd who supplied data, and an editorial board of six under an Editor-in-Chief, V. V. Zagladin. Its subject is the Commune and its suppression, the last years of the First International, the Anti-Socialist Law, the founding of the Second International, the Bernstein debate, the Millerand affair, the growth of trade unions and cooperatives and women's and youth organisations, the first proletariats of Latin America, Asia and Africa, and — for something like a third of its length — Russia, Iskra, and the Second Congress of the RSDLP.

The date needs settling first, because the spine is four years later than the text. Volume One carries "© Издательство «Мысль», 1976 / English translation © Progress Publishers 1980". Volume Three carries Mysl 1978 and Progress 1983; Volume Four, Mysl 1980 and Progress 1984; Volume Five, Mysl 1981 and Progress 1985. The corresponding line in Volume Two did not survive the scan — where the Russian copyright should stand, the extracted text carries only the printing codes. But the internal evidence closes the gap. The latest secondary work cited anywhere in the book is dated Moscow, 1976. The two latest events named are the Twenty-Fifth Congress of the CPSU, which met in February 1976, and the Conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe held in Berlin in June 1976, whose proceedings are cited in their 1976 printing. Nothing later appears. Given the series' consistent four-to-five-year translation lag, this is a Russian text of about 1977 reaching English readers in 1981. Read it as a document of the years

immediately after Helsinki and Berlin, not of the year Solidarity was banned.

The other change from Volume One is a matter of who signs. Volume One opened with a signed thirty-page introduction by Academician B. N. Ponomarev — a Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, as the Soviet press styled him and as Intercontinental Press confirmed at the time — and a companion introduction in this series argued — rightly, and the argument holds — that Ponomarev's pages were the most revealing thing in the book, because they stated the commission out loud: the seven volumes exist, he wrote, for "interpreting the past in the interest of the present and future". Volume Two still carries "Introduction by Academician B. N. Ponomarev" on its title page and still lists him as Chairman of the general editorial committee. But his introduction is not reprinted here. The introduction to Volume Two is unsigned, and it is a different kind of document: not a statement of purpose but a thirty-page compression of Lenin's theory of the party, of hegemony, and of the two tendencies in the working-class movement, written in the collective voice of the editorial board. The rank has withdrawn behind the institution. What it left behind is a vocabulary.

The word

The vocabulary is one word. Opportunism and its cognates occur 199 times in Volume Two, 7.3 times per 10,000 words. To see what that means, set it against the rest of the Progress catalogue: across 195 titles the rate is 1.55 per 10,000, and 76 of those books — well over a third — never use the word at all. Volume Two uses it more than nine books in ten.

It is worth correcting one thing before going further, because the correction is itself a finding. This series is often described as the catalogue's densest user of the term, and that is true of the series but not of this volume. Volume One, which ends in 1870, sits at 1.44 per 10,000 — the corpus average,

indistinguishable from a book that is not doing this at all. Volume Two is at 7.28. Volume Three (1983), covering 1905 to 1914, is at 12.91 — the highest figure in the whole catalogue, with *The World Communist Movement* (1973) just behind it at 12.80. Volumes Four, Five and Six then fall away to 3.26, 1.88 and 0.66.

So the curve is not flat and it is not an author's tic. The word switches on at exactly the point where the Second International arrives and Bolshevism is being founded, peaks in the volume covering 1905–14, and dies away afterwards. It is a period instrument. And the period it belongs to is the one in which the Soviet account of the world workers' movement has to explain why the largest, most successful socialist parties in history were, in the end, on the wrong side — and why a small Russian faction was on the right one.

Watch how the word behaves. Of the 199 occurrences, nineteen are explicitly right-flavoured ("right opportunism", "right-wing opportunists"). Six are left-flavoured. All six of the left-flavoured uses put "left" inside scare quotes; not one of the right-flavoured uses is qualified at all. The introduction states the asymmetry as doctrine:

But right opportunism is not alone. "Left" opportunism grows as a sort of reaction to it, as a manifestation of petty-bourgeois pressures on the working-class movement. Outwardly the antipode of right opportunism, it is actually no more than the reverse side of one and the same coin.

This is the move that a comparable Progress title, *A Dictionary of Scientific Communism* (1984), makes explicit when it defines Trotskyism as a petty-bourgeois opportunist current that "shrouds its opportunism with radical leftist phraseology". The scare quotes do the same work in miniature. They pre-empt the objection that the accused sound more revolutionary than the accuser: whatever a "left" opportunist says, the quotation marks have already ruled that he does not mean it. Right opportunism gets no such treatment, because right opportunism is at least what it says it is.

It is worth knowing where that particular pairing came from, because it is not the private usage of a team of historians. In December 1971, five or six years before this volume was written, the chairman of its general editorial committee published a twenty-one-page article in *Kommunist* subtitled "Trotskyism — Weapon of Anti-Communism", and closed it with a list of tasks for "our theoretical and propagandist cadres". The first of them, as Intercontinental Press rendered it a month later, was "To profoundly lay bare the anti-Leninist

essence of Trotskyism, its ideological and political kinship with open anti-Communism, with opportunism of right and 'left' persuasions". Volume Two applies that formula to the Second International of 1898. It is the same formula, and the quotation marks around "left" have survived the journey.

The other 174 uses are bare — the noun stands alone, applied to a person, a tendency or a resolution, and nothing follows. That is the real work the word does. It is not an analytical category that has to earn its application; it is a classification that removes the need for one. Nowhere in 273,000 words is the reader shown an argument for why a particular position is opportunist, as against merely mistaken.

And yet — this matters, and the volume should get credit for it — the book does sometimes concede. The test case is Jean Jaurès, whose "Opportunist propositions, which were close to Vollmar's views" the book condemns in one chapter, and whose 1902 Tours programme it mocks as satisfying "the revolutionaries by the fact that it spoke frequently of revolution, and the moderates by the fact that it was permeated with Bernsteinism". On colonialism, several hundred pages later, the same book writes that Jaurès, "by unmasking the brutalities of colonialism and its close connection with militarism, and demanding the unification of proletarians and all the working people in the fight against war ... became an enemy of the imperialists, instilling fear in them. In his practical activity against colonialism and militarism Jaurès sided with the revolutionary Social-Democrats—the followers of Marx and Engels." That is a real concession, made against the grain of the volume's own vocabulary, and it is the sort of thing that a book written purely to classify would not contain. There are others: Kautsky is criticised for his 1904 Amsterdam resolution and simultaneously credited with the Anti-Critique against Bernstein; the SPD leadership's failure is located precisely, and honestly, in the fact that at Hanover "neither Bebel nor any other leader of the party raised the question of expelling Bernstein and his supporters from the SDPG".

That last sentence is worth sitting with, because it inverts the usual complaint. The charge Volume Two lays against the German party is not that it was too harsh with its minorities. It is that it was not harsh enough — that it tolerated "a contest of views", in Kautsky's phrase, which the book quotes in order to condemn. A history written in Moscow in 1977 about a party that failed to expel its dissidents in 1899 is a history with a subject it cannot name.

Trotsky, twice

The name Trotsky appears twice in Volume Two, and forms of "Trotskyist" and "Trotskyism" four times more. That is six occurrences in 273,000 words, in a volume that reaches 1904. For comparison, Volume One — which stops nine years before Trotsky was born — manages three. Volume Three, covering 1905–14, jumps to twenty-nine, with Stalin's name appearing seven times. Volume Two is the trough, and it is the trough at exactly the point where a serious history would have to say something: at the Second Congress of 1903 Trotsky was a delegate, an Iskra supporter, and one of the men who split with Lenin over the first paragraph of the rules.

One of the two mentions is a footnote reference to a Lenin title. The other is this:

The drive of the overt opportunists to exclude any mention of the dictatorship of the proletariat from the programme was supported by Leon Trotsky, one of a group of vacillating Iskristis which shortly afterwards was to form the nucleus of a new opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic movement, Menshevism. While posing as a champion of the dictatorship of the proletariat, he asserted that it would be possible only when the proletariat constituted the "majority" of the nation. This attitude betrayed a lack of understanding of the essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat and a general disregard for the role of the many millions of peasants as an ally of the working class in revolutionary struggle.

Read the first two sentences against each other. In the first, Trotsky supports excluding any mention of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the second, he is a champion of it who attaches a condition. Both cannot be true, and the second is the one the book's own source — the published minutes of the Congress, cited to page 136 — will bear. The first sentence is not a report; it is an amalgam, of the kind this series has now been caught making three times over Brest-Litovsk, where Trotsky is regularly given Bukharin's position. The mechanism is the same: place the man in the company you want him judged by, then let the reader supply the rest. What is being paid for here is the word "supported", which does all the work and rests on nothing.

