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HISTORY

Diplomatic Battles Before World War II

The diplomacy of 1933 to 1939 from the Soviet side, in one continuous narrative - collective security, Munich, the summer talks of 1939 - and the treaty of 23 August itemised article by article, with one document missing.

Vilnis Sipols

Introduction to the 1982 Edition

This is the third book in this series on the same eleven months, and it is the one that had nowhere to hide.

The first, Soviet Peace Efforts on the Eve of World War II, was a collection of 350 documents that stopped on 1 September 1939, so that the Treaty of Non-Aggression signed in Moscow on 23 August survived only at second hand — in a telegram from Tokyo reporting the Japanese reaction, and in a reassurance to the Chinese ambassador. A document collection can do that; it prints what it prints. The second, Oleg Rzheshevsky's *World War II: Myths and the Realities* of 1984, was a polemic against Western historiography in which the word protocol does not occur once in some ninety-two thousand words.

Sipols has neither escape available. *Diplomatic Battles Before World War II* is a continuous narrative by a single author, running from 1933 to the outbreak of war, and its declared subject is precisely the negotiation. The Pact gets its own section, under its own heading — "Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact" — with four subheadings. He has to reach it, and he does, and he describes the treaty clause by clause:

The Treaty, signed in the small hours of August 24, contained the commitments of non-aggression (Article I) and a statement on refusing assistance to a power attacking one of the contracting parties (Article II). Both parties undertook to inform one another on matters involving their common interests (Article III) and to stay out of any group of powers, directly or indirectly spearheaded against the other party. The Treaty was concluded for a term of 10 years.

That is the whole instrument, itemised. And the Secret Additional Protocol signed the same night — dividing Poland along the Narew, Vistula and San, assigning Finland, Estonia and Latvia to the Soviet sphere and Lithuania to the German,

and noting Soviet interest in Bessarabia — is not there. It is not called a forgery, which had been the standing Soviet line since 1948 and would at least have been an argument the reader could weigh. It is not mentioned. In a book that enumerates three articles and a term of years, the omission is not an absence. It is an act.

Four years after this book appeared, Ernest Mandel gave the practice its name. In *The Meaning of the Second World War* (Verso, 1986), a full-length treatment of the war from the tradition this series writes from, Mandel observes in chapter 2, "The Immediate Causes", that "the Hitler-Stalin pact contained a secret protocol which, even before that conquest had commenced, implemented a fourth partition of Poland," and adds the flat sentence: "Russian historiography continues to deny this — by keeping silent about the secret protocol." He goes on: "Likewise, it draws a veil over Stalin's formal opposition to the survival of any Polish state." (Mandel's own text misdates the signature by four days; the protocol was signed on the night of 23 August 1939.)

Sipols shows us how the silence was actually operated, and it is stranger than Mandel could have known. The word protocol does occur in this book — fourteen times, across nine passages — and every occurrence is an instrument the USSR proposed or signed openly: the 1933 protocol on the definition of aggression, the Soviet draft protocol on economic non-aggression, the Soviet-French protocol of 5 December 1934, the protocol to the mutual assistance treaty of 2 May 1935, the mutual assistance protocol with the Mongolian People's Republic of March 1936. The phrase "secret additional" occurs zero times. So the word is not avoided; it is worked hard, in one direction only, until it means the opposite of what it means in the one place it is missing.

The ninth occurrence is the sharpest. On 1 July 1939, Sipols records, Britain and France finally agreed to extend the three-power guarantee to the Baltic states, but proposed that the states concerned "should be listed not in the treaty itself but in a protocol which was not subject to publication." He offers this as evidence of Anglo-French bad faith. Seven weeks later

his own government listed those same states in a protocol which was not subject to publication, and he does not say so. This is not a veil drawn over a fact. It is the fact turned round and fired at the other side.

The commission

Sipols was Latvian, and a professional historian of Soviet diplomacy rather than a propagandist drafted in for the occasion. The book's own footnotes show the trade: he had co-authored, with M. Pankrashova, *Why the War Could Not Be Prevented: The Moscow Talks of the USSR, Britain and France in 1939* (Moscow, 1970), the standard Soviet monograph on the military negotiations. He works from the USSR Foreign Policy Archives, from the Central State History Archives of the Latvian SSR, from the Public Record Office by Cabinet and Foreign Office file number, from the German, French and American published series, from the Potsdam Zentrales Staatsarchiv, and from West German and British monographs he reads in the original. This is not a hack's apparatus.

The date is 1982 — Brezhnev's last year, the year the first Pershing II and cruise missile deployments were being fought over across Western Europe, and the year the Fourth International's *International Viewpoint* began publishing. Progress Publishers pushed out a wave of English-language titles in these years for the same audience Rzheshesky would address two years later: the Western peace movement, the Western Communist Party lecturer, and the diplomatic historian who could be trusted to weigh a footnote. The conclusion states the thesis without ornament: "The Soviet Union was the only country to have done whatever it could throughout the prewar years towards a collective effort by a number of nations to keep the peace." The argument runs from there to the present of 1982 by implication only, which is why it works better than Rzheshesky's, who spelled it out.

What holds

A reader who takes this as a tissue of lies will be badly served, because a great deal of it is right, and some of it is better documented here than in most Western books of its date.

The Soviet pursuit of collective security between 1933 and 1938 was real. The convention on the definition of aggression signed with Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan on 3 July 1933; the Eastern Pact negotiations; the Soviet-French protocol of December 1934, acceded to by

Czechoslovakia days later; the mutual assistance treaty of 2 May 1935 — these happened, they were pursued for years at cost, and Sipols traces them with archival detail. His account of Soviet-French military staff contacts, including the 1937 Soviet document offering "petrol, fuel oil, lubricants, manganese, foodstuffs, armaments, engines, tanks, aircraft" and raising even then the "cardinal question" of transit through the states between the USSR and Germany, is a genuine contribution: it shows that the problem which wrecked August 1939 had been on the table for two years.

Munich is a betrayal, and he is entitled to say so. His set piece — Horace Wilson entering the room where the Czechoslovak representatives had been kept waiting, announcing "It is almost over. You will be glad to know that we have reached agreement on practically everything," being asked "And what is to be our fate?", answering "It is not as bad as it might have been," and closing the exchange with "I am sorry. It is no use arguing" — is drawn from the Czechoslovak record and it is not softened by any subsequent scholarship. Nor does he rest the anti-Soviet reading of Munich on assertion. He quotes the West German historian B. Celovsky that "Chamberlain and Bonnett did all they could to keep the Soviet Union out," and Wheeler-Bennett on the "secret hope" in London that German expansion turned eastward would exhaust itself on the Russian steppes. Serious historians who share none of his politics — Michael Jabara Carley in 1939: *The Alliance That Never Was* (1999), Geoffrey Roberts across his work on Soviet foreign policy — have argued much the same.

The chapter on the military talks of 12–21 August 1939 is the strongest thing in the book. The British and French missions took seventeen days to reach Moscow. The British delegation was led by Admiral Drax and, as Sipols shows from Strang's memoirs, was of "inadequate standing" with instructions of a "limiting character." Ambassador Seeds warned London on 13 August that the talks would produce nothing beyond confirming that the British "are not trying to conclude a concrete and definite agreement." Most damningly, the Foreign Office told the American embassy in London that the British mission "has been told to make every effort to prolong its discussions until October 1." Voroshilov put the transit question on 13 August and pressed it on 14 August, naming the two corridors he wanted — "the Vilno Corridor in the north and Galicia in the south" — and warning that "without a positive solution to this issue, the whole of the enterprise undertaken with a view to concluding a military convention between Britain, France and the USSR is doomed to failure in advance." Drax noted after that session: "I think our mission is finished." When Doumenc returned on 22 August claiming

French authority to answer yes, he could not say whether Warsaw had been consulted. It had not been. The Polish refusal was real, it was rooted in the Polish government's own hope of a bargain with Berlin — Sipols documents Lipski's proposed mission of 18–20 August from Lipski's own memoirs — and it was fatal.

None of that is invented, and a reader who dismisses it will be defenceless when they find it in Carley. They will also find it in Mandel, who is no friend of the case Sipols is building. In chapter 10, "The Opening Gambit in Europe", Mandel writes that "the refusal of the Polish regime to accept direct Soviet military assistance transformed the military negotiations between the Western allied general staffs and the Soviet government in the summer of 1939 into a farce." And in chapter 2 he grants the premise on which Sipols's whole defence of August 1939 rests: "Considering the wavering (to say the least) of the French and British governments over military collaboration in the event of a German aggression against Poland, the Soviet government had every right to ensure its immediate safety in case of a German conquest of that country."

That sentence is worth pausing on. It is written by a leading figure of the Fourth International, an organisation founded in opposition to Stalin and hunted by his police, and it concedes without hedging the ground Sipols occupies most strongly. What Mandel will not concede is the next step, and neither should the reader.

Where the argument breaks

The trouble is not with the pieces. It is with what the pieces are made to carry.

Sipols argues that the Pact was forced, and that "there had been no chance of ever creating an Anglo-Franco-Soviet coalition" — a defensible reading, and one held by non-Soviet historians. But he then argues something else. He contrasts German conduct favourably with Anglo-French conduct: while the Soviet government "had spent months on end for inconclusive negotiations with Britain and France, it took but one day to draw up the text" of the treaty with Germany. He offers this as proof of German sincerity. It is in fact the strongest available evidence that the substance had been settled in advance — because what took one day to draft was not one document but two, and the second was the one that mattered.

Mandel names the consequence Sipols cannot: the protocol, he writes in chapter 2, meant that "Stalin gave the green light to

Hitler's aggression, temporarily saving the Third Reich from the nightmare of a prolonged war on two fronts." Note that this is not the Cold War thesis of equivalent guilt. Mandel is emphatic in the same chapter that "there cannot be the slightest doubt that German imperialism deliberately and brazenly unleashed the war against Poland, and therewith the Second World War, on 1 September 1939," and he is scathing about A.J.P. Taylor's attempt to spread the responsibility around. He is equally unsentimental about Chamberlain, though not in the direction Sipols wants: appeasement, in Mandel's reading, was "an illusory and foolhardy attempt to outmanoeuvre Hitler, not an acceptance of a Europe dominated by Berlin," and while "some of the 'appeasers' played with the idea of diverting the aggressive dynamic of German imperialism against the USSR," after Prague they understood that a Hitler in possession of Eastern Europe would come for the Empire next. That is a real disagreement with Sipols, and it is the more useful for coming from someone with no stake in exonerating London.