There is a document that settles it, and it was written in 1903 by one of the delegates. Trotsky's Report of the Siberian Delegation is his account of the Congress to the organisation that sent him, published the same year. On the programme debate he records that there was, in effect, no fight — and he names the critics. They are the same two men the Soviet volume names, without him among them:

The congress did indeed give us a program, or more precisely, it adopted without basic corrections the draft program presented by the editorial board of Iskra and Zarya. But although this part of the work was without any doubt positive, there is nothing to be said about it, because in reality the congress only affirmed that in this field "all was going well". The critical voices of Comrades Martinov and Akimov and a few delegates of the Bund were raised in isolation.

He is explicit that he was inside the Iskra organisation, that the Iskra bloc had voted as one on the programme, and that the split came afterwards and over something else entirely: the differences "blew apart the Iskra-ists compact majority which had unanimously repulsed the federalist pretensions of the Bund, designated Iskra as the organ of the Party and adopted the program presented by the editorial boards of Iskra and Zarya", and "The first point of the statutes — the definition of the concept of 'party member' — served as the basis of the first open clash." That is also what Volume Two's own narrative says happened, a few pages later, when it comes to describe the paragraph-1 debate and the division of the Iskra-ists into "hard" and "soft". The book contains its own refutation; it simply does not set the two paragraphs beside each other.

As for the placing of Trotsky at the "nucleus" of Menshevism, he answered that charge in 1927, in his letter to the Bureau of Party History — printed ten years later as part of The Stalin School of Falsification — and the answer concedes more than the accusation requires:

I was of that "minority" (menshinstvo) of the Second Congress (1903) from which Menshevism subsequently developed. I remained politically and organizationally associated with this minority only until the autumn of 1904 ... In 1904, that is, twenty-three years ago, I broke politically and organizationally with Menshevism. I never called myself or considered myself a Menshevik.

The first sentence is an admission, and a fuller one than most polemicists make about themselves. The last is the part Volume Two's formula is built to make unsayable.

The rest of the passage is more interesting than the smear, because it is the whole quarrel of the next thirty years compressed into two clauses and then sealed. The charge is disregard for the peasantry — which is the standing Soviet charge against the theory of permanent revolution. But the phrase "permanent revolution" does not occur in this volume. Neither does "socialism in one country". Trotsky's position is

never stated, so it cannot be examined; only the verdict on it survives. And the volume's own unsigned introduction, some six hundred pages earlier, has already written a sentence that a reader allowed to compare the two would find hard to unsee: that Lenin concluded "the proletariat could and should now be the leader not only in the socialist but also in any people's, including bourgeois-democratic, revolution", and that "proletarian leadership of the democratic revolution was the foundation and guarantee of the possibility for its development into a socialist revolution."

Lenin and Trotsky did genuinely differ in these years — about the class character of the provisional revolutionary power, about whether it would be a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry or a proletarian dictatorship leaning on the peasantry. That is a real argument, and it was argued in public. It is not the argument this book reports. This book reports that one of the two men had a "general disregard" for the peasantry, and then stops.

The silence that is in period

Every introduction in this series has to be careful about absences. A history that closes in 1904 cannot be blamed for not mentioning the Moscow Trials, the POUM, the Popular Front or Kronstadt, and the nil returns on all of those tell us nothing at all. Stalin's name occurring zero times in a book about the nineteenth century is chronology, not evidence.

There is one absence in Volume Two that is not chronology, and it is decisive, because it falls squarely inside the volume's own dates.

Rosa Luxemburg is one of this book's heroes. She appears some forty times, always favourably where the book's politics allow: the first to answer Bernstein, the author of *Social Reform or Revolution*, the mover of the anti-militarist resolution at Paris in 1900, the one leader of the German party who demanded mass action against the intervention in China. Her disagreement with Lenin over the right of nations to self-determination is stated openly and argued against, at length and by name — which is exactly what a scholarly book should do.

Volume Two also devotes two full chapters to the founding of the Bolshevik party. It narrates the paragraph-1 dispute with Martov clause by clause. It quotes Lenin's *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* nine times, including the "state of siege in the Party" passage in full. And in 1904, in *Neue Zeit*, Rosa Luxemburg published a reply to *One Step Forward, Two Steps*

Back — an argument that Lenin's organisational conception was an ultra-centralism carried over from the Blanquist conspiratorial tradition, that it mistook the discipline of the factory for the discipline of a class, and that the errors of a genuinely revolutionary movement are worth more than the infallibility of the ablest central committee.

That text is not mentioned. Not refuted, not misrepresented — absent. The word "centralism" and its cognates occur fifty-nine times in the volume; the one contemporaneous critique of Leninist centralism from inside the revolutionary wing of the International, published within the volume's own terminal year by the volume's own most-admired witness, is not among them. This is the shape the falsification actually takes in a book of this quality. It is not that things are said which are untrue. It is that a document is left out, and the reader is never given the chance to know that the argument had two sides before 1917.

Where the present intrudes

A book about 1871–1904 has, on the face of it, no occasion to cite the leaders of the French student revolt of May 1968. Volume Two does. In chapter 11, discussing Lenin's theory of the party, the "ultra-left ideologues" who "contend that 'any organisation and any programme inevitably paralyses' the movement" are footnoted to Sauvageot, Geismar, Cohn-Bendit and Duteuil, *La révolte étudiante* (Paris, Seuil, 1968). Two footnotes later, Roger Garaudy's *L'Alternative* (Paris, 1972). In chapter 12, the exponents of "left" opportunism are traced "beginning from G. Sorel and other ideologues of anarcho-syndicalism ... to some 'neo-Marxists' of the Frankfurt school and also Jean Paul Sartre, Paul M. Sweezy, Andrée Gorz, and other spokesmen of petty-bourgeois radicalism", with Sweezy cited to *Monthly Review* for December 1967. In the same chapter, "Works penned by anarcho-syndicalists and Trotskyists invariably misrepresent the fundamental character of the differences in the international proletarian movement", and "'left'-opportunist, Trotskyist, and similar interpretations of many problems of the working-class movement of this period are often used also by rabid bourgeois anti-communists."

So the enemies list of 1968–76 is imported wholesale into a history of the 1890s, and the same two-front schema — right opportunism and "left" opportunism, twin faces of one coin — is used to sort both centuries. The classification is not a finding about the Second International. It is a template, and the book applies it forwards.

Two of the names deserve a note. Roger Garaudy and Ernst

Fischer are introduced together as "present-day spokesmen of revisionism" who "distort the historical facts in order to belittle the significance of the Leninist stage in the development of Marxist theory." What the reader is not told is what these two men had recently done. Fischer, the Austrian party's leading theorist, and Garaudy, for years the French party's official philosopher, were both expelled from their parties around the turn of the 1970s, after publicly opposing the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Czechoslovakia 1968 is not mentioned in this volume. It could not have been, in a book that ends in 1904 — except that the book has already reached forward to 1972 to name the men, and having reached that far, it tells the reader they are revisionists about Lenin's early philosophy, and nothing else.

One further intrusion, of a different kind. Twice in the account of the Second Congress the authors footnote a historical claim to M. A. Suslov's *The Second Congress of the RSDLP and Its Worldwide Historic Significance* (Moscow, 1973). Once they footnote the assessment of the Congress's significance to a resolution of the CPSU Central Committee dated 4 April 1973. These are chapters otherwise built on the published Congress minutes, on Lenin's *Collected Works*, on Krupskaya's memoirs and on the archives. In the middle of that apparatus sit a citation to a serving member of the Politburo and a citation to the Central Committee itself, on a question of what happened in Brussels and London in 1903. That is the institutional fingerprint, and it is more revealing than any adjective.

What is worth having

None of the above should be allowed to obscure what this book mostly is, because a reader told that the whole of it is propaganda would be badly misled, and would also miss the best labour history Progress ever exported.

Start with a test that this series set for itself. A companion introduction here examined the Institute of Marxism-Leninism's unsigned preface to *The Hague Congress of the First International* (Progress, 1976), and found that across nine pages it contrived never to tell the reader that Bakunin was expelled. Volume Two covers *The Hague*. It says so plainly: the commission of inquiry "confined itself to recommending the expulsion of Bakunin and James Guillaume from the International for their divisive activities. This the congress proceeded to do." More than that — it criticises the Congress for the way it did so, and criticises it against Marx and Engels:

The only resolution of The Hague congress not entirely in

keeping with the line mapped out by Marx and Engels concerned the results of the inquiry into the activities of the Alliance.