Then comes the sentence that gives the game away entirely. The German government, in signing, was to relinquish "the plans for its domination of the Baltic states including the idea of turning them into a springboard from which to attack the USSR." The Pact, that is, saved the Baltic states. This is written by a Latvian, in 1982, about an agreement whose unpublished half consigned Latvia, Estonia and Finland to the Soviet sphere, and which was followed within fourteen months by the extinction of Latvian statehood.

Mandel, who had no reason to give the Baltics more than a line, gives them several, and they read now like a direct answer. In chapter 17, "The Aftermath", he lists what Stalin spent the first eighteen months of the German-Soviet war trying to get Churchill to recognise: "the Soviet frontiers of 1941, i.e. recognition of what had been obtained through the Hitler-Stalin pact: the Baltic States, the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia as well as Bessarabia and the Northern Bukovina." Later in the same chapter he sets 1939–41 alongside 1944–48 as two instances of one method: "Already in 1939–41, the opportunity to seize the Baltic states, the Western Ukraine and Belorussia, and Bessarabia as a result of the Hitler-Stalin Pact had presented itself." Sipols's springboard sentence and Mandel's list describe the same document. One of them names what it did.

And in chapter 3, "The Social Forces", Mandel writes about what that did to the people living there. In "certain areas like the Baltic republics and the Ukraine, where national oppression had been combined with the large-scale terror and

famine of the collectivization period, hostility to Stalin among large sectors of the peasantry, the professional classes and layers of the working class had turned into outright hatred." He notes at once that the Nazi occupation's crimes exceeded anything Stalin's people had done and turned that tide. But the observation stands, and it was made in 1986 by a Belgian Marxist in a book for a British publisher — three years before it could be made in Riga.

Because the book stops on 1 September 1939 — the same terminus as the 1973 document collection, arrived at by a different route — none of what followed is in it. There is no 17 September, no entry into eastern Poland, no Boundary and Friendship Treaty of 28 September with its further secret protocols, no Winter War, no ultimata of June 1940, no single-list elections of July 1940, no accession of August 1940. The words Bessarabia, Katyn and deportation do not appear in the book at all. Neither does Trotsky. Neither does any account of the destruction of the Soviet officer corps in 1937–38 or of the diplomats — Litvinov's colleagues, many of them — who were shot in those same years. A book about the diplomatic balance of forces in 1939 that cannot mention what happened to the Red Army's command in 1938 is missing a variable. Mandel supplies it in a single clause of chapter 2: the purges "decapitated the Red Army, disorganised the defences of the country, delivered Poland and Europe to Hitler, and facilitated the Nazi attack on the USSR."

Two smaller silences are worth naming because they fall inside the declared period. The Soviet-German trade and credit agreement was signed in Berlin on 19 August 1939 and began the flow of Soviet grain, oil and manganese into the German war economy. Sipols's only entry for 19 August is that Schulenburg pressed for Ribbentrop's visit and was "refused once again." And the removal of Litvinov on 3 May 1939, read in Berlin at the time as a signal, is not treated as an event with meaning.

Yet the terminus leaks, and it leaks in the most revealing way in the book. Note 198, attached to the Pact chapter, reaches past 1 September into the Latvian archive to cite a conversation between Stalin and the Latvian foreign minister Vilhelms Munters on 2 October 1939, in which Stalin observed that a German attack could not be ruled out and that "you had to get ready for any eventuality in good time." Sipols uses this to prove Soviet vigilance. He does not say what Munters was doing in Moscow. He was there under duress, negotiating the mutual assistance pact that admitted Soviet garrisons to Latvia, signed on 5 October 1939 — the instrument by which the secret protocol was executed. Sipols

had the file. He cited the file. He printed the sentence about vigilance and left the room it was spoken in unfurnished.

The reply

Trotsky wrote against the Pact within weeks, most fully in "The USSR in War" of 25 September 1939, collected in *In Defense of Marxism*, and the Fourth International argued the question in public through the split it caused in its own ranks.

Mandel's book of 1986 is the mature form of that reply, and the reason to set it beside this one is that the two are so nearly commensurable. Both are single-author syntheses working from the published diplomatic series and the secondary literature; both hold that German imperialism bore the decisive responsibility for the war; both are unsparing about Chamberlain, Daladier and the Polish colonels. Where they part is on one document and everything downstream of it. Mandel's judgement in chapter 10 — "Stalin preferred to ally himself with the likely victor rather than with the probable victim" — is a political charge that a reader may weigh and reject. Sipols's method makes weighing impossible, because the evidence has been removed from the scale.

It is worth adding, since Sipols's Soviet readers were taught the opposite, that Mandel does not treat the postwar settlement as a diplomatic betrayal by anybody. In chapter 16, "The Outcome", he insists that the shape of Europe after 1945 was "to a large extent" determined "on the battlefield," not at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam, and that the Western powers were in no position in 1945 to alter the position of the Red Army. That is a refusal of the émigré legend as much as of the official one, and it is why the criticism of Sipols is not a Cold War criticism.

The reply that speaks most directly to this book, though, came from Latvians. In 1988–89 the Soviet admission finally arrived; the Congress of People's Deputies condemned the protocols on 24 December 1989. *International Viewpoint* no. 169 (September 1989) devoted much of an issue to it. The piece headed "The secret protocols of the 'Hitler-Stalin pact'" noted, correctly and without triumph, that "all the documents concerning the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact have been known in the West since the end of the Second World War and the Soviet press has revealed nothing new" — what was new was the admission. Gerry Foley reported that the Soviet authorities "were obliged to acknowledge that the way was opened for occupying these countries by the secret protocols." The Estonian historian Herbert Lindmäe, writing in the same issue on the postwar armed resistance, began from the flat statement

that his republic "was occupied by the Red Army on June 17, 1940," and that this "ensued from the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939 and the secret protocols appended."

And the same issue printed the programme of the Popular Front of Latvia — *Latvijas Tautas Fronte* — in translation. Its fourth section, on the national question, contains the sentence this book was written to prevent: "It must be officially recognized that the incorporation of the Latvian republic into the USSR was accomplished by force and in disregard of what the Latvian people thought." The programme also demands recognition of "the deportations in Latvia's twentieth century history" and that the Stalinist regime's crimes against the inhabitants of Latvia in the 1940s and 1950s be declared crimes against humanity. It was written by people who still called themselves socialists and invoked Lenin on self-determination, seven years after this book appeared, in the republic Sipols came from.

How to read it

Take the middle of this book as scholarship and the seam at 23 August as an object lesson. Chapters III and IV, on Munich and on the three-power talks, are a well-sourced account of a failure that was mostly the West's, and the archival work behind them is sound. The section on the Pact is something else: a professional historian, working from the files, describing an instrument article by article while suppressing the annex that determined the fate of his own nation.

Read it against Mandel, and the demonstration completes itself. Mandel had less archive than Sipols and reached the harder conclusion; Sipols had the archive and could not print one page of it. The difference is not scholarship and it is not politics in any sense a reader would recognise from the footnotes. It is that one of them was writing where the answer had been decided in advance.

It is worth holding both facts at once. Sipols was not a liar about the Anglo-French record, and the reader who dismisses him there will simply be wrong. He was a man permitted to publish everything he found except one document, and he wrote the book that permission allowed. What that cost, in a Latvian writing about Latvia's last year of independence, is not recorded in the text. It is only visible in the shape of it.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

Political Economy

The canonical Soviet textbook of political economy, prepared under Academician Rumyantsev - capitalism through Capital and Imperialism, then the political economy of socialism. The orthodoxy at full length and on its best behaviour.

Aleksei Matveevich Rumyantsev

Introduction to the 1983 Edition

This is the book at the centre of the whole enterprise. Of the roughly two hundred Progress titles gathered in this series, most are monographs, polemics or reference works orbiting a doctrine; Political Economy is the doctrine itself, in its fullest teaching form. Prepared by a large collective of the USSR Academy of Sciences under Academician A. M. Rumyantsev — the book's own closing note describes it as "a systematic course in the political economy of capitalism and socialism ... intended for students of political economy and social-science lecturers" — it is the canonical Soviet textbook of the subject, the single exposition through which more people learned what the Soviet state meant by Marxist economics than through any other. To read it is to read the orthodoxy at full length and on its best behaviour: patient, ordered, professional, and, across its first half, very largely correct. The interest of the book is that its two halves are built to the same specification and only one of them holds, and that the reason the second fails is written, in plain sight, into the first.

A word first about when it was written, because the spine misleads. The English volume is dated 1983 and the copyright line reads "© Progress Publishers 1983"; the underlying Russian course had appeared through Politizdat some years earlier. But the text in your hands is not that earlier text reprinted. Its statistical spine reaches into the early 1980s — "In the early 1980s the capitalist world is experiencing the third economic slump over the last decade", NATO military expenditures "during 1980 and 1981", the US share of world exports "by the beginning of 1982" — and it cites, as current Soviet policy, the Central Committee and Council of Ministers resolution "On Improving Planning and Strengthening the Impact of the Economic Mechanism on Raising the Efficiency of Production and the Quality of Work", adopted in July 1979. Whatever its ancestry, this is a text revised to sit squarely in the late-Brezhnev years — the period that Soviet economists themselves would shortly be calling the era of stagnation. That dating is not a pedantic point. It fixes the book at the precise

moment when the economy whose laws it expounds was, in fact, seizing up: growth rates sliding, investment returns falling, the chronic shortages and assortment failures of a command economy settling into permanence. The textbook teaches the serene functioning of a planned socialist order at the hour of that order's exhaustion. Everything that follows turns on the gap between the two.

What the book gets right

The bulk of Political Economy — Chapters Three through Eighteen, the whole of Part One after the methodological opening — is an exposition of Marx's Capital, and it is a good one. It proceeds in Marx's own order and by Marx's own logic. Chapter Three takes the commodity, the twofold character of labour, the development of the value form and the genesis of money; the circulation formula $C—M—C$ is set against $M—C—M$ with precision, and the passage notes that "commodity-money circulation contains within itself the possibility ... of economic crises of overproduction". Chapter Four derives surplus value and states the basic economic law of capitalism as the production and appropriation of surplus value; Chapters Five and Six handle wages and the general law of capitalist accumulation; Chapter Seven the circuit and turnover of capital; Chapter Eight the formation of the average rate of profit and the transformation of values into prices of production, worked through a numerical example that comes out, correctly, with the aggregate mass of surplus value equal to the aggregate mass of profit and total value equal to total price of production. Chapter Ten gives ground rent, referred accurately to "Part VI of Volume III of Capital"; Chapter Eleven the reproduction of social capital and the theory of crises; and Chapters Twelve to Sixteen expound Lenin's Imperialism — the concentration of production, finance capital and the financial oligarchy, the export of capital, the division of the world, the colonial system and its collapse. The book quotes Marx where Marx should be quoted and gets him right: "The rate of profit is the motive power of capitalist production. Things are produced only as long as they can be produced with

a profit." It teaches commodity fetishism as a category, not a slogan. It is, in short, real Marxist political economy, competently taught to millions, and a reader schooled in it would emerge genuinely equipped to analyse a capitalist economy.