Marx and Engels had wanted the Alliance expelled as a body; the commission had not had time to read the documents, was "misled by the testimony of the Bakuninists", reached no conclusion about the secret Alliance, and expelled two men instead. A book that will criticise a decision Marx pressed for, on the ground that the procedure was inadequate, is not a book that has given up on history. The same seven-volume project that produced the Ponomarev introduction produced this, and it is more candid than the preface the same Institute wrote for its own documentary edition of the Hague Congress — a 690-page volume of minutes and resolutions whose introduction never names Bakunin in his own right.

The chapter on the labour aristocracy is the strongest single stretch in the volume, and it is quantitative social history of a high order. It works from Engels's 1892 preface to *The Condition of the Working Class in England* ("They form an aristocracy among the working class"), from the British official series *British Labour Statistics: Historical Abstract*, 1886–1968, from Philip Foner, from Tom Mann's *Memoirs*, and from a genuinely contested literature: F. A. Rothstein's estimate that the labour aristocracy was between a sixth and a quarter of the British proletariat is set beside "the progressive British sociologist E. J. Hobsbawm", who "estimates that in that period the labour aristocracy in Britain comprised a maximum of 10–15 per cent of the working class", and a Soviet estimate for Germany beside both. Wage dispersion is traced across four countries and four decades, with the turning points given. Tom Mann's account of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers branch that voted five to seventy-odd against the eight-hour day — nobody opposed in principle, but "the time was not ripe" — is exactly the right kind of evidence, and it is used without sneering.

The chapter on the colonial and dependent countries is the volume's genuine scholarly contribution, and it is the reason to keep this book on a shelf. It is built on Spanish- and Portuguese-language sources that were not otherwise reaching English readers in 1981 — Rubens Iscaro's *Historia del movimiento sindical*, Hernán Ramírez Necochea on Chile, Nelson Werneck Sodré on Brazil, Leonardo Paso on Argentina, Cuban and Colombian documentary collections — and it gives the first Latin American, Asian and African proletariats a serious quantitative account: the size of the Latin American urban working class by the late 1890s, the Argentine occupational census of 1869 and the 1895 class breakdown,

the Brazilian immigration figures either side of abolition in 1888.

The section on southern Africa is unsparing and precise. The 1894 tax designed to drive peasants to the mines; African employment in gold mining rising from 14,000 in 1890 to 98,000 by the Anglo-Boer War; the masters-and-servants law of 1880 in the Transvaal and its Natal and Free State counterparts; the permit law of 1899 with its ten-pound fine or twenty lashes; the compounds, the tuberculosis, the death rates; the 1891 Natal wage of £2 2s for an African against £5 13s for a white worker; the 60,000 Chinese indentured miners sanctioned in 1904. And then, having established all that, the book does not flatter the white labour movement it is describing. Of the 1884 Kimberley strike against body searches, which cost seven workers' lives and won the abolition of searches for whites: "The strikers were satisfied by this, although the humiliating procedure was preserved for the Africans." That sentence would not be out of place in any modern history of South African labour.

The chapter on Bernstein is a competent, close account of the Bernstein-Debatte worked from *Die Neue Zeit*, from *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus* itself, and from the Stuttgart and Hanover congress protocols, with the votes given (216 to 21 at Hanover) and the international spread of revisionism traced country by country. And in the short section on the women's movement the book makes an admission that costs it something: "At the close of the century there was thus no women's socialist movement in any country, even in countries with hundreds of thousands of women factory workers."

Set that beside the treatment of E. P. Thompson, and you can see the two halves of this book pulling apart. Volume One cited *The Making of the English Working Class* around a dozen times and called Thompson "the progressive British historian". In Volume Two he appears exactly once. His book, its title misprinted as *The Making of the British Working Class*, sits in a footnote to a list of bourgeois historians who regard the working-class movement "as a democratic movement alien to socialist ideas". Hobsbawm is still "progressive". Thompson has been reclassified. Nothing in the intervening five years changed what Thompson wrote; what changed was which chapter of the series he turned up in.

Where to read the other side

On the Paris Commune, the counterpart text is Trotsky's "Lessons of the Paris Commune", written in February 1921 and reprinted in *The New International* in March 1935, when

that magazine was still the American Trotskyists' — it changed hands at the 1940 split and should not be cited as theirs after March 1940. Its judgement is the opposite of this book's, and harder: "The Commune came too late. It had all the possibilities of taking the power on September 4 ... The Parisian proletariat had neither a party, nor leaders to whom it would have been closely bound by previous struggles." Volume Two attributes the Commune's defeat chiefly to the immaturity of the movement and the absence of a Marxist party in the abstract; Trotsky puts the failure in a date and an opportunity forgone.

On the Second International, Max Shachtman's "The Second International in the War", in *The New International* for August 1934 — again from the magazine's Trotskyist years, though Shachtman took it with him in 1940 — locates the collapse where the Soviet volume cannot, in what the parties had become rather than in a list of named opportunists: "The great betrayal of socialism in 1914 by the Second International consisted in trampling in trench-mud the Basel anti-war resolution and the whole of revolutionary socialist tradition. The main parties of the International had become so closely interwoven with the fate and interests of the capitalist fatherland that the declaration of 1912 was little more than a heroic echo of a revolutionary past." For Bernstein specifically, Joseph Hansen reviewed Peter Gay's *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism* — the very book Volume Two cites as evidence of social-reformist historiography — in *Fourth International* vol. XV no. 4 (whole no. 129), Fall 1954, and gave a fairer account of Bernstein's motive than either: he "had the unenviable distinction of being the first after the death of Engels to break from the great founders of scientific socialism", facing "new, unanticipated facts that seemed to vitiate the prognoses of the masters".

On the labour aristocracy, where this book is at its best, the anti-Stalinist left has no settled line to offer, and that is worth saying rather than hiding. Tony Cliff's "The Economic Roots of Reformism", written in 1957 and reprinted in *The New International* in Winter 1958 — by then Max Shachtman's journal, and Cliff belonged to a third current again — quotes Lenin at length and then rejects the theory outright, on the ground that the spread and solidity of reformism across the whole working class over the following half century cannot be explained by the buying-off of what Lenin had called "an infinitesimal minority of the proletariat and the working masses". Volume Two's chapter assumes the answer Cliff denies. A reader who wants the question rather than the answer should have both.

For the specific charge levelled at Trotsky here — the leap --- over stages, the disregard for the peasantry — the answer was published in 1930 as *The Permanent Revolution*, where the position is stated before it is defended, rather than left, as here, to be inferred from the verdict. And the reader who wants the 1904 objection Volume Two omits should go to Rosa Luxemburg's *Organisational Questions of the Russian Social Democracy*, commonly reprinted under a title that was not hers, *Leninism or Marxism?* — and then, for the argument taken seriously from the other side, to Joseph Hansen's review of Isaac Deutscher's biography of Trotsky in the *International Socialist Review*, Winter 1960. Hansen quotes Trotsky's own 1904 formulation — "the party organization at first substitutes itself for the party as a whole; then the Central Committee substitutes itself for the organization; and finally a single 'dictator' substitutes himself for the Central Committee" — and then argues against it, holding that it "turned out to be no more than what it was, an exaggerated statement in a factional dispute" that needed conditions Trotsky did not then supply. A reader may side with Deutscher or with Hansen. The point is that the exchange happened in the open, in a journal of the tradition being condemned, and that nothing of the kind occurs in this book.

There is one further finding, and it is not to the Fourth International's credit. The phrase "Institute of the International Working-Class Movement" returns nothing across all 763 issues of *Intercontinental Press*, 1968 to August 1986; nothing in the *International Socialist Review*, in *Fourth International*, in *The New International*, in *International Viewpoint* or in *Inprecor*. Neither does the name of the Institute's director, nor the subtitle *Problems of History and Theory*. Boris Ponomarev, by contrast, appears in *Intercontinental Press* more than twenty times between 1969 and 1981 — always as the Central Committee secretary, never as the chairman of this history. The *Kommunist* article quoted above, no. 18 for 1971, approved for printing on 16 December that year, was reviewed by George Saunders in *Intercontinental Press* on 24 January 1972, within weeks, observing that "the Kremlin leaders have made a major move to upgrade the status of the anti-Trotskyist campaign. One of the top inner circle has been assigned to put his name to a rewritten and updated version of the old themes," and that the substance of the historical section was "to reiterate over and over: 'Trotskyism is the opposite of Leninism. It is not the continuation of it. It is the opposite, the opposite.'" The polemic was answered in a fortnight. The seven-volume Academy history over which the same man presided went unremarked for fifteen years. The polemics were easier to fight, and they were the part of the operation that mattered least.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM

The Ultras in the USA

The American right from the open-shop drive to George Wallace, documented from the Congressional Record, the hearings and the Birch Society's own press - with five hundred endnotes an American reader could check.