This is worth stating without hedging, because the anti-Stalinist Marxist tradition from which this introduction is written shares that analysis. On the anatomy of capital — value, exploitation, accumulation, the tendency to crisis, the imperialist stage — there is no quarrel between this textbook and its critics. The disagreement is not about Capital. It begins at the exact point where the book turns from the mode of production Marx analysed to the one the USSR claimed to embody, and asks the reader to carry the same categories across the frontier unchanged.

The claim at the centre

The decisive thesis of the book — the thing it exists to establish, and the thing the revolutionary-Marxist tradition contests — is that socialism has its own political economy, governed by its own objective economic laws. Part Two opens by asserting that a "political economy in the broad sense" became "meaningful with the origination of the political economy of communism (socialism)", and proceeds to enumerate the laws of the socialist economy as a parallel system to the laws of capital: a "basic economic law of socialism", a "law of the planned and proportionate development of the economy", a law of distribution according to work, and — this is the load-bearing claim — the continued operation, under socialism, of commodity production and the law of value.

The book is entirely explicit about this. Socialism, it says, retains "commodity-money relations" as one of its defining features. "The production of commodities under socialism means that the law of value, which determines the production and exchange of commodities in accordance with their social value, also operates under socialism." What changes is only the manner of operation: "Within the system of the economic laws of socialism, the law of value does not operate as an elemental regulator of production, but is used for its balanced management." Under socialism, we are told, "the production of commodities and, accordingly, the law of value have a specific character, because the functioning of the law springs from other factors than it does under capitalism, because it does not operate haphazardly but is used in a planned and balanced manner". Money, price, trade, credit and profit persist too:

"Commodity-money relations exist in the transition period. Their existence, together with the laws of value, determines the existence of related economic forms and categories: money, price, trade, credit, and profit."

And these laws are presented, insistently, as objective — as operating with the same independence from human intention as the laws of capital. Here is the tell the whole edifice rests on. Economic laws, the book states in its methodological chapter, are "just as objective as the relations of production" and "do not depend on the consciousness and will of men". It repeats the formula for the socialist laws specifically: "Although economic laws do not depend on the consciousness and will of men, men are not powerless in their presence. Under definite conditions, men can use these laws for their benefit." The socialist economy is thus a domain in which men "use" laws that nonetheless govern them from outside their will — laws they must "reckon with" as they would reckon with nature.

Why this is the concession, not the doctrine

Set that against what the book itself taught in Part One, and the trouble is immediate. Marx's political economy was not a description of the economy of socialism; it was a critique — of value, of the commodity, of money, of the domination of the producers by the product of their own hands. Value, in Marx, is precisely the category of a society in which production is not consciously controlled, in which the labour of individuals is validated as social labour only behind their backs, after the fact, through the exchange of things on a market. That is what commodity fetishism is, and the book knows it: in Part One it defines economic relations as those "into which men enter in the process of material production regardless of their will or consciousness". The law of value governs from behind precisely because, and for exactly as long as, the associated producers do not govern their own economy in front.

To assert, therefore, that the law of value and commodity production persist under socialism is to concede — whether the authors intend it or not — that the producers do not yet consciously control their economy; that their labour is still socially validated through exchange and price rather than through transparent common decision; that they are still, in Marx's sense, ruled by their product. And that is not a description of the classless society Marx meant by socialism. It is a description of a transitional economy in which the old forms survive because the old problem — the conscious social organisation of labour — has not been solved. The book's own

vocabulary gives the game away. An economy still governed by laws that "do not depend on the consciousness and will of men" is, by Marx's own definition, an economy not yet mastered by its producers. Where there is still a law of value operating objectively, there is not yet socialism in Marx's sense; there is a society on the road, managing its unresolved commodity relations through a state.

The reflexive point, put at its sharpest, is that "the political economy of socialism" is a contradiction in Marx's terms. Political economy is the science of an economy that runs itself, that confronts its participants as an alien objectivity to be studied and obeyed. To the extent that an economy has become genuinely socialist — consciously planned by freely associated producers — it ceases to be the object of a political economy at all and becomes the object of something Engels called simply the administration of things. A textbook that can write a "political economy of socialism" at the length of this one is testifying, in its very existence, that its object is not yet socialist. The book cannot see this, because its institutional function forbids it: it must present the USSR of the early 1980s as socialism achieved — "developed socialism", in the period's phrase, which the book uses more than twenty times — and so it must convert what Marx treated as symptoms of an unfinished transition into permanent "laws" of a completed order.

The answer from within the tradition

None of this is a subtlety invented after the fact. It was stated, from inside the Marxist movement and against precisely this bureaucratic tendency, half a century before Rumyantsev's collective set it down as orthodoxy. In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), in the chapter on the productivity of labour and the fate of money, Trotsky treated the survival of money and value under Soviet conditions not as a law to be codified but as a measure of distance yet to be travelled. State and money, he wrote, are both "an inheritance from the class society"; in a communist society both "will disappear", and "their gradual dying away ought consequently to begin under socialism". The persistence of money was therefore an index of how far the society still stood from its goal: "We shall be able to speak of the actual triumph of socialism only at that historical moment when the state turns into a semi-state, and money begins to lose its magic power." He was scathing about the notion that the commodity forms could simply be commanded out of existence — "Money cannot be arbitrarily 'abolished'", he wrote against the ultra-lefts — but the reason cuts equally against Rumyantsev: the value forms cannot be

abolished by decree because they cannot yet be dispensed with, and that inability is the standing evidence that the transition is incomplete. What Trotsky read as a symptom, the textbook enthrones as a law. That is the whole difference between a critical and an apologetic Marxism, and it lies in a single move.

Trotsky had made the constructive half of the argument even earlier, in *The Soviet Economy in Danger* (October 1932), against the first flush of bureaucratic triumphalism about the plan. A transitional economy, he insisted, cannot verify its own plan a priori; it must test its blueprints against reality through the very market forms the bureaucracy imagines it has transcended. "The plan is checked and, to a considerable degree, realized through the market." Only through the "inter-reaction of these three elements, state planning, the market and Soviet democracy" could the economy of the transitional epoch be correctly steered. And he named, exactly, the delusion that Political Economy would later institutionalise. Only "a universal mind" of the kind imagined by Laplace, able to register every process of nature and society at once, "could a priori draw up a faultless and exhaustive economic plan". The bureaucracy, he wrote, "often imagines that just such a mind is at its disposal; that is why it so easily frees itself from the control of the market and of Soviet democracy." Rumyantsev's textbook is that imagination codified into a curriculum: the law of value not confronted as a check on the plan but "used for its balanced management", prices "established in a planned manner", the whole recalcitrance of an unmastered economy dissolved into the confident administration of objective laws by a state that has, on paper, already understood them.

The symptoms the book half-sees

To its credit, the book is not wholly blind to the friction. In its discussion of the contradictions of the socialist economy it concedes, glancingly, that things go wrong: there is "non-fulfilment by some enterprises of their targets on product mix because they find it more profitable to turn out some products and unprofitable to turn out others", there are delays in technical progress "in some units of production", there is "wasteful expenditure of materials, and so on". This is, remarkably, an accurate list — the assortment problem, the innovation-aversion, the input-hoarding that every serious study of the Soviet command economy would document as endemic. And the July 1979 planning resolution is invoked precisely as the remedy for a management standard felt to be lagging. But the diagnosis is quarantined. These are presented

as non-antagonistic contradictions arising from a local "failure to reckon with the objective necessity" — correctable friction, not the signature of the system. The book records the symptoms and forbids the inference.

The forbidding is most visible in a single word. Stagnation appears four times in the book, and every time it names capitalism — the monopoly economy's "tendency towards stagnation and decay", the recession of West German industry, the uneven fate of the imperialist powers. Not once is it turned on the Soviet economy, though the Soviet economy was in 1982 the more stagnant of the two. The same holds for "crisis", reserved throughout for the capitalist cycle, and for the vocabulary of shortage, which the book applies to the developing world and the capitalist money market but never to the Soviet consumer. The analytical instrument that Part One builds with such care is, in Part Two, pointed in one permitted direction. The reflexive test the anti-Stalinist tradition applies to this whole library — can the category be turned on the speaker's own side? — comes back, here as elsewhere, negative: crisis, stagnation and anarchy of production are things that happen to the other system.

And then history supplied the control experiment. Within a decade of this textbook's appearance, the economy whose objective laws it expounded had abandoned the plan for the market — the enterprise law of 1987, the cooperatives, the price reforms of perestroika — and then ceased to exist. The "basic economic law of socialism" and the "law of the planned and proportionate development of the economy", taught here as the deep grammar of a superior mode of production, did not describe a viable order. This is not hindsight scoring a cheap point; it is the balance sheet the book's own method demands. A political economy claims to have found the objective laws of its object. When the object collapses within ten years, the claim is answerable, and the honest verdict is that the laws were not laws.

The suppressed prehistory

There is one further silence, and it is the most telling of all, because it concerns the discipline's own past. Political Economy presents "the political economy of socialism" as though it were the natural continuation of Marx and Lenin. It was nothing of the kind. As a distinct academic discipline with its own "laws", the political economy of socialism was a Stalin-era construction, canonised around 1943 and given its authoritative form by Stalin himself in *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* (1952) — the text that ruled that commodity production and the law of value would persist

under socialism, and that the basic economic law of socialism was the securing of the maximum satisfaction of society's growing material and cultural requirements through the continuous expansion of socialist production. Rumyantsev's collective reproduces that framework entire, down to the wording. Their basic economic law — "assurance of full well-being for all the members of society and the free and all-round development of the individual through a steady boosting and improvement of social production" — is Stalin's 1952 formula, lightly rephrased. The template is unmistakable. And the name of its author appears in this book exactly zero times.

The erasure is not confined to Stalin. The real Soviet economic debates — the ones that were genuinely foundational, fought out in the 1920s over industrialisation, accumulation and the fate of the peasantry — have been removed from the record entirely. Evgeny Preobrazhensky, whose *The New Economics* (1926) made the law of value under Soviet conditions its central problem and gave the debate its most powerful category, "primitive socialist accumulation", appears nowhere: a search of the whole text returns not one occurrence of his name, nor of "primitive socialist accumulation", the very concept a serious history of this discipline would have to reckon with. Bukharin, his great antagonist in that debate, appears once — inside the title of a Lenin polemic. The agrarian economists Kondratiev and Chayanov, whose work on peasant economy was of the first international importance, are absent. Trotsky appears twice: once, again, inside a Lenin title, and once as the supposed author of a "Trotskyite principle" of distribution — "shock work in production, egalitarianism in distribution" — held up for condemnation as "left" revisionism, a doctrine attributed to him without a single citation to anything he wrote. The New Economic Policy is discussed, and discussed respectfully, but as Lenin's policy alone, sealed off from the men who argued over how to end it. This is not an oversight. The economists who conducted the founding debates of Soviet political economy were, most of them, physically destroyed in the Terror — Preobrazhensky shot in 1937, Bukharin executed in 1938, Kondratiev shot in 1938, Chayanov in 1937. The discipline that this textbook teaches was built on the graves of the discipline that preceded it, and its serenity depends on the reader not knowing they are there.

Where to read the other side

Political Economy should be reprinted, and read, for what it is: the most complete and competent statement of Soviet

economic orthodoxy in the language of international circulation, and — in its first half — a genuinely usable exposition of Marx. The reader who wants the counter-argument on the second half has it close to hand, and much of it stands in the same tradition the book claims and cannot name. Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* remains the standard against which every Soviet account of Soviet society should be read; its treatment of money, value and the state supplies the reflexive analysis this textbook forbids itself. Within this series, three companion volumes from the same Soviet political-economy stable show the identical structure of insight and blindness applied to narrower subjects — V. V. Rymalov's *The World Capitalist Economy* (1982) and Irina Osadchaya's *Keynesianism Today* (1983), both first-rate on the crisis of the capitalist order and both silent on the sickening of their own, and the earlier Sdobnikov-edited *Socialism and Capitalism* (1971), which frames the same contest between the two economic systems that the present book stages as "economic competition between the two systems". And the deepest of the disagreements between the Marxisms — whether a planned economy can dispense with the market and the law of value at all — was fought out, in these very years, between Ernest Mandel and Alec Nove in the pages of *Quatrième Internationale* (no. 28, 1988). That debate presupposes, as its first premise, that the socialist economy is a genuine object of critical economic analysis, capable of crisis, disproportion and failure, and not merely the triumphant subject of a curriculum. That premise is the one thing *Political Economy* cannot grant — and the whole of its second half is the record of what a serious economics costs when it is required, by the state that commissions it, to face in only one direction.

HISTORY

A Modern History of China

China from the Manchu conquest to the May Fourth Movement, by eighteen named specialists of the Institute of Oriental Studies under the Soviet Union's foremost China hand - written at the height of the border war.

Sergei L Tikhvinsky

Introduction to the 1983 Edition

This large and learned book closes on a sentence that its own date makes almost unbearable. Having taken the reader from the Manchu conquest of 1644 to the eve of the May Fourth Movement, the general editor signs off with the hope "that the present volume will contribute to better mutual understanding and friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union and China." The Russian original from which this English translation descends was published by the Nauka press in Moscow in 1972. Three years earlier, in March 1969, Soviet and Chinese troops had fought a shooting war over Zhenbao (Damansky) Island in the Ussuri river, the same river whose boundary this book takes such trouble to explain. When Tikhvinsky wrote of friendship between the two peoples, the two states were massing armies along the longest border in the world and denouncing one another as traitors to Lenin. That contradiction — a scholarly monograph on China's past produced at the height of the Sino-Soviet split, by the Soviet establishment's foremost China hand, and exported eleven years later in English — is the key to reading it.

Sergei Leonidovich Tikhvinsky was not a marginal figure working under sufferance. He was a Corresponding Member of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, a career diplomat who had served in China, and by the 1970s the discipline of Soviet Sinology largely ran through him. A Modern History of China is the collective product of the modern-history group of the China Division of the Institute of Oriental Studies — eighteen chapters shared among named specialists, most holding the Candidate of Historical Sciences degree, each writing on the period of their research. It is, in other words, exactly what it appears to be: the considered account of China's modern past issued by the scholarly arm of the Soviet state. And precisely because Soviet scholarship was a state activity, the book is also a weapon. By 1972 Moscow and Beijing had been at open ideological war for a decade; each claimed the mantle of October, each accused the other of betraying it, and China's own history — who had oppressed China, who had befriended it, what its revolution had been and still owed — was

contested ground. A Soviet Academy history of modern China was never going to be neutral, and this one is not. Its argument runs from the first page: China's past belongs inside the schema Moscow administered, and the villains of that past were the Western and Japanese imperialists, with Russia standing conspicuously apart.

The doctrine

The frame is announced in the opening lines of the Introduction and never varies. "Chronologically, modern history covers the time from the bourgeois revolution in mid-17th-century England ... to the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 in Russia." China is fitted to this universal template. "Throughout China's modern history," the editor writes, "feudal relations continued to predominate"; the "central event in China's modern history was the bourgeois Xinhai revolution of 1911 which swept out the Qing monarchy." Feudal Qing empire, its reduction to what the book repeatedly calls a "semicolony" of the imperialist powers, and the maturing of a bourgeois-democratic revolution in 1911 — this is the five-stage universal history applied without remainder to two and a half centuries of Chinese development. The book is candid that it is applying, not discovering, this frame: "In their study of China's modern history, the authors took guidance in the works of the founders of Marxism-Leninism."

What that guidance costs is visible the moment one asks how the book classifies the Chinese social order. Marx himself, cited approvingly in the Introduction, had reached for a distinct category — the "Asiatic mode of production," his name for the great hydraulic-bureaucratic states of the East whose stagnation he traced to the absence of private landed property and the fusion of state and landlord. That category is a standing embarrassment to Soviet orthodoxy, because it breaks the neat single ladder of feudalism-to-capitalism that every people is supposed to climb; and in this volume it has simply been made to disappear. The word "Asiatic" occurs nine times, and every one is incidental — Lenin's phrase "an Asiatic

government," the "Asiatic states" bordering the Qing, the "Asiatic Department" of the Russian Foreign Ministry, the "German-Asiatic Bank," the London Asiatic Quarterly Review. The mode of production named for Asia does not appear in a history of China at all. This is not an isolated tic: the companion Progress volumes on India and on feudal society, prepared in the same institutional world, suppress it in the same way. China is instead forced onto the feudal track by main force, with Lenin's authority supplying the label the book cannot derive from the evidence — his description, quoted here, of "a backward, agricultural, semi-feudal country numbering nearly 500 million people." A social formation that puzzled Marx is resolved by fiat into a phase of European feudalism.

Within that frame the great popular movements are handled with real sympathy and a fixed grammar. The Taiping rising of 1850–64 is "the peasant war of the Taipings," given the largest single block of the book and treated as a heroic anti-feudal upheaval betrayed by Anglo-French intervention on the Qing side. The Yihetuan or Boxer uprising of 1898–1900 is a "massive anti-imperialist" movement of the rural poor, its superstition and its dynastic loyalism noted but subordinated to its patriotic core. Sun Yat-sen is honoured through Lenin, "a democrat of noble feelings and abounding in heroism," and the Xinhai revolution he inspired is the book's climax — "a highlight in Asia's awakening." Each of these judgments is defensible, and much of the underlying research is genuinely good. But notice the tacit boundary the schema draws: the peasant and the bourgeois democrat are heroes precisely insofar as their struggle can be booked as a bourgeois-democratic stage, a rung on the ladder. The revolution that stage is meant to prepare — the proletarian one — lies beyond 1919, beyond the book's close, and beyond the reach of any judgment the book is willing to make.

The Russian exception

The book's central and genuine achievement is its documentation of what the imperialist powers did to China. Chapter by chapter it lays out the mechanism of subjection: the Opium Wars fought to force a narcotic on a country that had banned it; the Treaty of Nanjing's cession of Hong Kong "in perpetuity" and its twenty-one million dollars of indemnity; the customs autonomy stripped away article by article; the coolie traffic in "yellow slaves"; the concessions, the missionary privilege smuggled into a treaty by its own translator, the eighteen thousand British and six thousand French troops who burned their way to Beijing in 1860. On the

powers — Britain, France, Japan, the United States, Germany — the book is detailed, angry, and largely right. "Imperialist aggression" against China is its organising category, and against those states it is earned.

Then one looks for Russia, and the category quietly fails.

Russia is the one great power whose expansion into Chinese territory the book declines to call aggression. The turning point comes in a single remarkable passage. "In spite of the predatory colonial nature of tsarist policy in general," the authors write, "the tsar showed no initiative either in imposing unequal treaties on China or in defending the post-[18]60 system of treaties. Russia traded with China by the caravan route and the terms were entirely equal. The border between the Qing and Russian empires — the longest land border in the world — was drawn by peaceful diplomatic means under the Aigun and Tianjin treaties of 1858. The 1860 Beijing Treaty gave it its final shape ... The growth of Russia's possessions in the Far East and Central Asia involved lands that were not inhabited by any Chinese or Manchurians and were in no way economically bound to China." Every clause of this does work. The Treaty of Aigun of 1858 and the Treaty of Beijing of 1860 transferred to Russia the entire left bank of the Amur and everything east of the Ussuri to the sea — something like a million square kilometres, an area larger than France and Germany combined. By any measure applied to Britain or Japan these were unequal treaties, extracted from a Qing government reeling under Anglo-French assault; indeed the book itself records that Russia's minister Ignatiev secured the 1860 cession by "mediat[ing]" between the Qing and the very Anglo-French forces then occupying Beijing. But the book will not use its own category here. Aigun, it says, merely restored to Russia "the greater part of the territories lost by Russia in 1689"; the lands east of the Ussuri were places "where, we might add, there was neither any permanently settled Manchu or Chinese population nor any Qing administration." The annexation becomes a restitution; the seizure becomes the peaceful settling of empty land.

The exculpation reaches back to the seventeenth century, and there it inverts the whole moral scheme of the book. In every other chapter the Manchus and the Chinese are the victims of foreign predators. In the chapter on the Amur — the one chapter, the Introduction notes, whose "material ... is from Russian archives" and whose dates are therefore "in the old style" — the roles reverse. Now it is the Qing who are the aggressors, harassing the "Russian settlers" and "Russian pioneers" Poyarkov and Khabarov, blockading the Cossack fort of Albazin, and forcing on Russia the Treaty of Nerchinsk

of 1689, which "was imposed on Russia by force" and "meant the loss of a fairly large territory developed by Russian Cossacks and settlers." A history that indicts the Qing for "bloody wars of conquest against ... the Russian settlements on the Amur" while treating Russia's nineteenth-century acquisition of those same lands as a friendly regularisation of the frontier is not confused. It is consistent — consistent to a purpose. The category of "imperialist aggression" is available for every power except the one writing the book.