Vyacheslav NIKITIN

Introduction to the 1981 Edition

Vyacheslav Nikitin's *The Ultras in the USA* is a history of the American right from the National Association of Manufacturers to George Wallace, and it is a better book than a reader approaching a Progress Publishers title on American politics has any reason to expect. It is built out of the Congressional Record, the hearing transcripts of the Government Printing Office, presidential memoirs, the American academic literature, and the ultra-right's own press — American Opinion, the John Birch Society's monthly, is cited across a decade and a half. The publisher's own note at the back describes the method accurately: the book "is based on Congressional documents, Presidential memoirs, items from the press, and other American sources, as well as on special studies." It is. There are more than five hundred endnotes, and the great majority of them point at documents an American reader could have checked in an American library.

That matters, because most of what this book describes happened, and much of it was still being minimised in the mainstream American accounts available in 1981. The Smith Act prosecutions happened. The loyalty programme happened. The Attorney General's list happened. The Hollywood blacklist happened. The purge of the left from the CIO unions happened. Nikitin's numbers on the loyalty programme are the government's own: "By June 30, 1950, the government had processed 2,833,846 loyalty forms"; by Eisenhower's inauguration "the FBI had run 4,722,278 name checks on government employees and job applicants." His account of the machinery is exact and unhysterical. He quotes Seth Richardson, chairman of the Loyalty Review Board, telling investigators they were under no obligation to give an employee the reason for his discharge — "No person," read the board's statement, "has an inherent or Constitutional right to public employment. Public employment is a privilege, not a right." He sets out, in a sentence that could stand as the epigraph of the whole period, the trap a witness faced before a congressional committee: "for violation of the Smith Act, if he acknowledged membership in the Communist Party; for

perjury, if he denied association with the Communists; or for contempt of Congress, if he refused to answer the committee's questions."

He is good, too, on the long American pedigree of the thing, and he lets Americans say so. He opens the first chapter with I. F. Stone: "the red menace in our history is older than the Reds. . . In the 1890s the first federal income tax law was attacked before the Supreme Court as Communistic." He quotes Roger Baldwin of the American Civil Liberties Union on the 1949 Foley Square trial — "They are not being tried for a secret conspiracy. They are being tried for openly advocating the Communist program and objectives" — which is the correct legal characterisation and remains so. He notes that Robert Taft called the Nuremberg executions "a blot on the American record," and he does not have to editorialise about it. His best single page reports a Wisconsin newspaper's experiment in July 1951: of 112 citizens approached with a petition assembled entirely from the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, one would sign. "That may be the Russian Declaration of Independence," said one of those who refused, "but you can't tell me it's ours."

The closing chapters, on the ideology and the class base of the right, are the most substantial thing in the book and the least ideologically forced. Nikitin's argument is that the American ultra-right is a petty-bourgeois formation — small manufacturers, independent retailers, commercial farmers — squeezed between the monopolies and the unions, mistakenly identifying the second as an accomplice of the first, and reaching backward for a Jeffersonian America of "small, independent manufacturers, each the master of his fate." He supports it with the Final Report of the House Select Committee on Small Business, with Martin Trow's 1958 study in the American Journal of Sociology of small businessmen and support for McCarthy, with C. Wright Mills. On the regional political economy — the "new" capital of the South and West, outside the Wall Street–Washington nexus and therefore structurally available to the right — he is describing, in the 1970s, exactly the coalition that would put Ronald Reagan in the White House.

Which brings us to the date on the spine, and to the first thing a reader must be told.

The book does not know that Reagan exists

The word "Reagan" does not occur in this book. Neither does "New Right," nor "Moral Majority." Jimmy Carter appears four times, glancingly. A history of the American ultra-right, published in Moscow in 1981, contains no reference whatever to the political current that had just won the presidency.

The explanation is in the volume itself. Progress's own back-cover note says that Nikitin's work "provoked a lively response in the learned periodicals of the Soviet Union and other countries," and that reviews "appeared during the 70s" in *Voprosy istorii*, *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya* and *SShA*. The reviews preceded the English edition by years because the Russian text did. The internal evidence agrees: the citation density collapses after 1976, with a handful of 1977 and 1978 references and effectively nothing after. The single genuinely 1981 item in the book is the epigraph in the preface — a passage from the Central Committee Report to the 26th Party Congress, which met in February 1981, quoted from a *Novosti* pamphlet of that year. This is a mid-to-late-1970s Soviet monograph with a fresh preface bolted on and a new date on the copyright page. Read it as a book of the détente years, written to explain to Soviet readers why détente was in trouble, and the strange shape of it — the enormous weight on McCarthy, the thinness on the seventies, the confident closing line that "the government of the USA began speaking the language of cold war, as it did decades ago" — resolves.

That closing line is also the commission. This is not a disinterested history. It was written to establish that hostility to the Soviet Union in the United States is the work of a reactionary faction rather than a settled policy of the American state, and that the American right is the enemy of American liberals and trade unionists as much as of Moscow. The first half of that proposition is a diplomatic position. The second half happens to be true, and the book proves it.

The unexamined mirror

Search this book for the words Stalin, samizdat, Sakharov, Solzhenitsyn, or Gulag, and you will find none of them. The Moscow Trials are not mentioned. The year 1937 appears five times, always in connection with an American organisation founded in it. Article 70 of the RSFSR Criminal Code — "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda," the statute under

which Soviet citizens were prosecuted for what they said and wrote throughout the years Nikitin was writing — does not appear, and could not.

The silence is not incidental to the book; it is structural, because the categories Nikitin has assembled to indict the United States are precisely the categories that describe the state he was writing in. He is outraged, correctly, that men were imprisoned for what they advocated rather than what they did. He is outraged, correctly, that a citizen could be ruined by a secret informer whose evidence he was not shown. He is outraged, correctly, that an official list of proscribed organisations was compiled by the executive and used to destroy them, that membership in a lawful body was made grounds for dismissal, that loyalty was made a condition of employment and adjudicated by boards that were "investigator, prosecutor, and judge" at once. Every one of those sentences is a more exact description of Soviet practice in 1949, or in 1975, than it is of American practice.

In January 1980, while this book was in production, Andrei Sakharov was seized in Moscow and exiled without trial to Gorky. He was not a defendant; there was no proceeding. There was no *New York Post* to break the story, no American Civil Liberties Union to write to the Procurator General, and no court that could have reversed it.

That asymmetry is the point, and the honest way to make it is with the book's own material. Nikitin's story of the American witch-hunt has an ending, and the ending is that the witch-hunters lost. He records it himself: *Pennsylvania v. Nelson* in April 1956 striking down the state sedition laws; the Supreme Court's retreat; the eventual abolition of HUAC, of the Subversive Activities Control Board, of the Justice Department's lists — which he attributes, fairly, to the persistence of American democratic forces. A system that can be beaten by its own citizens using its own courts and its own press is not the same kind of system as one that cannot. Nikitin has all the evidence for that conclusion in front of him and is professionally unable to draw it.

The Smith Act, 1941

Here the omission is not a matter of the horizon of a Soviet scholar. It is a specific erasure, and it goes to the heart of the book's strongest chapter.

Nikitin writes: "In 1940 the Alien Registration or Smith Act was adopted at the suggestion of the House Committee on Un-American Activities." Then: "In the years after the war the

Smith Act became one of the right's chief weapons in its struggle against the Communist Party." Then he goes directly to 17 January 1949 and the eleven Communists on trial in New York.