This is the reflexive tell, and its date sharpens it to a point. The Aigun–Beijing treaty line was exactly what Mao's government, from the early 1960s, denounced as the greatest of the "unequal treaties," the legal fiction under which Tsarist Russia had robbed China of its northeast — and it was over precisely this line, on the Ussuri, that Soviet and Chinese soldiers had killed each other in 1969. When Tikhvinsky's authors insist that these treaties were "entirely equal," "peaceful," and drawn across land with no Chinese on it, they are not writing disinterested diplomatic history. They are litigating the border dispute of their own moment, retroactively, in a book about the Qing. The scholarship on British opium and Japanese gunboats is real; but the chapter that matters most to the Soviet state in 1972 is the one where the evidence is bent to the state's territorial claim.

To be fair to the book — and fairness is the point of a series like this — the suppression is not total, and the honest reader should say so. The volume does record that "tsarist Russia took a dutiful part in all collective moves to squash the revolution and promote Yuan Shikai" in 1911, and it names Russian warships and Russian servicemen among the interventionist forces that gathered in Chinese waters that year. It describes, without much disguise, how the tsarist government exploited the fall of the Qing to detach Outer Mongolia, signing the 1912 Urga agreement that promised Russian arms to the Mongol princes and warned China to keep its troops out. What the book will not do is let these admissions touch the category. Russian troops in 1911 are present in the narrative but never gathered under the word "aggression"; the Mongolian episode is told as the manoeuvring of Mongol feudal lords who happened to lean on St Petersburg, not as a Russian land-grab. The facts are on the page; the judgment the book passes freely on London and Tokyo is withheld from Moscow. That asymmetry — full documentation, selective condemnation — is the operation, and it is more sophisticated than a simple silence.

There is a second front to the same war, and it too is on the page. The Introduction's most heated passages are not about

foreigners at all but about Chinese nationalism. The book warns, again and again, against "Chinese great-power nationalism, chauvinism, and xenophobia," against the "Great-Han chauvinism" that "diverted the country's new social forces," against a revived doctrine "asserting the superiority of the Chinese to all other peoples, and seeing China — the Middle Kingdom or Celestial Empire — as the fulcrum of the world." It goes out of its way to remark that "the Qing government (and the 'republican' governments that succeeded it) treated subject non-Han peoples with coarse brutality." No reader in 1972 could miss the target. A Soviet history that hammers on Chinese "great-power chauvinism" and the mistreatment of national minorities by both the Qing and their republican successors is aiming past the Qing at the People's Republic — at the Mao whose regime Moscow accused of exactly this nationalist deviation. The historiography of the eighteenth century is being written with one eye on the frontier of the twentieth.

The reply

A Modern History of China stops in 1919, and so it never has to describe the catastrophe toward which its own doctrine pointed. But the doctrine is the thing the anti-Stalinist left answered, and the answer is worth setting beside the book. The organising claim of this volume — that a colonial or semi-colonial country must pass through a discrete bourgeois-democratic stage, in which the proletariat's task is to help the national bourgeoisie complete its revolution and not to overleap it — is not merely an interpretation of the Qing past. It was, within a few years of the events this book narrates, a live instruction to living revolutionaries, and it produced a massacre.

In 1925–27 China rose in a second revolution, and the Chinese Communist Party grew into a mass force. On the theory that China's was a bourgeois-democratic stage, the Communist International under Stalin ordered the young CCP to subordinate itself to the Guomindang of Chiang Kai-shek — to enter it, to accept its discipline, to restrain the workers' and peasants' movements that might frighten the "national bourgeoisie" whose revolution this was supposed to be. In April 1927, with the Communists having delivered him Shanghai, Chiang turned on his allies and drowned the city's labour movement in blood. The party that had been told to trust the bourgeoisie was destroyed by it.

Trotsky had opposed the policy before the killing and dissected it after. Against the whole conception of a fixed sequence of stages he wrote, in *The Permanent Revolution*

(1930), that "the pedantic reactionary theory of Stalin and Martynov on 'stages' and 'steps' must be eliminated at the very outset, must be cast aside, broken up and swept away with a broom." The "democratic dictatorship" the Comintern promised, he argued, "can only be the masked rule of the bourgeoisie during the revolution ... This is taught us by the experience of our 'dual power' of 1917 as well as by the experience of the Kuomintang in China." And where this book credits the 1911 revolution with placing China "in the stream of the world democratic movement," Trotsky's verdict on the second revolution names the price of the doctrine directly: in China, "where, in spite of the exceptionally favourable situation, the leadership of the Communist International prevented the Chinese proletariat from fighting for power, the national tasks found a wretched, unstable and niggardly solution in the regime of the Kuomintang." The stage-theory that organises Tikhvinsky's history of the Qing is the same stage-theory that, applied to the living movement, subordinated the Chinese workers to their executioners.

Trotsky also anticipated, with uncanny precision, the kind of book this is. Writing in 1938 the introduction to Harold Isaacs's history of the Chinese Revolution, he observed that one would "seek in vain in the library of the Communist International for a single book which attempts in any way to give a rounded picture of the Chinese Revolution. Instead, we find scores of 'conjunctural' works ... which docilely reflect each zigzag in the politics of the Communist International, or, more correctly, of Soviet diplomacy in China." A Modern History of China is not a conjunctural work in Trotsky's crude sense — it is serious scholarship, and it earns that description in most of its pages. But its treatment of the Amur is conjunctural in exactly his sense: a passage of the historical record trimmed to fit the diplomacy of Moscow, in this case the border diplomacy of 1969. The border chapter reflects the zigzag; the rest of the book does the honest work that makes the reflection hard to see.

What holds

None of this is a reason to discard the volume, and it would be a poor service to the reader to pretend otherwise. On its central subject — the internal history of Qing and early republican China — A Modern History of China is a substantial and often excellent work of research, and much of it has no rival of comparable scope in English. The reconstruction of the Manchu conquest and the peasant war of Li Zicheng; the anatomy of the "self-strengthening" movement, a term the book uses more than sixty times and treats with genuine

analytic care as the ruling class's attempt to modernise the means of coercion without touching the relations of production; the long, close, document-based account of the Taiping state's tax and land policy, down to the manifestos of 1860 lowering rents in southern Jiangsu; the social portrait of the Yihetuan, their altars and amulets and the artisans and boatmen thrown out of work by the new railways who filled their ranks — this is the work of scholars who read the Chinese sources and cared about getting the mechanics right. Two chapters written afresh for the modern editions treat China's economic history with a seriousness the general reader will not easily find elsewhere. Where the book stays inside China and away from the frontier with Russia, its class analysis is a real instrument and not a ritual, and its sympathies — with the rebel peasant, the exploited artisan, the patriotic reformer — are honourably placed.

The reader this edition is for can therefore take the book as what it is: an authoritative Soviet account, rich in fact and organised by a doctrine, whose value and whose distortion lie in the same place. Read it for the Opium Wars and the Taipings and the fall of the Qing, and it will repay the attention. Read the chapter on the Amur, and read it knowing that the border it calls "entirely equal" was, when these words were written, a line of trenches. The book hoped to serve "friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union and China." Its most revealing pages are the ones where that friendship had already broken, and the history was quietly redrawn to defend the ground the two states were fighting over.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM

The Export of Counter-Revolution

Five centuries of intervention against revolutions - the Hussite crusades to Chile, Nicaragua and Afghanistan - argued from a real category, and written at the coldest point of the Second Cold War.

František Kolár

Introduction to the 1983 Edition

The thesis of this book is stated on its first page and never afterwards complicated: revolutions provoke counter-revolutions, and the reactionary classes, unable to hold power at home, call in help from abroad — "sweeping campaigns of lies and slander," "subversion and sabotage," "economic blockade, and finally, armed invasion, all of which constitute the export of counter-revolution." From there František Kolár runs the idea across almost five centuries. The Hussite crusades of the fifteenth century; the coalition of monarchies against the French Revolution; Tsar Nicholas I's army crushing the Hungarian revolution of 1849; the Prussian and Versaillais siege of the Paris Commune; the fourteen-power intervention against Soviet Russia in 1918–20; the Western abandonment of the Spanish Republic; Vietnam, Indonesia, Chile, Nicaragua, Afghanistan — the survey is genuinely long, briskly written, and organised into some three dozen short thematic chapters. An afterword is supplied by Vitaly Korionov, a Pravda political observer, which places the book squarely inside the Soviet foreign-affairs establishment rather than at its scholarly margins.

Date the argument, not the spine. The copyright page reads © Progress Publishers 1983, and unusually for this series there is no lag to correct: the book is contemporaneous with its jacket. Its latest events are the martial law imposed in Poland on 13 December 1981, Reagan's March 1981 remarks on aid to the Afghan insurgents, and the "Polish events of 1980–1982." This is a book of the Second Cold War, written at its coldest — the Euromissile crisis, the war in Afghanistan, Solidarity crushed — and it was written to be a weapon in that conflict, not a study of it. That is the right frame for reading it, and it is also the frame in which its central problem becomes unmissable.

The problem is not that the category is empty. It is that the category is real, and the book holds it to only one side.

A true idea used as a one-way mirror

"Export of counter-revolution" describes something that has repeatedly happened. Kolár is on solid ground for long stretches, and an honest introduction has to say so before it says anything else. His chapter on the intervention against Soviet Russia is substantially accurate history. Britain, France, the United States, Japan, and eleven other states did land troops on Russian soil, arm the White generals, and blockade the young republic between 1918 and 1920; "Counter-revolution was exported in the most frank way" is not propaganda but a fair description of an actual war. His chapter on Spain is likewise sound in its main charge: the Popular Front government was legally elected, Franco's officers mutinied against it with German and Italian arms, and the Anglo-French policy of "non-intervention" — proclaimed, as he notes, by the French Socialist premier Léon Blum — was in practice a slow strangling of the Republic while the Soviet Union "was the only country to give active and extensive support to the Spanish Republican Government." The Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919, the Paris Commune, the coalition wars against revolutionary France: in each, the essential shape of the story — an internal reaction reinforced from outside — is correctly drawn. Where Kolár describes imperialist counter-revolution, he is often simply describing what occurred, and the reader is better off for having the sequence laid out.

What turns a defensible thesis into a propaganda instrument is that the mirror only ever faces outward. In the whole 500-year sweep, armed intervention across a border to crush a revolution is a crime committed exclusively by the West and its predecessors. The Warsaw Pact never appears in the dock, though within the living memory of the book's author it had marched into two capitals to reverse two revolutions, and was at that moment fighting a third war beyond its southern border. The test for a book like this is not whether it uses the word "opportunism" or "counter-revolution" often, nor whether it quotes its enemies fairly. It is simpler and harder: can the category the book defines ever be turned on the author's own side? Here the answer is a flat no — and the interest of the book is that we can watch it say no, at length, about the very

events that fit its definition best.

Budapest, Prague, Kabul, Warsaw

One might expect a Soviet-bloc book of 1983 to secure this asymmetry by silence — simply to omit 1956, 1968, Afghanistan, Poland. It does the opposite, and the opposite is more revealing. Kolár names all four, devotes a full chapter to each, and re-describes each so that the tanks change sides.

Hungary, 1956, appears under the chapter title "Hungarian Putsch." The revolution is "essentially fascist counter-revolution"; Imre Nagy — arrested and, though the book does not say so, hanged in 1958 — is "revisionist and traitor who had wormed his way to the top." The Soviet military assault on Budapest is rendered as its opposite: the Kádár government "asked the Soviet Union to help it oppose the counter-revolution," and "the Soviet government met that request and resolutely came out against the imperialist export of counter-revolution." The one genuine armed invasion in the chapter — the Red Army's — is thus recoded as resistance to invasion. Note the trick of grammar that makes it work: the Soviet Union "met that request," an act of assent, never an act of force.

Czechoslovakia, 1968, is the crucial case, because it was Kolár's own country and he was writing inside it during the long "normalisation" that followed. His chapter is titled "Abortive Attempt to Take Revenge," and it treats the Prague Spring as a counter-revolutionary plot to undo the "February 1948 triumph" — the reformers around Ota Šik become "right-wing opportunists" scheming to restore capitalism; Alexander Dubček, the movement's leader, is not named once in the entire book. The invasion of 21 August 1968 — some half a million Warsaw Pact troops, the largest military operation in Europe since 1945 — is dissolved into a single sentence in the passive voice: "the internationalist aid by the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Treaty allies" of Czechoslovakia "was called for in order to foil the plans of exporting counterrevolution and to preclude bloodshed. This step was necessary and had no alternative." (The book's own spelling of the word drifts between hyphenated and solid; quotations here follow the printed page.) A Czech writer, describing the occupation of Prague by foreign armies, produces a sentence in which no army occupies anything and no agent acts: aid "was called for," a step "was necessary." Fifteen years later the defeated reformers who signed Charter 77 are dismissed in the Poland chapter as "the bankrupts of 1968." The book cannot see that its own governing concept — counter-revolution carried across a border by armed force to

reverse a movement for reform — is the exact description of what the Soviet Union did to the country in which its author sat writing.

Afghanistan receives the chapter "Hatred of the Saur Revolution," and here the book reproduces, almost to the phrase, the official formula the Soviet foreign-policy literature of these years used everywhere. After the December 1979 coup that installed Babrak Karmal — the killing of Hafizullah Amin passing as the removal of a usurper — "in response to repeated requests from the Afghan government, the Soviet Union performed its internationalist duty and brought a limited contingent of its troops to Afghanistan to help the Afghan people repel the armed aggression from without," an act said to accord "fully" with Article 51 of the UN Charter. The war was three and a half years old when Kolár wrote this. Aggression is exclusively American; the Soviet expeditionary force is "a limited contingent," present only to "repel" someone else's aggression.

Poland, 1980–81, gets the longest of the four chapters, "The West Looks for a 'Weak Link.'" Solidarity — at its height a ten-million-member workers' movement — is presented throughout as a fabrication of Western intelligence: the KOR intellectuals were "sanctioned by Western secret services," the free-union idea "came from abroad and was financed in dollars," and the whole rising was scripted in a Brzezinski memorandum. When the strikes forced the recognition of the independent unions, "this legalisation enabled the reactionary forces to engage in overt political struggle against the Polish United Workers' Party." The declaration of martial law on 13 December 1981 appears only obliquely — as the moment American radio stations doubled their Polish broadcasts — while the crushing of the union is folded into the claim that "external and internal counter-revolution dealt it a blow." A general seizing power against a trade union at the head of tanks is, in this telling, not counter-revolution; the trade union is.

The reflexive blindness has a perfect emblem inside the book itself. Kolár writes with real feeling about Budapest in 1919, when foreign invasion and Entente blockade strangled Béla Kun's Hungarian Soviet Republic — a genuine export of counter-revolution. Two hundred pages later he writes about Budapest in 1956, when Soviet armour entered the same city, and this time the invasion is salvation. Same capital, foreign tanks in both, and only one set of tanks counts. The book never notices that it has told the story twice with the verdict reversed.

And the contradiction is sometimes visible on a single page. In

his closing hymn to the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, Kolár quotes its founding preamble for "the principles of respect for the independence and sovereignty of states and non-interference in their internal affairs" — six hundred lines after he has praised that same organisation's interference in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia as "necessary" and having "no alternative." The general summation is baldest of all: "Soviet foreign policy of peace has always emphatically rejected both the export of revolution and the export of counter-revolution," and the socialist countries "consider it inadmissible and even criminal to attempt the export of counterrevolution in any form." The book means every word. That is what makes it a document rather than a lie — the author does not appear to be concealing the invasions; he has genuinely reclassified them, and the category has been built so that it can never catch him.

Two questions, then, dispose of the book's method, and they are worth stating because they generalise to the whole shelf of Soviet foreign-affairs writing this series reprints. First: is each accusation attached to a described act that could be shown not to have happened? Often it is — the Brzezinski memorandum, the Radio Free Europe broadcasts, the Dulles brothers' remarks are all, in principle, checkable, and some are real. Second: could the category, as the book defines it, ever be applied to the author's own state? Never. It is the second failure, not the first, that convicts the book. A concept of "exported counter-revolution" that cannot be predicated of Budapest 1956, Prague 1968, and Kabul 1979 is not a historical category at all; it is a badge of allegiance.

What the book leaves out, even on its own side

There is a second, quieter kind of selectivity, and noticing it guards against the opposite error — of imagining that the book at least gets the Western crimes right and only falsifies the Eastern ones. Its coverage of imperialist counter-revolution is itself oddly thin exactly where the postwar record is most damning. A book whose entire subject is the covert overthrow of revolutionary and reforming governments manages not to narrate the two textbook cases. The 1953 coup against Mohammad Mosaddeq in Iran is absent — Iran appears once, only as the country from which the CIA is said to have relocated a regional office. The 1954 coup against Jacobo Árbenz in Guatemala is absent — Guatemala appears once, buried in a list of United States interventions of 1903–1924. Even Chile, the crime the book most wants, is handled at arm's length: the 1973 coup is mentioned twice, once as an example of a "reactionary coup" and once as "the overthrow of the

Popular Unity government," but Salvador Allende is never named and nor is Pinochet. The book that exists to catalogue exported counter-revolution cannot bring itself to write the individual histories of the clearest exported counter-revolutions of its own lifetime — perhaps because close narration invites the reader to ask about the symmetrical cases in the East, and the safest register is the general one.

The Spanish chapter carries the sharpest omission of all. Kolár's account of Western betrayal is true as far as it goes, but it stops precisely where the Soviet role becomes uncomfortable. Not a word here about the other force that was exported into Republican Spain after 1936: the Terror. The suppression of the POUM, the murder of Andreu Nin, the settling of Moscow's scores in Barcelona in May 1937 — the intervention that came from the East — falls into total silence, because it cannot be told inside a book whose thesis requires the Soviet Union to be the Republic's only friend. The word POUM does not occur. This is the recurring signature of the series: the true half of a story told with genuine energy, and the half that would implicate Moscow left blank.

The position the book cannot occupy

The deepest thing the book conceals is that a consistent anti-imperialist position was available in 1983 and had been for decades — one that opposed the export of counter-revolution from both directions — and that it was held, in print, by the tradition this series speaks from. The Fourth International and the wider anti-Stalinist left condemned the CIA coups, the war in Vietnam, and the strangling of the Spanish Republic as fiercely as Kolár does; they also condemned the tanks in Budapest and Prague and Kabul, which he cannot. That combination is not a paradox but a principle, and it was worked out in exactly the moments Kolár rewrites.

On 1956, the American Socialist Workers Party's International Socialist Review did not wait for the archives. In its Summer 1956 issue it read the June uprising in Poznań as an "independent working-class struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy," and by the Fall 1956 number — "Revolution in Poland and Hungary," vol. 17 no. 4 — it wrote that "the Polish and Hungarian workers launched a general revolutionary uprising against the rule of the Kremlin bureaucracy... rallied around the demand for complete national independence and workers democracy." Where Kolár sees a "fascist putsch" organised by Radio Free Europe, the contemporaneous revolutionary left saw a workers' political revolution — the

very thing his tradition claimed to want, breaking out against his tradition's state.

On 1968, the reply is even more direct. The issue of Intercontinental Press dated 2 September 1968 (vol. 6 no. 28) carried on its cover the demand "End the Soviet Occupation!" and inside, Joseph Hansen's article "A Political Disaster for the Kremlin," which took apart the "counterrevolution" pretext as "a fiction to cover up" a decision already taken to intervene, and drew the exact parallel Kolár suppresses — to the fate of "the Hungarian leaders in 1956." Through the autumn of 1968 the paper ran week after week of eyewitness material from Czechoslovakia, precisely the reporting Kolár's chapter treats as enemy propaganda. The occupation he calls internationalist aid, the revolutionary press of the day called an occupation and demanded be ended.

Behind these particular judgments stands the analysis the book most needs its readers not to have read: Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), the standard against which every Soviet account of Soviet society deserves to be measured. Its argument — that a privileged bureaucratic caste had raised itself above the working class and now defended its own rule under the banner of socialism — is the missing premise that makes sense of everything Kolár cannot explain. Once the Warsaw Pact is understood as the armed guarantor of that caste rather than of "the socialist accomplishments of the fraternal countries," the invasions of 1956, 1968, and 1979 stop being anomalies to be explained away and become exactly what the theory predicts: a bureaucracy exporting counter-revolution to protect itself from workers who might do to it what the Hungarians and Czechs were trying to do. The reader who wants the reply to this book in one sentence has it in the book's own vocabulary: the export of counter-revolution is real, and between 1953 and 1981 the state that commissioned this book was among its most practised agents.

That is why the volume is worth reprinting rather than dismissing. Read as history it is unreliable in a patterned, instructive way; read as evidence it is first-rate. It shows, more clearly than any hostile summary could, how a genuine idea — that reaction crosses borders by force to kill revolutions — was fitted with a one-way mirror, so that the citizen of the bloc that had just done exactly that could survey five centuries of it and never once see his own reflection. Kolár's Czechoslovakia had been invaded fifteen years before he sat down to write about the export of counter-revolution. The most important sentence in the book is the one he did not know he was writing.