Between 1940 and 1949 there is a gap, and in it stands the first prosecution ever brought under the Smith Act. On 15 July 1941, twenty-nine leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and of Teamsters Local 544 in Minneapolis were indicted for seditious conspiracy. Eighteen were convicted and imprisoned. The full text of the federal indictment was printed in *Fourth International*, August 1941. The immediate cause was a jurisdictional fight: Local 544 had voted on 9 June to leave the AFL Teamsters for the CIO, and Daniel Tobin, the Teamsters' president and Roosevelt's chief labour lieutenant, telegraphed the White House. Stephen Early's reply was issued the same day and quoted in the *New York Times* of 14 June 1941: "When I advised the President of Tobin's representations this morning, he asked me to immediately have the Government departments and agencies interested in this matter notified." The FBI raided the Minneapolis and St. Paul headquarters of the SWP on 27 June. Attorney General Francis Biddle announced that the party's leaders "have gained control of a legitimate labor union to use it for illegitimate purposes." The American Civil Liberties Union, after investigating, wrote to Biddle on 20 August that "the government injected itself into an interunion controversy in order to promote the interests of the one side (Tobin) which supported the administration's foreign and domestic policies." All of this was set out in *Fourth International*, October 1941, five weeks before the trial opened.

The Communist Party USA supported that prosecution. The Party was then in the phase that followed the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the Trotskyists were its most dangerous rivals on the left, and it welcomed the government's action against them. Eight years later the same statute was turned on the Communist Party's own leaders. The *Fourth International* of August 1948, reviewing the indictment of the twelve, made the connection without any pleasure in it:

It was under this very law that 18 leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Minneapolis Truckdrivers Union were indicted in 1941 and later convicted. The teachings of Marx and Lenin which are to be found in every library of the country were construed by the Justice Department as a conspiracy to overthrow the government by force and violence.

And it recorded that the CPUSA "did everything in their power

to sabotage the fight of the Trotskyists against the sinister Smith Act in the famous Minneapolis trials." The resolution adopted by the SWP's National Committee in February 1950 and printed in *Fourth International*, March–April 1950, put it in one sentence: "In 1941 the CP applauded the prosecution of the 18 Trotskyists in Minneapolis under the Smith Act which provided the precedent for their own trial and conviction in 1949."

The same journal, in the same resolution, called on the whole American labour movement to defend the Communist leaders anyway — "not out of agreement with the Stalinists or in remission of their crimes, but solely because of our unwavering adherence to the principle of class solidarity." The SWP wrote to the Communist Party's Central Committee proposing a united front against the indictments. The proposal was not allowed onto the floor of the CP's convention.

None of this is in Nikitin's book. Not the 1941 case, not Local 544, not the SWP, not the words "Trotsky" or "Trotskyist," which occur nowhere in a book largely devoted to the American left under repression. The consequence is not only that a page of history is missing. It is that Nikitin's central claim about the Smith Act — that it was "one of the right's chief weapons in its struggle against the Communist Party" — is put in the wrong tense. The Act's first weapon-use was by a Democratic administration against revolutionary socialists and a militant union local, with the enthusiastic approval of the Communist Party, and the precedent thereby established was the one that convicted Eugene Dennis.

There is a second, smaller absence of the same kind. Nikitin devotes many pages to the Attorney General's list and to the loyalty programme, and he is right that both were instruments of political proscription. The Socialist Workers Party was on that list. The most publicised individual loyalty case of the whole period — front-paged from coast to coast at Christmas 1955, and reported in *Fourth International*, Winter 1956 — was that of James Kutcher, a legless veteran and Purple Heart holder whose disability pension the Veterans Administration suspended on the ground that the Socialist Workers Party had been determined by duly authorised officials to be "an organization which seeks to alter the form of Government of the United States of America by unconstitutional means." Public outrage forced the VA to rescind the suspension within six hours of the story appearing. Nikitin's chapter on loyalty tests does not contain the case, because it does not contain the party.

Browder

The third silence is domestic to the American Communist Party. Earl Browder led it from 1930 to 1945, and his name does not occur in this book. Nor does the line change of 1939–41. Nikitin writes that in the late thirties and early forties "rightists opposed American participation in the war against Hitler," which is true; between September 1939 and June 1941 so did the Communist Party, and a history of American anticommunism that is silent on the fact leaves its central actor without a biography. When Nikitin reaches the war years he writes that the government "tolerated, to a certain degree, the activities of the Communist Party, which favored a system of collective security and in every way supported the USA's effort in the war against the Axis" — accurate for 1942–45, and reached without passing through the two years before it.

What the book is for

Read it for the machinery. Nikitin has done real archival work on how a state that guaranteed freedom of opinion in its constitution built, in a decade, an apparatus for punishing opinion — through employment rather than through the criminal law, through private employers acting under public pressure, through lists and affidavits and secret informers, and with the collaboration of the union leaderships whose members were its eventual victims. On that he is a useful and well-documented witness, and there were American historians in 1981 who were less honest about it than he was.

Read it also as a document of what a Soviet scholar of the seventies could and could not say. The book's evidence and the book's silences are the same evidence. Every count in its indictment of the American loyalty apparatus is a count that could have been laid, more heavily, against the state that commissioned it — and the reason Nikitin could publish the first and not the second is itself the difference the book is unable to name.

INTERNATIONALISM

Workers in Society

The director of the Academy's institute on the international working class, arguing against the Western Marxists who said the working class had ceased to matter - published in the year of the Polish August.

Timur Timofeevich Timofeyev

Introduction to the 1981 Edition

Of all the volumes in this catalogue, *Workers in Society:*

Polemical Essays is the one whose author had the least excuse. Timur Timofeyev was not a journalist filling a commission or a philosopher straying into politics. He directed the Institute of the International Working-Class Movement of the USSR Academy of Sciences — the body the Soviet state had created precisely to study the world's workers — and he sat as a deputy chairman of the editorial commission behind the six-volume International Working-Class Movement, the official Soviet history of the subject, also republished in this series. If anyone in Moscow was equipped to see a workers' movement coming, it was the man who ran the institute named after it. This book is his own account, in his own voice, of what the working class is, what it has become under socialism, and how its enemies misrepresent it. It went into English in the single year that answered it.

What the book is, and when

Date the text before arguing with it. The English translation carries 1981, and the printing codes confirm the year; but the book behind the translation is a book of 1979–80. Its statistics stop in 1977 and 1978 — Soviet wages "from 1960 to 1977," pension rolls "in 1977," the working class at "approximately 66–67 per cent" of the employed population in that year. Its supreme political authority is the 25th Congress of the CPSU of 1976, quoted as the last word; the 26th Congress met in February 1981 and this book does not know it happened. Its recurring lodestar is the 1976 Conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe in East Berlin. The one hard sign of a later hand is a single clause noting that Zbigniew Brzezinski was National Security Adviser "from January 1977 to January 1981" — a translator's or reviser's touch on a text whose substance was fixed before Reagan took office and before the Polish summer. So this is a late-Brezhnev book, composed at the high-water mark of "developed socialism" — the doctrine that the Soviet bloc had left the improvised,

transitional phase behind and settled into a mature and lasting order — and issued for export just as that confidence was about to be tested to destruction.

What was it for? Not, on the evidence, for a sympathetic Western bookshop reader. The subtitle is honest: these are polemical essays, and the polemic runs against named living opponents. Timofeyev's targets are the Western Marxists and ex-Communists who, in the crisis of Eurocommunism — the moment when the Italian, Spanish and French Communist parties were loudly asserting their independence from Moscow — were questioning whether the industrial working class was still the agent of revolution at all: Fernando Claudín, Roger Garaudy, the sociologist André Gorz, and the "Trotskyite ideologists (E. Mandel)." The book is an in-house weapon for the world Communist movement, meant to arm cadres against the argument that the proletariat had been dissolved by the "scientific and technological revolution" into a shapeless mass of employees. It is the Institute's contribution to holding the line on the one doctrine the CPSU could not concede: that the working class, and no other force, remains "the leading revolutionary and creative force" of the age.

Give the book its due on that ground, because much of it is competent and some of it is sharp. Timofeyev's running quarrel with the Western sociology of "post-industrial" society is not foolish. When he catches the U.S. Department of Labor's own bicentennial history conceding, through its Secretary of Labor, that "in America there was no working class as a clearly defined social group," and then quietly reprinting the 1905 preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World — that "the working class and the class of employers had nothing in common" — he has caught official America trying to talk a class out of existence while its own documents record that class declaring war. His insistence that the growth of white-collar and technical labour enlarges the working class rather than abolishing it, that the engineer converted into a salaried employee is closer to the worker than to the owner, is a serious position with Marx behind it, and he argues it with real material. On the terrain he chose — the theory of the working class in the capitalist West — this is a book that

knows its opponents and lands blows.

The doctrine: the class that became the master

The book's spine, though, is not its Western polemic. It is a claim about the East, stated with a confidence that makes it the clearest single statement of the doctrine anywhere in this series. The working class, exploited and propertyless under capitalism, is transformed by the October Revolution into the ruling class of a new kind of state — and then into something more than ruling. Timofeyev writes of "the transformation of the proletariat, formerly an object of exploitation and oppression, into a new social class" — "the socialist working class which is now the real master of its country." That is the hinge of the whole book. Under capitalism the worker is an object; under socialism he is the master. The dictatorship of the proletariat, he explains, "is nothing else but the rule of the working majority over the overthrown exploiting minority"; and once the exploiters are gone and their return foreclosed, even that becomes unnecessary, so that "the Soviet state ceased to be an organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat and turned into the state of the whole people." The class that seized power has so completely won that it no longer needs to rule as a class: it has become the nation.

Two further propositions complete the picture. First, the socialist working class governs through participation, and the chief instrument of that participation is the union: "the trade unions which embrace practically the entire working class, the working intelligentsia and large contingents of agricultural workers." Note the verb — embrace. The union is universal, all-encompassing, a body that takes in the whole class rather than one the class builds for itself. Second, the old wound of class society, the split between those who work with their hands and those who work with their heads, is healing: "the scientific and technological revolution brings the working class even closer to the engineering and technical intelligentsia." (The intelligentsia, in Soviet usage, means the educated professional stratum — engineers, teachers, scientists, managers.) Worker and specialist are converging, the book says, into an ever more homogeneous socialist people, welded by a shared Marxist-Leninist outlook. Here the doctrine turns against Timofeyev's Western enemies from the other side: where Gorz and Mandel are accused of trying to "drive a wedge between the working intelligentsia and other sections of the contemporary proletariat," Soviet socialism is presented as the place where no wedge can enter, because the interests of hand and brain have fused.

It is a coherent and, on its own terms, an attractive story: the

wretched of one century made the sovereigns of the next. Everything in the book that concerns the West is arranged to make it shine. And it contains, at its centre, a silence so exactly shaped to the year of publication that no critic could have designed a better one.

The test: the master who may not strike

Read the two halves of this book side by side and the doctrine comes apart in the reader's hands.

When Timofeyev writes about the working class in the capitalist countries, its life is combat and self-organisation. He fills chapter after chapter with strikes — the strike battles of the 1970s in the United States, Britain, France and Italy, "protest 'days' and 'weeks,'" wildcat stoppages, factory occupations, ten-million-strong trade-union federations forcing governments to bargain. An entire section of the final chapter is devoted to "The Situation of the Proletariat in the USA and Its Struggle." For the Western worker, the proof of vitality is precisely the capacity to withhold labour, to organise against the employer, to build unions that fight. The strike is the signature of a class that is alive.

Turn to the socialist countries and every one of these things disappears — not because Timofeyev reports their absence but because his frame cannot contain them. There are no strikes in his GDR, no stoppages in his Poland, no independent unions anywhere in the bloc, because the class that would call them is defined as the master already in possession. The "leading role" of the socialist working class is measured instead in participation: seats held, posts occupied, the all-embracing union that "embraces" everyone and confronts no one. The one weapon that certifies a living class in Manchester or Detroit — the withdrawal of labour against those set over it — is not merely absent in Leipzig or Gdańsk but unthinkable, because against whom would the master strike? The book grants the Western worker the right to fight for a voice and awards the Eastern worker the voice as a fact accomplished, without the fight, and therefore without the means to test whether the voice is real.

And then it names the country. The working class, Timofeyev writes, "constitutes the absolute majority of the gainfully employed population" in "Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Hungary, Poland and the USSR." Poland appears in his book as a statistic — a mass of worker-citizens, the leading class of a socialist state by his own definition. It appears as nothing else. Search this text for the union that ten million of those Polish workers were about to build and there is nothing: the

word "solidarity" recurs constantly, always as an abstract virtue — "proletarian solidarity," the "solidarity of the working people" — never the shipyard union of that name.

For while Timofeyev's book was being set into English, the class he had crowned was demonstrating, in the plainest possible terms, that it did not feel like the master of anything. In August 1980, at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk, Polish workers struck, occupied their yards, and on 31 August forced their government to concede the one thing the doctrine says a socialist working class cannot need: the right to form a trade union independent of the party. Within a year *Solidarność* had close to ten million members — more than the British Trades Union Congress whose strength Timofeyev admired — and it asserted, inside a state that called itself the workers' own, exactly the independence he had reserved for workers under capitalism. On 13 December 1981 the government answered with martial law and interned the union's leaders. The "real master of its country" was placed under curfew by the party that claimed to embody it, in the very year Timofeyev's book announced the mastery as complete.

This is the point at which a doctrine stops being merely wrong and becomes self-refuting, and it is worth being exact about why. The failure is not that events overtook a book — books are overtaken all the time, and no one blames a 1980 text for not foreseeing 1985. The failure is structural. Timofeyev's categories were built so that the event could not be perceived even as it happened. If the socialist worker is already the master, a mass movement of socialist workers demanding what masters do not lack cannot be reported as what it was — a class asserting an interest of its own against a stratum that had appropriated its state. It can only be reclassified: as error, as backwardness, as the work of enemies. Which is, in the end, precisely how martial law described it. The book did not merely miss *Solidarność*; its central doctrine required that *Solidarność* be impossible, and when the impossible arrived, the doctrine's only recourse was the truncheon.

This finding is not this volume's alone, and the reader should not take it on one book's evidence. Its closest sibling in this catalogue, L. B. Moskvina's *The Working Class and Its Allies* (1980), went to press in the same window with the same blind spot — celebrating Western wildcat strikes and independent unionism while measuring the socialist worker's "leading role" purely in worker-deputies and elective posts — and met the same Polish refutation. So did the multinational committee volume *Socialism as a Social System* (1981), coordinated, as it happens, by the theoretical institute of the Polish party itself, which proclaimed "the moral and political unity of the people"

in the year its own working class rose against it. Three books, three teams, one doctrine, one refutation. That the pattern replicates across independent authors is what makes it a property of the doctrine rather than a quirk of one writer. Timofeyev's contribution is only to have stated the doctrine's central claim — the worker as master — in its barest and most falsifiable form, and to have done so from the desk of the man whose whole professional charge was to watch the working class of the world.

The reply that was already in print

None of this needed hindsight. The categories that make sense of Gdańsk had been set down forty-five years earlier by a writer this book damns by name — for Timofeyev's roll of enemies runs from the "Trotskyite ideologists (E. Mandel)" back to the source, the "revisionists from the left" who "falsify the proletariat's socio-political role." The source is Leon Trotsky, and the answering book is *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), the standard against which every Soviet account of Soviet society in this series must be read, because it took the same object and reached the opposite conclusion by refusing the same evasions.

Trotsky's argument begins where Timofeyev's refuses to look: with the gap between the worker and the state that is supposedly his own. Against the official claim — quoted by Trotsky from *Pravda* — that the Soviet worker "is not a wage slave" but "a free workman," Trotsky set the factory as it actually ran. "The transfer of the factories to the state changed the situation of the worker only juridically," he wrote. "The workers lost all influence whatever upon the management of the factory." And the conclusion that a Polish shipyard would underline in 1980: "In the bureaucracy he sees the manager, in the state, the employer. Free labor is incompatible with the existence of a bureaucratic state." Where Timofeyev's worker is the master of his country, Trotsky's worker has "expropriated the proletariat politically" done to him — the bureaucracy, he wrote, "has expropriated the proletariat politically in order by methods of its own to defend the social conquests." The identical worker, the identical state; master in one account, dispossessed in the other. Only one of the two readings had to answer to Gdańsk.

On the two institutions Timofeyev leans on hardest, Trotsky is more precise still. The all-embracing union — the one Timofeyev said would "embrace practically the entire working class" — is, in *The Revolution Betrayed*, an instrument turned inside out. Dissecting the 1936 "Stalin" Constitution — which first announced that antagonistic classes were abolished and

society welded into one — Trotsky read its guarantee that citizens might "group themselves" in unions and the rest, alongside its reservation of real power to the party, and gave the verdict this whole tradition of books earns: such organisations are "subordinate branches of the bureaucratic firm." A union that embraces everyone and can refuse the state nothing is not the class in possession of a weapon; it is the state in possession of the class. That is why, when Polish workers wanted a union that could actually say no, they had to build one outside the party — and why the party's reply was internment.

And beneath both institutions lies the condition the doctrine of the "master" is built to deny: not a sovereign class but a scattered one. Trotsky's word for it was atomization. The new constitution, he wrote, returned from workplace-based soviet democracy to a bourgeois ballot cast by "an atomized population"; and the regime that rose above that population, "resting upon a police and officers' corps, and allowing of no control whatever," he named "a politically atomized society." An atomized class is the exact opposite of a ruling one — a mass of individuals with no independent organ through which to act together, each facing the state alone. *Solidarność* was, before it was anything else, the sudden de-atomization of ten million people: the moment the "master" discovered it possessed nothing that a master needs, and set about building it. Trotsky had named both the condition and, by implication, the cure, four decades before the shipyard proved him right.

There is a test that separates this tradition from Timofeyev's more cleanly than any tally of citations, and it is worth stating because it is the fairest test available. Ask of any political vocabulary: can its central accusation ever be turned on the speaker's own side? Trotsky's charge — that a bureaucracy had appropriated the workers' state and expropriated the workers politically — names a stratum, a mechanism and an act, all of which could be shown false and which history was invited to test; and the Fourth International applied the same category of degeneration to its own sections when it judged they had earned it. Timofeyev's doctrine is built so that the reverse charge can never be levelled: if the socialist worker is by definition the master, then the party cannot be in conflict with him, because they have been defined as one flesh. When the conflict came anyway, the doctrine could metabolise it only by declaring the workers enemies. A theory that can defend itself against the facts only by reclassifying the facts as hostile has stopped describing the world and started supplying an alibi for those who rule it.

What survives

A reader told that a book is worthless learns nothing, and it would be false to say it of this one. Two things in *Workers in Society* hold up, and the series is the more credible for saying so plainly.

The first is the empirical record of the Western class struggle of the 1970s. Timofeyev was, whatever else, a diligent director of a well-resourced institute, and his chapters on the developed capitalist countries are dense with usable material: the strike waves of the decade country by country, the changing shape of the workforce as technical and white-collar labour grew, the sociology of the "new middle strata," the running argument over whether the working class was expanding or dissolving. Stripped of its framing, the survey of the workers' and trade-union movement of the capitalist world in that decade is a serviceable compilation, assembled by someone who read the Western literature closely in order to fight it and reported a good deal of it accurately in passing.

The second is the polemic against the liquidation of class as an analytical category — the argument that "post-industrial" society had abolished the proletariat. Here Timofeyev's target was real and his aim often true. Against the sociologists who declared the working class a nineteenth-century relic, he insisted that the salaried engineer and the office worker were being drawn into the condition of wage labour, not out of it — that capitalism "increasingly deprives the intellectual of his independent position, converts him into a hired worker," in Lenin's phrase, which he quotes to the point. A reader who wants to see the strongest Soviet case that the working class remained the central fact of capitalist society, made against the fashionable Western claim that it had evaporated, will find it stated here with some force. The irony — and it is the book's, not the reader's — is that this genuine insight about the West was precisely the insight its author could not extend to the East. He could see that the Western intelligentsia was being proletarianised into a working class with interests of its own to defend. He could not see that the Eastern working class had interests of its own to defend against the stratum set over it, because his doctrine had already declared that stratum to be the working class. The same sharp eye that would not let a Western sociologist dissolve the proletariat into "employees" let a Soviet bureaucracy dissolve the proletariat into "the whole people."

That is finally the use of this book. It is the most authoritative single statement in English of what the working class meant to the state that ruled a third of the world's Communists —

written not by a hack but by the head of the institute charged with the subject, at the doctrine's most confident hour, and issued in the exact year the class it crowned rose to say it was no master at all. Read it for the doctrine, stated more nakedly here than anywhere; read it for the honest Western reporting folded inside the polemic; and read *The Revolution Betrayed* alongside it, and Gdańsk in the margin. A book about the workers in society, published in 1981, that could not see the largest workers' movement in the history of the society it praised, is not merely mistaken. It is the finest available demonstration of what its own doctrine was built to hide.

HISTORY

History of the Middle Ages

The standard Soviet school textbook on the medieval world, a State Prize winner, in its 1982 English edition: a thousand years organised around the Jacquerie, Wat Tyler, the Hussites and Huang Chao rather than around dynasties. New critical introduction by Dmitry Chasovennikov.

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Introduction to the 1982 Edition

This is a schoolbook, and it should be read as one. History of the Middle Ages is not a monograph, not a polemic, and not a work of research addressed to adults; it is the standard Soviet secondary-school textbook on the medieval world, the volume from which Soviet children learned what the thousand years between the fall of Rome and the discovery of America had been about. Progress Publishers issued it in English in 1982, but its life was in the Russian classroom, and the register never lets you forget it. "You will learn how the working people lived at that time and how valiantly they fought for freedom and a better life," the first chapter promises its pupil, and the book keeps the promise in the second person throughout: numbered study questions close every section, a "Request to Readers" asks the child's "opinion of this book, its translation and design," and the back cover records that in 1978 the volume "was awarded the State Prize of the USSR." That last fact fixes its standing exactly. This was not a marginal production but the canonical text, honoured by the state, put into the hands of tens of millions. It is the sequel, the book itself says, to History of the Ancient World — the two together forming the world-history spine of the Soviet school course.

To read it, then, is to watch the Marxist-Leninist account of world history being taught not to cadres or to sympathetic foreigners but to twelve-year-olds, as their ordinary schooling. That is what makes it worth reprinting. The interesting question is not whether a children's textbook is subtle — none is — but what a whole society chose to teach its children as the shape of the human past, and how the master-narrative of historical materialism looked when it was boiled down to a catechism a child could recite in an examination.

Take the date lightly. The spine reads 1982 and that is the year of the English translation, but the text is older: this is the Russian textbook of the Brezhnev decades, in print and reprinted long enough to have won its State Prize in 1978, and nothing in it belongs to the 1980s. A history that stops at the

discovery of America has no contemporary events to date it by, so the usual test — what is the latest thing the author knows about? — does not bite here, and it would be idle to hunt for the absence of glasnost in a book about the fifteenth century. What dates the book is not its silences but its architecture, and the architecture is the thing to examine.

The five stages as a school catechism

The frame is announced on the first page, and it is the frame of Stalin's 1938 codification of historical materialism: history as a fixed succession of socio-economic formations, each society climbing the same staircase in the same order. "From the history of Antiquity, you have learned how people lived under the primitive communal system and the slave-owning system," the pupil is reminded; "throughout the Middle Ages, most peoples lived under the feudal system." Antiquity was the slave formation, which the child studied last year; the Middle Ages are the feudal formation, the obligatory stage between slavery and capitalism; and the whole book is the story of that one stage — "the emergence of feudalism," "its main characteristics," and "the reasons for its decline." Everything is fitted to this scheme. "Under the feudal system, two main classes existed, feudal lords and dependent peasants," and the engine of the period is the antagonism between them: "Heavy feudal oppression resulted in a fierce class struggle between the feudal lords and the peasants." The pupil is not invited to weigh this; he is set to prove it. One study question reads, flatly, "Why is class struggle inevitable under the feudal system?" — the conclusion supplied, the child's task merely to reconstruct the argument for it. The closing review of the whole book is franker still: among its final exercises the pupil must demonstrate that the feudal order was "a higher stage than the" slave-owning system, and explain why it was in turn "forced to give way to" capitalism. The necessity of the sequence is not a finding to be reached but a proposition to be defended in an exam.

What the schema selects for is the history of the labouring

majority and its revolts. Where a Western textbook of 1982 would organise the medieval centuries around dynasties, this one organises them around uprisings, and it clearly relishes them. The Jacquerie of 1358 is given a full section, its peasants credited with a clarity the book admires: "the insurgents knew who their enemies were—the feudal lords." Wat Tyler's rising of 1381 gets a chapter to itself, John Ball released from prison to lead beside him, the rebels demanding that the Church's lands be divided among the peasants and that all Englishmen be given equal rights, and the king breaking his word the moment the danger passed. The Hussite wars in Bohemia are read as "a peasant war," longer and better organised than the English and French risings. And the sequence is deliberately worldwide: the same section that treats Europe carries the rebellion of Huang Chao in ninth-century China, a peasant army led by a man "very good with a javelin and a bow," so that the child sees the class struggle as a law of the feudal world and not a local European accident. The German Peasant War of 1525 is the culmination — "the highest stage of the Reformation," the point at which "the people made an attempt to destroy the feudal system." The revolts are heroic, their defeats tragic, their leaders martyrs; the whole emotional charge of the book runs toward them.

This is genuine historical materialism, and made into a school subject it has real explanatory power. A child taught this book comes away understanding that the cathedral and the castle were paid for out of the peasant's harvest, that the three-field system mattered as much as the succession of kings, that religion and law and art all sat on a particular way of producing food and were shaped by it. That is a serious and largely true thing to teach, and it is taught with energy. But the same schema that illuminates also flattens. Because every society must occupy the same rung at the appropriate moment, the book must find "feudal lords" and "dependent peasants" everywhere, whether or not the local society was built that way — and here the strain shows most in the parts of the book that are, by the standards of the genre, its glory.

What the schema gets right, and the world it lets in

Before pressing the objection, the credit has to be paid, because it is substantial and it is the reason the book is worth anyone's time. A materialist world history that puts the producing majority at the centre — that asks what the peasant ate and how much of it the lord took, and treats the risings of the poor as the motor of the age rather than as disturbances of the peace — was, as school history, in many ways more honest and more illuminating than the great-man and national-glory

history taught to children elsewhere in 1982. It told a French or English child's Soviet counterpart that history is made by the people who work, and that ordinary human beings have fought their exploiters in every age and country. Set against a curriculum of coronations and battles, that is not a small gift, and it is a Marxist one.

The genuine breadth is the second thing to credit. This is a world history, and it means it. The Arab Caliphate gets three full sections — its rise, its structure, and, pointedly, its culture — and the treatment of Islamic learning is warm and unpatronising: Arab scholars "stated that knowledge was man's best asset"; Córdoba's schools drew "students from many European countries"; Avicenna, "the head of all scholars" in the East, wrote medical works that "remained the principal reference books" for European physicians "up to the 17th century"; and Europe is told plainly that it "acquired a great deal of valuable scientific knowledge from the countries of the caliphate." India and China are not appendices but recurring subjects, from the Chinese peasant wars to Cheng Ho's ocean voyages to the Russian merchant Afanasy Nikitin's journey to the Deccan. A Western schoolbook of the period that gave the medieval Islamic and Asian worlds this much respectful attention would have been unusual; this was the norm for every Soviet child. The claim sometimes made for these textbooks — that they de-provincialised the past — is, on this evidence, largely fair.

The treatment of the Atlantic slave trade deserves its own line of credit. The book does not give sub-Saharan Africa a history of its own — Mali, Songhai, Great Zimbabwe are absent, and Africa enters mainly as a coast the Portuguese sailed round and a source of captives — but what it does with the slave trade is morally clear in a way many contemporary Western textbooks were not. It calls the traffic "the despicable trade in 'live goods,'" describes the burning of African villages and the horror of the ships' holds for a child's eyes without flinching, and lays the enrichment of the European bourgeoisie squarely on "the suffering and death of millions of people." A twelve-year-old reading this learned that the wealth of the rising West was built on plunder and enslavement. That, too, is a Marxist emphasis, and it is to the book's credit.

Where the frame presses

The cost of the universal staircase is paid where the world does not fit it, and the book itself keeps showing the seams. The Caliphate is the clearest case. Having described a society in which "nearly all land in the caliphate was considered the property of the caliph," the book must nonetheless deliver the

required verdict: "The Arab nobility turned into feudal lords and landowners, and the peasants found themselves dependent on the new masters." A state that is the universal landlord, rent and tax merged, no manorial hierarchy and no serfdom — this is precisely the configuration that Marx himself, writing about the East, set outside European feudalism altogether and called the Asiatic mode of production. The concept had been condemned in Soviet scholarship in the early 1930s and quietly banned; after Stalin's 1938 fixing of the five stages, Soviet historians of Asia had one permitted task, to find slavery and feudalism where Marx had found neither. The companion volume in this series, *A History of India, Volume One*, shows learned specialists performing exactly that operation on the Indian evidence, itemising the predominance of state-owned land and the absence of serfdom and then writing "feudalism" over the top of the list. Our schoolbook performs the same operation in one sentence, for children, without the specialists' visible unease — the Caliphate is feudal because every society at that stage must be. The child is handed the answer the scholars were forced to reach; he is spared the sight of the evidence pulling the other way.

The teleology is the subtler charge, and it needs stating precisely, because the book is better on this point than its frame would predict. The five-stage schema is teleological by construction: it presents the whole human past as an escalator whose next step, after capitalism, is socialism, and every earlier stage as a rung on the way to that destination. A schema built to end in 1917 tends, in weaker hands, to turn every peasant rising into a rehearsal for the October Revolution. This book, to its real credit, mostly resists the sermon. It stops at the discovery of America and does not preach forward; the words "socialism," "proletariat" and "1917" do not appear in it at all. The revolts are not presented as conscious steps toward a future the peasants could not have imagined; they are presented as the peasants' own struggle for "freedom and a better life," which is truer to the peasants. But the architecture carries the teleology even when the prose does not. The pupil who is drilled to prove that feudalism "was a higher stage" than slavery and was "forced to give way to" capitalism has been taught the escalator as a law, and the escalator has only one terminus. The book does not name it. It does not need to; the child's next textbook will.

Religion is the place where a reader braced for crude Marxism will be most surprised, and the surprise is worth registering fairly. The famous slogan — religion as "the opium of the people" — appears nowhere in the book; the caricature one expects is simply absent. What the book teaches instead is the functional account, and it is closer to the fuller Marx than the

slogan is. The medieval Church is presented first as an economic institution: "the church was the biggest landowner and the mainstay of the feudal system," a feudal lord among feudal lords. And its doctrine is read as ideology in the exact, non-mystical sense — as a message pitched to keep the exploited quiet: "Christian morality was called upon to instil humility and patience in the oppressed people and suppress all thought of struggle against the feudal order." That is not the assertion that believers are fools; it is a claim about whose interests a doctrine served, and on the medieval Church as a landowning power it is largely right. The reading descends directly from Engels, whose *The Peasant War in Germany* taught that medieval heresy was class struggle fought out in religious language — which is why this book can treat the Hussites and Thomas Münzer's followers as revolutionaries rather than as fanatics. Where it flattens is where all such functionalism flattens: every religious idea is cashed out, in the last instance, as a device of class rule, and the enormous something-else that religion also was — consolation, meaning, the "heart of a heartless world" in Marx's own fuller sentence — drops out. But this is the mild version of the fault, and it would be unfair to a schoolbook to pretend it commits the crude one. As the drafted introduction to Tokarev's *History of Religion* argues at length, the interesting Soviet failure on religion is not vulgarity but a blind spot about coercion; a medieval textbook, describing the Inquisition and the burning of Giordano Bruno with evident sympathy for the victims, does not reach that blind spot at all.

The reply

The tradition from which this series is written shares the book's starting point and rejects its rigidity. Marxists do not need persuading that history has a material basis, that modes of production succeed one another, or that the class struggle is its motor; the disagreement is with the escalator — the claim that every people must climb the identical stairs in the identical order, which Stalinism turned from a broad generalisation into a law of nature and stamped into the schoolbooks. The objection is not that the stages are false but that they were made mechanical. Feudalism, slavery, the primitive commune are real and useful categories; the error is the drillmaster's insistence that each society must pass through each in turn, an insistence that forced Soviet historians to write "feudal" over societies Marx had expressly set apart.

George Novack's *Understanding History* (Pathfinder, 1972) makes the case at exactly the level a reader of this textbook needs: the materialist conception of history is a genuine

discovery and a powerful tool, but it is a guide to inquiry, not a timetable that the facts are obliged to keep. The sharpest single instrument against the staircase is Trotsky's law of uneven and combined development, formulated against precisely the unilinear stagism the textbook teaches. Backward societies, Trotsky argued, do not obediently repeat the path of the advanced ones; they fuse archaic and modern forms into something new. "To jump over intermediate stages," he put it in 1932, "is the way of backward countries" — the whole of Russian history his standing refutation of the idea that the stairs must be climbed one at a time. A schoolchild taught uneven and combined development instead of the fixed ladder would understand more, not less, of why the Caliphate and Mughal India and Ming China did not look like the France of Louis XI — and would not have to be told to prove that they secretly did.

None of which cancels the book. It is a school textbook, and it should be judged as one: for what it chose to teach children as the meaning of the past. What it chose was, in its broad outline, a serious and humane thing — that history is made by those who labour, that the wealth of the powerful is drawn from the poor, that the medieval world was the whole world and not merely Christendom, that the enslaved and the exploited fought back in every age. Those are real tools, and Soviet children were given them at an age when children elsewhere were given kings and flags. The book's fault is the fault of its frame: it hands the child the conclusions instead of the evidence, and it forces a various world onto a single staircase. Read it for what it is — the class struggle taught as a school subject to a whole society's children — and it is one of the more revealing documents in this catalogue, precisely because it aimed so low and, within its limits, so often told the truth.