Keynesianism Today

Keynes, the neoclassical synthesis, the Cambridge post-Keynesians and Friedman's monetarism, read in the original and followed through the models - a genuine economist's account of why the postwar consensus broke.

Irina Osadchaya

Introduction to the 1983 Edition

Of the several Progress Publishers volumes in this series that set out to demolish Western economics, this is the one that comes closest to doing honest work — and it is worth saying so at the start, because the usual charge does not stick. Irina Osadchaya's *Keynesianism Today* is not a pamphlet that condemns John Maynard Keynes from a safe distance and relays his arguments at second hand. It reads Keynes in the original, follows the neo-Keynesians and the post-Keynesians through their actual models, tracks Milton Friedman's monetarist counter-attack equation by equation, and arrives — in 1983 — at a diagnosis of the crisis of Keynesian economic policy that events had already begun to confirm. On its own subject, the failure of the post-war capitalist consensus, this is a serious book by a serious economist. The trouble is not what it says about capitalism. The trouble is the one economy it never once turns its instruments upon: the one it was written from.

Begin with the date, because the spine misleads in the ordinary way and the text corrects it. The English translation carries "© Progress Publishers 1983," and for once the argument does not lag behind the imprint — but neither is 1983 the whole story. Osadchaya opens her own Foreword by telling us exactly what we are holding: "This is a substantially re-written and enlarged version of the book *From Keynes to Neoclassical Synthesis*." That earlier book, she says a page later, appeared "five years" before — placing it around 1978 — and the rewriting was not cosmetic. The 1970s, she writes, "were marked by a deep crisis of bourgeois economic thought," and the new edition was built to take the measure of that crisis: two wholly new sections (Part Three on post-Keynesianism, Part Four rewritten "in the light of the experience of the 1970s"), a new treatment of monetarism, a new account of the collapse of the "neoclassical synthesis." This is the rare Progress title revised forward into its own moment rather than reprinted stale. Its latest references bear that out — it names "the Reagan Administration's conservative policy," quotes a Presidential message of 30 January 1980, and carries a 1982 citation. The Russian original

— its title is more literally *Contemporary Keynesianism* (Sovremennoe keynsianstvo) — was completed around 1981–82. The book reads its real date, and its real date is the hinge of the century's economic history: the Volcker recession, the arrival of Reagan and Thatcher, the monetarist ascendancy, and the wreck of the Keynesian order that had governed the capitalist West since 1945.

Who wrote it? Here I will be careful, because the series' credibility rests on not inventing what it cannot source. The book's front matter gives Osadchaya no institutional title, and I will not manufacture one. What the text itself establishes is enough: she is a working academic economist with a prior monograph on the same subject, writing in the first person about her own earlier judgements, reading French and English sources in the original, and — a detail worth noting — translated into English by Yuri Sdobnikov, the same hand that edited *Socialism and Capitalism: Score and Prospects* elsewhere in this series. She is not an apparatus functionary assembling quotations. She is a specialist, and the book carries the marks of a specialist's respect for its material even as it fights it.

The citation test — the instrument that convicts most of these volumes — acquits this one, and it does so decisively. The recurring finding across this series is that Progress authors characterise their opponents without quoting them: the doctrine attributed to a Trotsky or a Kautsky sits in the author's own paraphrase, sourced to a Party Congress, never to the man's own page, so that it can be neither checked nor refuted. Osadchaya does the opposite. Keynes is named some three hundred and seventy times, and not as an epithet — his *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* and the two-volume *A Treatise on Money* are cited from the Macmillan editions and quoted directly. Roy Harrod appears across nearly sixty passages, his *Towards a Dynamic Economics* (1948) worked through in its own terms, with the warranted, natural and actual growth rates set out and the instability of his model derived rather than asserted. Evsey Domar, Robert Solow, the Cobb-Douglas production function, the multiplier-accelerator cycle models — each is presented as

a piece of machinery to be examined, not a slogan to be denounced. Joan Robinson and Nicholas Kaldor, the Cambridge post-Keynesians, are read at length; Piero Sraffa's *Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities* and the "transformation of value into the price of production" get a whole chapter; the newer American post-Keynesians — Clower, Leijonhufvud, Davidson, Minsky, Pasinetti — are named and engaged. And Friedman, the great adversary, is quoted from *A Theory of the Consumption Function* (1957), from the *Monetary History of the United States* he wrote with Anna Schwartz (1963), from his *Journal of Political Economy* articles and from *Capitalism and Freedom* — the monetarist theory of the cycle reconstructed step by step before it is criticised. Osadchaya even quotes the French economist Émile James in French. This is what reading your opponents looks like. Whatever one concludes about her verdicts, the evidence is on the table and can be tested — which is precisely what cannot be said of the volumes this series more usually reviews.

She is candid, too, about the method and its risks in a way that is rare in this catalogue. Her Foreword closes: "Since this book was written, developments may have invalidated some of my propositions. I would be grateful to those who do not simply read this book but go on to let me know of their criticism." And she is willing to fault her own tradition. Explaining why she has re-read *The General Theory*, she notes that the orthodox reading "is precisely the aspect of the theory which is dealt with in most Soviet writings containing a critical analysis of Keynes's theory, including my own" — and that she now wants to recover "the elements that were ignored both by that version and in our own writings." A Soviet economist conceding, in print, that Soviet criticism of Keynes had been one-sided is not a common sight. It is the sound of a scholar working, under constraint, against the grain of her own genre.

Her governing method is the one Lenin licensed, and she states it openly — which makes the book more interesting than a simple denunciation and also fixes the limit it cannot cross. Bourgeois economics, she argues, has two functions, "an ideological one and a practical one": it exists to justify capitalism, but it must also, for the practical business of managing the economy, produce real knowledge of how that economy works. The critic's task is therefore double — to expose the apologetics and to salvage the science. She quotes Lenin to authorise the salvage: bourgeois economists are "learned salesmen of the capitalist class," and the job of Marxists is "to be able to master and refashion the achievements of these 'salesmen' ... and to be able to lop off their reactionary tendency." Her own formulation of the constructive half is a good one: the point is to "bring out the

elements of genuine knowledge, to identify the scientific elements, which no economic theory can do without." Read as a programme for reading Keynes, this is generous and, on its own ground, productive. Read as a description of what the book will and will not permit itself, it is also the key to the book's central silence — for the salvage runs in one direction only.

Now credit what genuinely holds up, because a great deal of it does, and 1983 was the moment that proved it. The book's spine — the argument that runs through all four parts — is that Keynesian demand-management could postpone, disguise and displace the contradictions of capitalist accumulation but could never abolish them, and that the post-war "neoclassical synthesis" which married Keynes to the marginalists was therefore built on sand. By the time the English edition appeared, that thesis had been vindicated by events with a completeness few economic predictions ever achieve. The stagflation of the 1970s — simultaneous inflation and unemployment — was the one outcome the orthodox Keynesian model had ruled out, and it broke the model. Osadchaya sees this exactly. She names it: the decade produced "a totally new situation which came to be known as 'stagflation', and which upset all the old notions about the mechanism of the cycle and inflation." And she describes the resulting policy trap with real precision — in "the atmosphere of stagflation," governments trying to fight inflation by contracting demand and unemployment by expanding it found that "it was impossible simultaneously to expand and to contract demand," so that policy degenerated into "feverish swings between dampers and stimulants." That is the impasse that discredited the post-war consensus and opened the door to the monetarism she goes on to anatomise. She has it right.

She has the deeper cause right too, in her own idiom. The recessions of 1969–71 and 1974–75 — the latter, she notes, "the gravest since the Great Depression and the first postwar crisis to hit all the developed capitalist countries" — were for her not accidents of policy but expressions of "the basic contradiction of capitalism, that between the social character of production and the private form in which its results are appropriated." Demand-management could redistribute the strain across time; it could not dissolve it. This is where her book converges with the best Marxist economics being written in the West at the very same moment — and the convergence is the point. Ernest Mandel's *Late Capitalism* (English edition, New Left Books, 1975) had already argued that the Keynesian "solution" bought post-war full employment at the price of a structural, "permanent inflation" that would eventually become uncontrollable, and had set the whole post-war boom inside a

Kondratieff "long wave" whose downturn was now arriving; his *The Second Slump* (1978) read the 1974–75 recession as the confirmation. Osadchaya, working from a different apparatus and forbidden some of Mandel's tools, reaches a strikingly similar destination: the boom is over, the crisis is structural rather than conjunctural, and the monetarist "cure" mistakes a symptom for the disease. On the economics of the capitalist West in the early 1980s, the Marxist diagnosis was simply better than the one that was about to triumph in Washington and London, and Osadchaya shares honestly in that vindication. A reader who wants to understand why the neoclassical synthesis fell apart will learn from this book.

Which makes the silence at its centre all the louder — and the silence is the finding. Reflexivity is the test this series has learned to trust above frequency counts and citation tallies: not how often a book uses its critical categories, nor even whether it quotes its opponents, but whether those categories could ever, in principle, be turned on the author's own side. Ask it of *Keynesianism Today* and the answer is a flat no, and the timing makes the no extraordinary. This is a book about the crisis of economic policy, published in 1983, at the depth of what the Soviet Union would later name its own "era of stagnation" — the last Brezhnev years, growth sliding toward zero, the shortage economy grinding on, the whole planning system three years from the reformers who would try and fail to save it. Every analytic instrument Osadchaya has sharpened on capitalism was available to be pointed homeward. Not one of them is.

Count the categories. "Stagnation" appears throughout the book — interwar Britain's stagnation, Hansen's stagnation theory, Robinson's "tendency to stagnation," the semi-stagnation of the American 1950s — and every instance is capitalism's. "Shortage" recurs — a shortage of capital goods in Harrod's model, a shortage of savings, the labour shortages of the industrial West, the US "National Commission on Supplies and Shortages" — and never once the shortage economy that defined daily Soviet life. "Soviet" occurs only to introduce Soviet writings and Soviet economists — the literature she draws on — never the Soviet economy as an object of analysis. The single "USSR" in the text is the publisher's postal address on the last page. The socialist economy is present in the book, but only ever as capitalism's serene and unexamined opposite. Marx's theory of reproduction, she writes, is "the theoretical foundation for socialist economic planning" — planning being, by definition, the thing that works. And the book's very last paragraphs make the point with a confidence that would be poignant if it were not so revealing. Surveying the West's inconclusive debates

over "planning," she insists that "there is a profound qualitative distinction between the capitalist planning and socialist planning," because genuine national economic planning "is ensured only by social property in the means of production, which is why it cannot be practised in the capitalist countries." Genuine planning is guaranteed by socialist ownership. The sentence was published as the genuine article was seizing up in every queue and every unmet quota from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok.

This is the pattern a sibling volume in this series names precisely: error is admissible, the category is not. A Soviet economist may concede, as Osadchaya does of her own earlier work, that a particular analysis was incomplete. What the frame forbids is the thought that the categories of crisis, stagnation, shortage and disproportion — the whole toolkit she wields so capably against the West — might describe the economy she was writing from. Her instruments were built to diagnose exactly the disease her own system had contracted. She could see, with real acuity, that Keynesian demand-management could paper over but never abolish capitalism's contradictions. She could not ask, and the book is constructed so that no reader is invited to ask, whether Soviet central planning was papering over contradictions of its own. The analyst who could describe the stagflation trap in a single flawless sentence was structurally incapable of turning to the window and describing what she saw there. The same closure runs through the neighbouring economics volumes: V. V. Rymalov's *The World Capitalist Economy* (Progress, 1982), which diagnoses Western stagflation exactly while presenting CMEA as "the most dynamically developing economic community in the world," and the Sdobnikov-edited *Socialism and Capitalism: Score and Prospects* (1971), which reserves the entire vocabulary of economic failure — crisis, unemployment, inflation, shortage — for the other side. Same house, same instruments, same reflexive silence. It is not a personal failing of Osadchaya's. It is the boundary of the permitted conversation, and it is drawn in the same place in every book that crosses this desk.

The tools she was denied are the ones her Western counterparts used to ask the forbidden question. Two of them stand out, and both were absent from Soviet economics by more than accident. The first is the long wave. Mandel's *Late Capitalism* organised the entire post-war epoch around a Kondratieff cycle of expansion and depression — but long-wave theory was heterodox in the USSR, and its originator, N. D. Kondratiev, had been shot in 1938; a Soviet economist of 1983 reached for it at her peril. The second, and more decisive, is the falling rate of profit turned on real data.

Mandel derived the structural downturn of the 1970s from a secular decline in the average rate of profit; Osadchaya's apparatus — "the general crisis of capitalism," "state-monopoly capitalism," the social-versus-private contradiction — could describe the results of the crisis but was ill-equipped to anatomise its mechanism, and it offered no way at all to ask the reflexive question, because the falling rate of profit is a category that presupposes profit, and Soviet planning was defined as the realm where that category did not apply. The point is not that Mandel was infallible; it is that his framework could take the socialist economies as a proper object of economic analysis, and hers, by construction, could not. That difference was being argued out in exactly these years, in the pages of *Quatrième Internationale*, in the long debate between Mandel and Alec Nove over whether a planned economy could dispense with the market — a debate whose very first premise is that the socialist economy is something to be analysed rather than celebrated. That premise is the one thing Keynesianism Today cannot grant.

And where a reader wants the reflexive analysis Osadchaya cannot perform, the answer was already old. Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) had turned the categories of political economy on the Soviet economy itself half a century before — the bureaucracy as a privileged stratum living off the administration of scarcity, the planned economy as a contradictory and crisis-prone formation rather than a serene one, the shortage and the queue as the material basis of bureaucratic power rather than as embarrassing accidents. It is the missing chapter of this book: the one in which the instruments are pointed homeward. That Osadchaya could not write it is not a measure of her ability, which the rest of the volume amply demonstrates. It is a measure of what her position would allow her to see, and of the price her genuine talent paid for the ground it was permitted to stand on.

So the verdict divides cleanly, and the division is the reason to reprint it. As an account of why the Keynesian settlement collapsed — what stagflation was, why the neoclassical synthesis could not survive it, how monetarism rushed the vacancy, what Friedman and the Cambridge post-Keynesians actually argued — this is a competent, well-sourced, and in places genuinely illuminating book, whose central thesis the 1980s proved out. Read it for that and it repays the reading; the citation test acquits it, and the acquittal is earned. But read it as a document of its moment and it becomes something sharper and sadder: a first-rate diagnostician anatomising the sickness of one economic order at the precise instant her own was sickening in ways her method was built to detect and forbidden to name. The book's power and the book's blindness

are the same faculty, pointed in the only direction it was allowed to face. That is the truest thing Keynesianism Today records — not about Keynes, whom it reads well, but about the intellectual world that produced so capable a reader and set so exact a limit on what she could turn her capability upon.

MARXISM

Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution

Written in Geneva while the Potemkin mutinied - Lenin's argument that a bourgeois revolution could not be left to the bourgeoisie, and the case that would define Bolshevism.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

Introduction to This Edition

Lenin wrote this book in the middle of a revolution, and it reads like it. It was drafted in June and July 1905, in the Geneva exile of the defeated, while Russia burned: Bloody Sunday in January had shattered the myth of the good Tsar, strikes and peasant risings were spreading, and the battleship Potemkin mutinied in the very weeks Lenin was correcting proofs. The pamphlet appeared in Geneva that July. Its immediate occasion was a quarrel inside a broken party. The Russian Social-Democrats had split in 1903, and in the spring of 1905 the two halves met separately — the Bolsheviks at their Third Congress in London, the Mensheviks at a rival "Conference" in Geneva — and passed opposing resolutions on the same question: what should Marxists do in a revolution that was, on any orthodox reckoning, a bourgeois one? Much of the book is a line-by-line comparison of those two sets of resolutions. Beneath the exegesis lies the argument that would define Bolshevism.

The Mensheviks reasoned mechanically from the textbook. If the coming revolution was bourgeois-democratic, then the bourgeoisie must lead it; the workers' party should stay in opposition, push from below, and wait for a later, separate, socialist revolution once capitalism had matured. Lenin's answer was that this schema handed the revolution to a class that did not want it. The Russian liberal bourgeoisie, tied by a thousand threads to the landlords and the throne, was "inconsistent, self-seeking and cowardly in its support of the revolution," and would betray it the moment its own narrow interests were satisfied. The revolution could be carried through to a decisive victory only by another combination: the working class leading, and the peasant millions marching with it. "Only the proletariat can be a consistent fighter for democracy," Lenin wrote; "it may become a victorious fighter for democracy only if the peasant masses join its revolutionary struggle." Their victory he named the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and

the peasantry." This is the living core of the book, and it has not aged: the insistence on the hegemony of the working class, its refusal to dissolve itself into a liberal coalition, its wager on the alliance of the workers and the rural poor. Against every version of tailing after a "progressive" bourgeoisie, *Two Tactics* is a manifesto of political independence.

It is honest to say where the book is dated, and the tradition from which this introduction is written has always said it. The particular formula — a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" that would carry through the democratic revolution and then, as a separate task, pass to socialism — Lenin himself abandoned. In April 1917, returning to a Russia where the workers' soviets and the bourgeois Provisional Government already stood face to face, he declared the old algebra obsolete and told the "old Bolsheviks" who still clung to it that the slogan belonged in the archive of pre-revolutionary antiques. The class content of 1917 — a proletariat taking power and being driven at once toward socialist measures — was closer to the "permanent revolution" that Trotsky had sketched in 1906 than to the staged sequence of 1905. On this one point Trotsky had seen further, and it does the memory of both men no service to pretend otherwise. What survived 1917 was not the formula but the method: proletarian leadership, distrust of the liberal, the worker-peasant bloc. And the deepest chapter of the book, the appendix on Marx's view of dictatorship, survived entirely. There Lenin recovered, against the "vulgar bourgeois" mind for which "the terms dictatorship and democracy are mutually exclusive," Marx's own understanding — that every state is the dictatorship of a class, and that the rule of the labouring majority is the most democratic dictatorship history has known.

Was the state that canonised this book faithful to it? Here the record turns bitter. Stalinism kept *Two Tactics* on every reading list and inverted its meaning. It seized on the "stages" — first the democratic revolution, then, much later, the socialist — and on the alliance with non-proletarian classes,

and it quietly dropped the one thing that had given the book its soul: the political independence of the working class. The result was not Leninism but the Menshevism Lenin had fought in these very pages, resurrected and exported. In China in 1925–27 the Communist Party was ordered into the bourgeois-nationalist Kuomintang and subordinated to it — Bukharin's "bloc of four classes" — in the name of the democratic stage. In April 1927 Chiang Kai-shek turned on his communist allies and drowned the Shanghai workers in blood. The party that had been told to trust the national bourgeoisie was destroyed by it, exactly as *Two Tactics* had warned that the bourgeoisie would betray. Trotsky's response, in *The Permanent Revolution* and the writings on China, was to point out the obscene irony: the schema Lenin demolished in 1905 had been dressed in Lenin's own authority and used to lead a revolution to slaughter. The same stagist logic would later disarm the workers in Spain and, after 1945, tie communist parties across the colonial world to their own bourgeoisies. A book written to keep the proletariat from surrendering its leadership was made the charter of one surrender after another.

The lineage did not stop at the colonial world. In Western Europe the same stagism reached its settled form in Eurocommunism, where by the 1970s the Italian, French and Spanish parties made the partnership with the "progressive" bourgeoisie not a passing tactic but a strategy — a standing compromise in the joint management of the capitalist state, the "democratic stage" stretched out until it swallowed the socialist one entirely. Ernest Mandel, in *From Stalinism to Eurocommunism*, followed that surrender back through the popular-front turn of 1935 to the abandonment of the proletarian independence this pamphlet was written to defend. What Lenin argued in 1905 against the Mensheviks had become, seventy years on, the standing argument against the parties that governed in his name.

That is what it means to introduce this text today. The Soviet edition in your hands — Volume 9 of Lenin's *Collected Works*, issued by Progress Publishers in Moscow in 1962, in the translation of Abraham Fineberg and Julius Katzer — presents *Two Tactics* as a seamless anticipation of everything that followed, a founding document of an unbroken "Marxism-Leninism." The apparatus of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, thorough on chronology and citation, is silent on the two facts that matter most: that Lenin retired the book's central formula in 1917, and that the formula was afterwards revived to break the revolution in China. The canon needed the 1905 formula intact and timeless precisely because the living Lenin had moved past it and the dead Lenin could be made to authorise the stagism his epigones practised. The

frozen text became a measure of the distance between the revolutionary and the state that embalmed him.

So read *Two Tactics* for what it is and refuse both of the readings pressed on it. It is not the Menshevik pamphlet its Stalinist admirers half-turned it into, and it is not a relic. It is a young revolutionary's insistence that the working class must lead in its own name, keep its own banner, trust no bourgeoisie to make its revolution for it, and build its power on the alliance of the exploited town and country. Read against the ossified "Marxism-Leninism" that flew its title while betraying its method, this small book from the Geneva of 1905 remains one of the sharpest arguments in the whole literature against the popular-front stagism that has cost the movement so dearly — and one of the clearest statements of why the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself.