

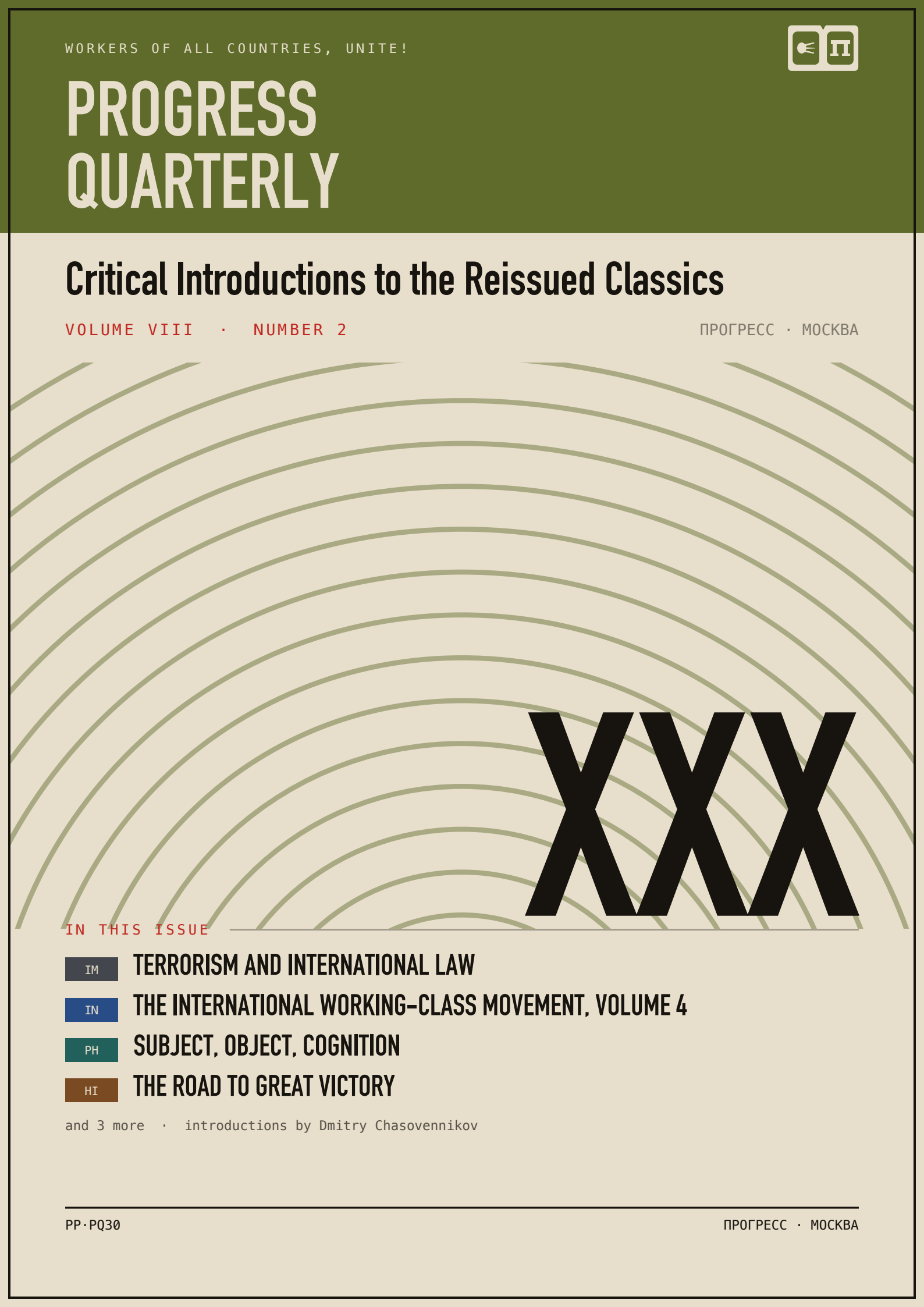


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Terrorism and International Law

Soviet international lawyers on the law of terrorism - the air conventions, the hostages and protected-persons treaties, the UN drafting deadlock - ending with the case for a permanent international criminal court.

Igor Blishchenko and Nikolai Zhdanov

Introduction to the 1984 Edition

This is a law book, and it should be read as one. Igor Blishchenko and Nikolai Zhdanov were Soviet international lawyers, and *Terrorism and International Law* — translated by Lev Bobrov, designed by Timur Samigulin, issued by Progress in Moscow — does what a monograph in that field is supposed to do. It works through the 1937 League of Nations Convention, the Tokyo, Hague and Montreal air conventions, the 1971 OAS Convention, the 1973 Convention on Internationally Protected Persons, the 1977 European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, the 1979 Hostages Convention and the law of mercenarism. It reproduces the drafting record of the UN Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism by document symbol. It cites Georg Schwarzenberger, Paul Wilkinson, Pierre Mertens, Brian Jenkins, Jean Salmon and the *American Journal of International Law*, mostly accurately and sometimes generously. It ends by arguing for a permanent international criminal court. A reader who came to it expecting a pamphlet will find something closer to a seminar.

Start with the date. The spine says 1984; the Russian imprint codes carry 84; but nothing in the text happens after the middle of 1982. The last events discussed are the Israeli invasion of Lebanon of June 1982 and a Middle East report of the same year; the most recent book cited is *The Words of Friends*, Progress, 1982. The strings "1983" and "1984" do not occur anywhere in seventy-five thousand words. This is a manuscript closed in the second half of 1982 and published two years later, and it matters, because it places the book beside a companion volume rather than after it. A. S. Grachev's *In the Grip of Terror*, Progress, 1982, was Moscow's political answer to the Reagan administration's "international terrorism" campaign — the Haig announcement of January 1981, Claire Sterling's *The Terror Network*, the El Salvador White Paper. This is the same commission in a different register. Grachev, who worked in the International Department of the Central Committee, wrote for the Western communist parties. Blishchenko and Zhdanov wrote for the international lawyers,

and for the delegations that had spent a decade deadlocked in the Sixth Committee. Between them the two books divide the brief: Grachev supplies the facts, this one supplies the doctrine.

The doctrinal problem is genuine, and the book states it correctly. In 1982 international law had no agreed definition of terrorism and had never had one. The 1937 Convention, drafted after the murder of King Alexander of Yugoslavia and Louis Barthou at Marseilles in October 1934, was signed by twenty-four states, ratified by one — India — and never entered into force. The General Assembly took the subject up in 1972 under an agenda item so long and so hedged that the book reproduces its full title twice, and the Ad Hoc Committee established by Resolution 3034 (XXVII) produced, through three subcommittees and several sessions, nothing. The book's account of why is the most useful thing in it, and it is documentary rather than assertive: it prints the submissions of Syria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Byelorussia, the Ukraine and the USSR from A/AC.160/1 and its addenda, and it names the fourteen non-aligned states — Algeria, Congo, Guinea, India, Mauritania, Nigeria, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia, Yemen Arab Republic, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia — who pressed for state terrorism to be examined first. That is not a Soviet invention. It was the position of a large part of the General Assembly, and anyone who wants to understand why the UN could not define terrorism for thirty years needs to know it. It was also being said in 1981 by people with no interest in Moscow's convenience. Maurice Bishop, prime minister of Grenada, put it to a rally that March in terms the book never improves on: Washington was "trying to lump together the socialist countries, the Non-aligned countries, the national liberation movements, the progressive countries in the third world . . . to try to attack the freedom fighters against apartheid in Namibia and South Africa as being internationalist terrorists." Intercontinental Press, reporting him, added the flat sentence that is the whole of the argument: "Grenada rejects this imperialist definition of terrorism."

The Soviet formula is stated plainly and should be stated

fairly. The USSR, the book records, "declared it to be inadmissible to extend the interpretation of the concept 'international terrorism' to cover the national liberation struggle, resistance to the aggressor in the territories occupied by him, and action by working people in defence of their rights and against the oppression by exploiters." The Conclusion repeats it almost word for word: legal measures against terrorism must "under all circumstances, preclude the possibility of such interpretation of international terrorism as could be applied to the national liberation movements or resistance to the aggressor in occupied territories, or the activities of the working people against their exploiters." One can disagree with that and still see that it is a position with a case behind it. A law that made armed resistance to the South African army in Namibia a crime, while leaving the South African army's raids into Angola outside the definition, would not have been a neutral law. The book quotes Wilkinson's chapter arguing that in recognising the PLO the UN had "granted legal status to terrorists and legalised their terrorist activities", and the reply — that this condemns the liberation movement and whitewashes the reaction — is not a bad one. Nor was the fear hypothetical. When Senator Jeremiah Denton opened the hearings of the new Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism in Washington in April 1981, he began by reading out a fresh CIA definition of terrorism that encompassed actions with "insurrectionary goals", and Charles Mohr of the New York Times observed that "This would seem to include some wars of national liberation." Intercontinental Press reported it in its issue of 4 May 1981, while these authors were still writing. The drafting fight the book describes was being conducted in the open, and the side the book was arguing against had just said the quiet part aloud.

The Western double standard was real, and the book's sharpest instance of it has never been answered: the United States co-sponsored resolutions condemning air piracy while sheltering the Brazinskases, who hijacked a Soviet airliner to Turkey in 1970 and shot dead the stewardess Nadezhda Kurchenko. That happened.

The book also develops the concept of state terrorism seriously, which almost no Western monograph of 1982 did. Its route is technical and rather elegant: since the Special Committee on the Question of Defining Aggression had, in April 1974, brought acts of state terrorism and support for them within the draft definition of aggression, and since the General Assembly adopted that definition in December 1974, state terrorism can be prosecuted through the law of aggression, and belongs among international crimes proper — alongside crimes against peace, war crimes, crimes against

humanity, genocide and apartheid. It is applied to Israel's operations against the PLO in Europe and in Lebanon, to South Africa in Angola, to Chile — Letelier in Sheridan Circle in September 1976, which it attributes correctly to the Chilean secret police, DINA, together with the car bomb that killed General Carlos Prats and his wife in Buenos Aires in 1974 and the shooting of Bernardo Leighton and his wife in 1975 — and to the United States, with the Church Committee material quoted from the published report. Isabel Letelier is quoted from New Times: "This is a case of state terror directed against a great many people in both Chile and other countries." The book's own definition, which it puts in a footnote, is this: "State terrorism should likewise be interpreted to imply a policy of terrorism pursued by the authorities in respect of individuals, groups of individuals or population for political, racial and" — the sentence runs on — and, by the doer, "acts of terrorism committed by persons in civil service and by those expressly trained for the purpose".

Write that definition out and read it slowly. It is a good definition. It is also, word for word, a description of what the Soviet state did to its own population between 1936 and 1938.

The same perception was arriving, that same season, from the opposite direction. On 4 December 1981 Reagan signed an executive order replacing Carter's of 1978, and where the Carter order had at least attempted a definition of "international terrorist activities", the new one dropped the definition and kept the powers. Jim Mack, writing in the *Militant* of 18 December and reprinted in Intercontinental Press of 21 December 1981, drew the conclusion:

The term "terrorist activities" has merely become the 1980s replacement for "subversive activities," which was used by an earlier generation of thought-control police. It is a term whose very value to the cops comes from the fact that it is never defined, and never can be defined.

Set that beside Blishchenko and Zhdanov and you have the two halves of one insight. Mack's point is that power finds an undefined term useful. Theirs is the harder case, and they get most of the way to it: that the cure is a definition precise enough to bind whoever invokes it. What they will not do is take the last step, which is to stand inside it.

The test this book invites, then, is not Grachev's. Grachev simply asserted that "throughout their entire history, the activities of the CPSU and the Soviet state have not had any relation with terrorism and political violence", in a book where the word Stalin never appeared. These are lawyers, and they do

something more interesting and more damaging: they state a test, and then decline to run it.

Here is the test, in the first chapter:

Never in the history of the Marxist working-class movement in Russia, not even in the context of ruthless terror of the tsarist secret police (particularly after the defeat of the first Russian revolution of 1905) has any act of terrorism been planned or committed against any member of the tsarist government or the tsarist household, or against any official of the Russian Empire for that matter on the territory of a foreign state.

And immediately after it:

The entire history of the world communist movement demonstrates its consistent and emphatic rejection of terror as a method of struggle, and all the more so the terror that has international implications, which is directly connected with the concept of condemning the export of revolution and the export of counter-revolution.

The first sentence is, as drafted, probably true, and it is carefully confined to the tsarist period. The second is not confined at all. And the criterion both sentences turn on — political killing carried out on the territory of a foreign state — is the criterion the book itself adopts as the mark of international terrorism. In the chapter on the 1937 Convention it quotes Maxim Litvinov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, addressing the Council of the League of Nations, with evident approval: "one particular feature of this kind of terrorism is that it is almost always prepared and carried out in foreign territory, financed from foreign sources and ... becomes an instrument of a foreign policy". A footnote on the same page lists the paradigm cases: Vorovsky, the Soviet plenipotentiary killed in Switzerland in May 1923; the couriers Nette and Machmastal attacked in Latvia in 1926; Voikov, the Soviet plenipotentiary shot in Warsaw in June 1927.

Litvinov's definition is exact, and it convicts his own service. Ignace Reiss, who had run Soviet intelligence networks in Europe and broke with Stalin in the summer of 1937, was shot dead near Lausanne that September — in the same country as Vorovsky, in the same year the Geneva conference adopted Litvinov's convention. Rudolf Klement was abducted in Paris in July 1938; a forged letter of resignation from the Fourth International appeared days later, and in September, in the words of Fourth International six years afterwards, "his mutilated body was dragged up from the River Seine". Leon Sedov died in a Paris clinic in February 1938. And on 20

August 1940, in Coyoacán in Mexico, an agent of the NKVD put an ice-axe through the skull of Leon Trotsky.

Trotsky had described the pattern himself, in a letter to the Mexican authorities written on 1 June 1940 after the machine-gun raid on his house — twenty-five men, four in the morning, 24 May — and published in Fourth International that October:

It is first of all necessary to affirm that the attempted assassination could only be instigated by the Kremlin; by Stalin through the agency of the GPU abroad. During the last few years, Stalin has shot hundreds of real or supposed friends of mine. He actually exterminated my entire family, except me, my wife and one of my grandchildren. Through his agents abroad he assassinated one of the old leaders of the GPU, Ignace Reiss, who had publicly declared himself a partisan of mine. This fact has been established by the French police and the Swiss judiciary.

Prepared and carried out in foreign territory; financed from foreign sources; an instrument of a foreign policy. Joseph Hansen, who was in the house, recorded what Trotsky said when he came out of his study with the blood running down his face — "See what they have done to me!" — and what he dictated in the ambulance: "He was a political assassin. Jacson was a member of the GPU or a fascist. Most likely the GPU." The killer's true name, Ramón Mercader, was not established for years; the Fourth International's own accounts of 1940 call him Jacson and Mornard throughout. He served twenty years in a Mexican prison and was made a Hero of the Soviet Union.

None of this is denied in these pages, because none of it is raised. The word Stalin does not appear in the book. Neither does Cheka, GPU, NKVD, KGB, Yezhov, Kirov, Katyn, collectivisation, famine, purge or Moscow trial. In a monograph on the international law of political killing, the Soviet security service is not named once, in any of its acronyms, across seventy-five thousand words. Trotsky is named exactly once, and not as a victim: "The theoretical base of leftist terrorism is an eclectic mixture of anarchism, Trotskyism and fascism." The sentence carries no footnote, which is conspicuous in a book that footnotes Lenin scrupulously by volume and page a dozen times over, and Plekhanov by volume in a five-volume Progress edition. It is also, as an account of Trotsky's position, precisely backwards. His "Why Marxists Oppose Individual Terrorism", published in *Der Kampf* in November 1911, is one of the sharpest Marxist attacks on individual terror ever written, and it makes the same argument this book makes at length in chapter one —

that terrorism belittles the role of the masses in their own consciousness — and attributes it to Plekhanov and Lenin instead.

The Red Terror of 1918 is not among the silences, and here the book is more honest than Grachev, if only just. It appears three times, and it is defended: "Red terror was declared in reply to White terror during the Civil War, following the 1917 October Socialist Revolution", with Lenin's Letter to the British Workers quoted — "Our Red terror is a defence of the working class against the exploiters, the crushing of resistance from the exploiters." One may argue about that; it is at least an argument, made about a civil war with foreign armies on Soviet soil, and it is stated openly. But it is where the Soviet record stops. The book has a long and rather good discussion of the Jacobin Terror of 1793–94, complete with the Committee of Public Safety, the revolutionary tribunals and Marx's line about "a plebeian way of dealing with the enemies of the bourgeoisie". On Soviet internal history it has nothing at all between the end of the Civil War and the UN debates of the 1970s. The terror the authors were old enough to remember is the one period the book does not enter.

Afghanistan is handled by inversion rather than silence, and the inversion is legal. The mujahideen appear as "bands of mercenaries" committing aggression from the territory of Pakistan and Iran with American support; the Soviet army appears once, in a single sentence, as collective self-defence: "the Soviet Union, replying to a request from the legitimate government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, and in accordance with Art. 51 of the UN Charter regarding the right of individual or collective self-defence and Art. 4 of the 1978 Soviet-Afghan Treaty, has lent armed assistance to the people of Afghanistan". The book's own protected category — "resistance to the aggressor in the territories occupied by him" — is applied to Palestine, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Angola, and cannot be applied to the one country where, at the moment of writing, the Soviet army was the largest armed force in the field. And a few pages earlier the authors have printed, without comment, the list of parties to the Convention on the Definition of Aggression of 3 July 1933: "the USSR and Afghanistan, Estonia, Latvia, Iran, Poland, Romania and Turkey". Of the seven other signatories to the treaty by which the USSR proposed to define aggression, six were subsequently invaded, occupied or partly annexed by it — Poland in 1939, Estonia, Latvia and Romanian Bessarabia in 1940, northern Iran in 1941, Afghanistan in 1979. Only Turkey escaped. The list is on the page. Nobody counts.

Two things the book gets right deserve saying, because a

reader told everything is worthless learns nothing.

The first is the shooting of Pope John Paul II on 13 May 1981, which was being loudly attributed to Bulgarian and Soviet services at the time and is not mentioned in this connection here at all. What the book does say is that Mehmet Ali Ağca was a Turkish national connected to the neo-fascist Grey Wolves, that he had murdered Abdi İpekçi, the editor of the liberal *Milliyet*, in 1979, that he was sentenced to death and escaped from an Istanbul prison shortly before the sentence was to be carried out, and that an accomplice arrested in Italy had obtained a pistol for him from Italian neo-fascists. Every element of that is correct, and it was correct when Western newspapers were printing something else. The absence of any answer to the Bulgarian allegation is a consequence of the manuscript's closing date rather than of evasion — Sergei Antonov was arrested in November 1982, after the text was finished. The case against him rested, as Will Reissner wrote in *Intercontinental Press* in June 1985, on the "unsubstantiated statements" of a man who was by then telling an Italian court he was Jesus Christ reincarnated; four years of investigation, a 1,200-page indictment and a ten-month trial produced nothing else. The trial ended in Rome on 29 March 1986 with the three Bulgarians acquitted — and Reissner noted the sting in it, that they were acquitted only for "lack of proof", one step short of full acquittal under Italian law.

The second is the chapter on the 1977 European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, which is the best sustained legal argument in the volume and has aged into something close to prophecy. The Convention's method was to strip the political-offence exception out of extradition law for a defined class of violent offences, and the authors object that it "does not draw any line of distinction between a terrorist act of international significance and a terrorist act of a domestic character", so that the machinery built for one is available for the other. They do not make this case alone or from Moscow: they cite the Belgian jurist Jean Salmon, writing in the *Journal des tribunaux* of 24 September 1977 under the title "Un vrai pas en arrière", who held that the text could be applied to "a spy, a hangman, or an entirely innocent civilian", that it aimed less at international terrorism than at internal political violence, and that "any political opponent of an existing regime, who has committed no act of violence whatsoever, can be declared an accessory and prosecuted for terrorist activity." They note that French lawyers drew up a counter-convention protecting the right of asylum in protest. Every European state that has since watched terrorism legislation migrate into ordinary criminal procedure will recognise the shape of the complaint. So will anyone who has followed the last twenty

years of extradition politics. It should be said that on this one point the anti-Stalinist left has no rival text to offer: a search of Intercontinental Press and International Viewpoint across 1981–86 turns up no discussion of the 1977 European Convention by name at all. The tradition was fighting the campaign, not the treaty. Blishchenko and Zhdanov saw the treaty, and they were right about it.

And there the book closes its own circle without noticing. Its final substantive argument is a defence of the right of political asylum against a treaty that erodes it. Trotsky spent the last eleven years of his life on a planet, as he put it, without a visa: expelled from the USSR in 1929, moved on from Turkey, France and Norway, and given asylum at last by the Cárdenas government in Mexico in January 1937 — asylum of exactly the kind these authors defend. He was killed there by a man his own government had trained and sent. That is a policy of terrorism pursued by the authorities in respect of an individual for political reasons, committed by a person expressly trained for the purpose, prepared and carried out in foreign territory, financed from foreign sources, and an instrument of a foreign policy. Every clause of that sentence is taken from this book.

The reply to it was written in Coyoacán in the first week of June 1940, by the man who knew what was coming. The Fourth International's account of the assassination — Hansen's "With Trotsky to the End", Fourth International, vol. 1 no. 5, October 1940 — is still the fullest eyewitness record, and Trotsky's own "The Comintern and the GPU", finished on 19 August 1940 and printed in the November issue, was written for a Mexican court to prove that a state had organised murder abroad. He completed it the day before Mercader came back. That is the case these two lawyers had to answer, and they had the tools to answer it: they built the category, they drafted the definition, they quoted Litvinov's test. They simply never turned any of it around.

What became of the fight is worth recording, because it vindicates the book's diagnosis and not its politics. In December 1985 the General Assembly finally passed a resolution on terrorism, and it passed because the phrase "state terrorism" had been taken out of it — deleted, Intercontinental Press reported in January 1986, "in deference to the delegations from the principal imperialist countries, including the United States". Cuba cast the only dissenting vote in the legal committee on 6 December. From the other side, Israel's ambassador Benjamin Netanyahu complained that the resolution attempted to "legitimize terrorism" because of the way it referred to self-determination. Both objections on one page, three years after this manuscript closed: the concept the

book had built was traded away to get a text, and the text was still too generous for the people who had wanted one.

The tradition's own position, when it was finally set out at length, belonged to neither camp. Gerry Foley's "'Terrorism' out of control?", in International Viewpoint no. 97 of April 1986, was written after the American strikes on Libya and it refuses both the available loyalties — indicting Washington for having "built up a really massive terrorist apparatus" while saying flatly, in the same piece, that "Qadhafi's Libya is not a revolutionary regime". The analytical core is a sentence Blishchenko and Zhdanov could have used and could not have written, since their whole chapter on "leftist terrorism" depends on assigning bombs an ideology: "bombs and bullets have no political convictions. They can be used equally by rightists, leftists, criminals, uncontrolled individuals and lunatics". That is why a definition has to attach to the act and the actor's office rather than to the actor's politics — which is, in its better moments, exactly what this book argues.

Read the book for the drafting history, which is documentary and hard to find elsewhere; for the argument on asylum and extradition, which was right; for the proposal of an international criminal court, made sixteen years before the Rome Statute and by no means as a formality; and for the concept of state terrorism itself, which the West would not take seriously for another generation and which remains the correct name for what was done in Chile and Central America in those years. Then read the first chapter again and notice what a definition is for. A definition in international law is a promise to apply the same rule to yourself. This one is a very good definition, and the promise was never made.

INTERNATIONALISM

The International Working-Class Movement: Problems of History and Theory, Volume 4

1917 to 1923 - October, Brest-Litovsk, the civil war, the founding of the Comintern, and the revolutions in Germany, Hungary, Austria and Finland - by several dozen named historians of the Academy of Sciences.

V. V. Zagladin and others

Introduction to the 1984 Edition

This is the volume of the seven in which the man the whole series is built to write out of history was, for the years it covers, running the state it celebrates. Volume Four takes the story from the October insurrection of 1917 to the German defeat and the death-throes of the European revolutionary wave in 1923 — the Russian Revolution, Brest-Litovsk, the civil war, the founding of the Communist International, the revolutions in Germany, Austria, Hungary and Finland, Kronstadt, the trade-union controversy and the New Economic Policy. Across almost all of it Leon Trotsky was chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and then for Military and Naval Affairs, the man who negotiated at Brest and the man who built and commanded the Red Army that won the war the book spends three hundred pages narrating. A Soviet history of these particular years cannot simply delete him, as the volume on 1905–17 could delete the chairman of the first Soviet. It has to decide, event by event, which Trotsky to admit and which to suppress. Watching it decide is the most instructive thing in the book, and it is the reason this volume is more revealing than the ones on either side of it.

Get the date right first. The spine and the catalogue read 1984, and that is the year of the English translation — Progress Publishers, in the Chernenko interregnum, four months after Andropov's death. But the text is a Brezhnev-era book. The copyright page carries "© Издательство «Мысль», 1980" above "English translation © Progress Publishers 1984": the Russian original was closed in 1980, the last settled year of Brezhnev's late reign, and reached English readers four years later unaltered. The internal evidence agrees — Brezhnev's name appears eleven times and is the freshest political horizon in the book; the 26th Party Congress of 1981 is nowhere in it. So this is the Brezhnev settlement on the revolution and the civil war, and the settlement is the point: it fixes precisely how much of 1917–23 a Soviet reader of 1980 was to be told.

It is a large collective work, prepared under the USSR Academy of Sciences by several dozen named historians, each carrying a kandidat or doktor degree, with a team of contributors listed chapter by chapter, under an editorial board headed by V. V. Zagladin as editor-in-chief and co-chaired for the authors by Zagladin and Y. S. Drabkin. (Unlike Volumes One through Three and Five, this volume's surviving front matter does not print the name of the specific institute — "the Institute of the International Working-Class Movement" of the Academy — that produced the sister volumes; it names only the Academy of Sciences. The series, the committee and much of the personnel are continuous, but I state what the title page shows.) Above the board stands the same General Editorial Committee that signed the other volumes, and its first line is the one to keep in view: "B. N. Ponomarev, Chairman, T. T. Timofeyev, Deputy Chairman". Ponomarev was a Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, and in December 1971 he had put his name to a long article in *Kommunist* instructing the Party's theoretical cadres to expose Trotskyism's "kinship with open anti-Communism, with opportunism of right and 'left' persuasions" — the scare quotes are in the original instruction. This is the book that carries out that directive across the one period in which Trotskyism's founder was a founder of the Soviet state.

A word that recedes as its enemy departs

The reader who comes to this volume from the one before it will notice at once that the temperature has dropped. In the 1905–17 volume the word opportunism and its cognates ran to nearly thirteen uses per ten thousand words, the densest in the entire Progress catalogue. Here it falls to a hundred and six occurrences as the text stands — about 3.3 per ten thousand words; joining words split across line-ends raises the figure somewhat, but nowhere near the previous volume's level. That is worth pausing on, because on the face of it the fall is paradoxical: this is the volume in which the split with "opportunism" actually happens, the volume of the founding of

the Communist International in 1919, the organisational break with the Second International that the word exists to name. Why does the vocabulary of denunciation thin exactly when the denounced are expelled?

Because the enemy has changed address. Read the hundred-odd uses and almost all of them are spent on the social democracy of the Second International at the moment of its collapse and the moment of the schism: opportunism "became social-jingoism" in August 1914; the "opportunist leadership" of the reformist parties; the founding of the new parties "between the revolutionaries and the opportunists over vital issues". Once the Comintern is founded the opportunists are a separate, defeated, external camp, and an external camp is narrated more than it is cursed. What is striking is what the book does not call opportunism: the fierce disputes inside the Bolshevik Party that fill these same years. Brest, the militarisation of labour, the trade-union controversy, the Workers' Opposition, the "platform of the 46" — these are handled in an entirely different register, the register of a comrade's error. Bukharin's and Trotsky's trade-union theses are "mistaken statements" that were "refuted by principled criticism"; the Workers' Opposition is an "anarcho-syndicalist deviation"; even Stalin, arguing at Brest that there was no revolutionary movement in the West, is recorded as a man Lenin "did not agree with". The disqualifying nouns are kept for those outside the walls. The language of error is available inside them.

That distinction — opportunism for the enemy, error for the family — is where Trotsky's case is decided, because Trotsky in this volume is a man being moved, across five years and several hundred pages, from one category to the other.

The half of Trotsky the book will print

Trotsky is present in this volume, unavoidably and by name, at every point where he can be shown hesitating, erring or opposing. He is there in October — "Trotsky, at that time chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, proposed waiting for the opening of the" Second Congress of Soviets, set against Lenin's insistence on striking first. He is there in the first Soviet government: "L. D. Trotsky became People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs." He is there at Brest, correctly: "Trotsky, who led the Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk", and — this matters — the volume gets the Brest positions right. Where three foreign-policy volumes in this series put the revolutionary-war line into Trotsky's mouth (it was Bukharin's and the Left Communists'), this book, which actually narrates the dispute, records the vote accurately: "Trotsky's proposal,

'neither peace nor war' received 16 votes", against thirty-two for revolutionary war and fifteen for Lenin's peace, and it names the war party correctly as Lenin named them, "our pseudo-Lefts, Bukharin, Lomov, Uritsky and Co." The house amalgam does not occur here. It is a genuine result, and it should be reported as one: the volume closest to the event is the one that gets it right, which tells you the amalgam in the later books was not ignorance but convenience.

He is there again in 1920–21, in the trade-union controversy, where his real position is stated with substantial accuracy — that the unions should be "'shaken up' in Trotsky's expression" and folded into the state, that "Trotsky and his supporters developed plans for militarisation of the whole economy", and that the Ninth Congress "rejected Trotsky's claim that militarisation should be employed throughout the whole period of building" socialism. And he is there at the end, in 1923, as the "remnants of the earlier defeated opposition groupings united around Trotsky and the 'platform of the 46'", condemned through the resolution of the Thirteenth Party Conference of January 1924 as "not only an attempt to revise Bolshevism, a direct departure from Leninism".

Every one of these is a real event and most of the characterisations are, on the facts, defensible: Trotsky did counsel waiting for the Congress, did break off at Brest against Lenin's known view, did argue for the statification of the unions. This is the language of error, and error is admissible. What the volume removes is not Trotsky's mistakes. It is Trotsky's victory.

The half it will not

For the whole central span of the book — the civil war, the years 1918 to 1920 in which the Soviet republic survived against fourteen interventions and three White armies — Trotsky simply is not in the sentences. The Red Army is founded: "On January 15 (28), 1918, the Soviet Government decreed the organisation of a Workers' and Peasants' Red Army." It is built, fought and won with. The book names its field commanders freely — Frunze eight times, Voroshilov, Budyonny, Tukhachevsky, Yegorov — and it names Tsaritsyn, where Stalin and Voroshilov served. It names the institutions: "In September 1918 Revolutionary Military Councils (RMCs) were instituted for the Republic, the fronts and armies." But the man who was People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, who chaired the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic that those front and army councils reported to, who spent the war in the armoured train that is one of the enduring

images of it, is nowhere near any of these words. In twenty-nine occurrences of his name, not one attaches to the Red Army he created. The commander-in-chief of the force whose victory is the spine of the volume has been lifted clean out of it.

The same surgery is performed on October, and here it reproduces a specific, documented forgery. The volume tells the reader that the insurrection was directed by the Petrograd Soviet's Military Revolutionary Committee, which is true, and then that "Its nucleus became the Military Revolutionary Centre of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party set up on October 16 and consisting of A. S. Bubnov, F. E. Dzerzhinsky, Ya. M. Sverdlov, J. V. Stalin, and M. S. Uritsky." Combat operations are credited to three others: "The MRC put three of its members, V. A. Antonov-Ovseyenko, N. I. Podvoisky and G. I. Chudnovsky, in charge of combat operations." Trotsky, chairman of the Soviet whose committee this was and the acknowledged organiser of its work, appears in the October narrative only as the man who "proposed waiting". The five-man "Military Revolutionary Centre" is the exact device Trotsky spent a chapter dismantling in *The Stalin School of Falsification* (1937), where he shows it was a paper body that met and did nothing, elevated after the fact into the true directing organ for one reason — that Stalin was on it. Trotsky's rebuttal is precise and it is checkable: Stalin's school builds the legend on "a 'practical center for the organizational leadership of the insurrection,' of which, if you please, Trotsky was not a member. Neither was Lenin a member of that committee." The point is not that the Centre existed — it did, on paper — but that a committee neither Lenin nor Trotsky sat on is now the "nucleus" of the revolution, and the two men who actually led it have one been demoted to a doubter and the other reduced to a decree.

Charges you can check against Lenin, and a man you cannot check at all

This series has a standing test: when a Progress volume attacks an opponent, does it cite that opponent to his own works, or only characterise him? On the earlier volumes the answer was stark — the 1905–17 book cited Luxemburg's collected works sixteen times and no work by Trotsky even once, with the doctrine attributed to him floating inside quotation marks sourced to nothing. This volume is, to its credit, a step more honest, and the honesty is worth stating exactly because it is the harder case for a critic. The charges against Trotsky here are mostly sourced — but they are sourced to Lenin. The refutation of the trade-union position runs through Lenin's

"The Trade Unions, the Present Situation and Trotsky's Mistakes"; the one place Trotsky is flatly labelled comes inside a quoted judgement from the controversy — "Trotsky's point of view is 75 per cent opportunist, Lenin keeps to the middle" — reported, not asserted in the Institute's own voice. These are real Lenin texts about real 1920–21 disputes, and a reader is better served by them than by the free-floating quotation marks of the previous volume.

But the asymmetry has not gone; it has only moved. Lenin is quoted at length; Trotsky is quoted never. Across the whole book the reader sees Lenin's side of every argument Trotsky lost and Trotsky's side of none of them. What Trotsky actually wrote about the militarisation of labour, about Brest, about the platform of the 46 — the reader is not shown a sentence of it, and cannot weigh the charge against the defence, because the defence is not in the room. An opponent refuted through his prosecutor's transcript is still an opponent you cannot cross-examine.

The sharpest single instance is Lenin's "Letter to the Congress" — the Testament — and it is sharp precisely because the book handles Stalin so honestly. On Stalin the volume does what the de-Stalinisation settlement of 1956 licensed it to do, and does it fully: it quotes the "Stalin is too rude" passage, and it does not stop at the euphemism. It goes on to report that "Lenin advised replacing him in that post" and quotes the description of the wanted successor — a man "more tolerant, more loyal, more polite and more considerate to the comrades". The proposal to remove Stalin as General Secretary is present and correct. This is the licensed candour, and it is real; the same permission lets the book narrate Lenin's late clash with Stalin over the "autonomisation" of the republics and Stalin's "infatuation with pure administration", and to say that "initially Stalin's attitude to the criticism was incorrect". Error, once again, is admissible.

Now watch the same document handle Trotsky. Lenin's Testament weighed him in a single balance — Lenin called Trotsky "the most able man in the present Central Committee" and in the same breath faulted his self-assurance and his absorption in the administrative side of the work. The volume prints neither half of that. It reduces the whole assessment to five words — "he expressed political mistrust of Trotsky" — a characterisation Lenin's letter does not contain, and it drops "the most able man in the present Central Committee" entirely. The book that will quote Lenin proposing to sack Stalin will not quote Lenin praising Trotsky. That is not a silence forced by the period; the sentence sits in the *Collected Works* the Institute cites on nearly every page (vol. 36). It is a choice

made inside a single quoted document, and it is the choice the whole volume is organised around.

The hinge

The reflexivity test this series has come to trust asks not whether a book can admit an error — this one plainly can, about Zinoviev and Kamenev in October, about Stalin's rudeness and haste, about Bukharin's trade-union theses — but whether the category of opportunism ever turns inward on the Party's own line of descent. It does not, and Volume Four shows the mechanism at closer range than any other book in the series, because it captures Trotsky at the exact moment of transfer. Through 1918 he is an erring Bolshevik leader, criticised by act and date. By the closing pages, as the narrative reaches 1923 and the founding of the Left Opposition, the register visibly hardens: the "Trotskyite opposition" becomes "a direct departure from Leninism", and Lenin is retrospectively said to have waged "a relentless struggle against the Mensheviks, the Trotskyites and opportunists of every stripe" — a sentence that quietly files Trotsky, chairman of the Petrograd Soviet in 1917, among Lenin's lifelong enemies. You can read, within one volume, a man being moved out of the family and into the category. Nobody who stayed makes that journey. That is the finding, and it does not rest on a word-count.

What the book is worth

None of this makes the volume worthless, and a reader told so would be badly misled, because most of it is not about Trotsky at all. Set the Russian-revolutionary chapters aside and a substantial work of comparative history remains, and it is often very good.

The core of the book after Part One is the European revolutionary wave of 1918–23, and it is narrated with real command and a genuinely internationalist eye. The November Revolution in Germany, the Austrian revolution, the short-lived Bavarian and Slovak Soviet republics, the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919, the workers' revolution in Finland — these get detailed, source-based treatment, and the book is alert to the international texture that a narrower account would miss: the Hungarian, Polish and Czech internationalists who commanded units in the Russian civil war, Béla Kun chairing the Central Federation of Foreign Groups in Turkestan, the fraternisation in the trenches after the Decree on Peace, the revolutionary shop-stewards of Berlin resolving to strike against the Brest ultimatum. The founding

congresses of the Communist International are covered as institutional history, with the delegates, the secretariats and the debates named. On the colonial and national-liberation movements — a running thread through this series and consistently its strongest material — the book quarries a wide, largely non-Russian source base and treats the awakening of Asia and the Middle East as a subject in its own right rather than an appendage to Moscow. The account of the Baku oilfields and the multinational proletariat of the Caucasus, of the strike waves across the dependent countries, is specific and documented. This is serious labour history done by people who were good at it, and English readers of 1984 had few better single-volume surveys of the 1918–23 conjuncture available to them.

The candour about Bolshevik error, within its limits, is also worth having. A Brezhnev-era book that reports Lenin's proposal to remove Stalin, that names Stalin's mistake at Brest and his overreach on the national question, that concedes the October waverers, is not doing nothing. It is telling a good deal of the truth about its own leadership — up to the exact line where the truth would require restoring a name.

Where the reply is

For the October narrative and the "Military Revolutionary Centre" legend, the direct answer is Trotsky's *The Stalin School of Falsification* (1937): chapter 4, the "Letter to the Bureau of Party History", which dismantles the "practical centre" forgery, and chapter 12, "How the October Insurrection Actually Took Place", which reconstructs the events the volume renders as a decree. For the Red Army the volume unmakes him from, Trotsky left his own record in the military writings collected as *How the Revolution Armed* — the reports, orders and speeches of 1918–1923, from "Rallying the Army During the Civil War" (1919) to "The 5th Anniversary of the Red Army" (1923) — held in this project's Trotsky archive. For the early Comintern, whose founding this volume treats as unambiguous doctrine, the contemporaneous counter-argument is *The Third International After Lenin* (1928), whose long opening section, "The Program of the International Revolution or a Program of Socialism in One Country?", is the answer to the whole frame. For the opposition of 1923 that the book condemns through a conference resolution, read the document itself: Trotsky's *The New Course* (1923). And for the Testament, the omitted sentence is at Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 36 — the assessment of Trotsky as "the most able man in the present Central Committee" that the Institute had on its own shelf and

did not print.

Two honest limits on the reply. The anti-Stalinist tradition is not united on Kronstadt, which this volume dispatches in three sentences as a Menshevik- and SR-led mutiny of "sailors... for the most part drawn from the peasantry", "quickly suppressed" — a framing that omits the rebels' actual demand for soviets free of the Party's monopoly, but which our own tradition has argued over rather than settled, Trotsky defending the suppression and others (Serge, later Ida Mett) condemning it; the reader should know the dispute is real on both sides. And the contemporaneous Trotskyist press held in this project begins only in 1934, so for 1917–23 the reply is necessarily Trotsky's own retrospective writing and Lenin's published texts, not a running commentary from the years themselves.

The boundary, once more

The introduction to the 1905–17 volume concluded that the Institute's constraint was not chronological but genealogical: within one book, at one moment, the section on a Chilean printer could be free while the section on the chairman of the first Soviet could not, and what decided which was distance from the Party's own line of descent. The volume on the 1930s confirmed it and added that the constraint attaches to the Institute's own voice — it could name a foreign catastrophe and not a domestic one. This volume adds the sharpest wrinkle of the three, because here the suppressed man cannot be suppressed. He held the offices; he signed the orders; he is in the record the historians are working from. So the operation becomes selective rather than total, and its logic stands exposed: admit the errors, delete the victories, source the charges to the prosecutor, drop the praise from the one document that carried both. Read the chapters on Germany, Austria, Hungary and the colonial world as the capable comparative history they are. Then read the chapters on October and the civil war knowing that the founder of the Red Army has been removed from the story of the Red Army, that the organiser of the insurrection has been reduced to a man who wanted to wait, and that the one figure the book cannot cite to a single line of his own is the one it most needs the reader never to hear.

Subject, Object, Cognition

Subject and object in the theory of knowledge, argued against Kuhn, Quine, Popper, Piaget and Chomsky by one of the Academy's senior epistemologists - and addressed explicitly to readers abroad.

Vladislav Aleksandrovich Lektorsky

Introduction to the 1984 Edition

Most of the philosophy in this catalogue was written to be recited, not argued. The great Soviet primers set a doctrine down in the impersonal voice of an institute and expect the reader to learn it; their engagement with the philosophers they reject rarely goes past the label. Subject, Object, Cognition is a different kind of book, and it declares the difference on its first page. Its preface is addressed not to a Soviet study-circle but to "the reader abroad," and its complaint is that this reader "is not always fully aware" that Western epistemology's newest preoccupations — the historical development of knowledge, the socio-cultural conditioning of science, the realist interpretation of scientific theories — are, in Lektorsky's phrase, "the most significant traits of the Marxist study of knowledge and cognition." The book that follows is an attempt to prove the claim on the opponent's own ground. Bridgman, Kuhn, Quine, Popper, Piaget, Chomsky, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, intuitionist mathematics, the measurement problem in quantum mechanics — these are not paraded as errors to be denounced but worked through, at length, by a man who has plainly read them and can follow their arguments. It is one of the best philosophy books Progress printed, and taking its measure means first taking it seriously.

Establish the date of the text before anything else, because the spine understates the book's real vintage in an unusual direction. The English edition is 1984; the author's preface to it is signed "Moscow, November 1982," the month Brezhnev died; and the monograph itself, to judge from a bibliography that runs thick through the 1970s and thins out around 1980, belongs to the very end of the Brezhnev era. There is no perestroika here, no glasnost, none of the vocabulary of "renewal" that dates the sibling volumes of the late 1980s. This is a book of the stagnation, written in the years when the political surface of Soviet life was at its most frozen — and it is worth holding that fact beside the intellectual openness of the contents, because the two sit oddly together and the tension between them is the most interesting thing about the volume. Its author, Vladislav Lektorsky, was no apparatus functionary.

He was one of the senior epistemologists of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences, a specialist in the theory of knowledge and the methodology of science who worked in close contact with the Soviet "activity" school of psychology, and who would in time edit *Voprosy filosofii*, the flagship journal of the discipline. The commission this book answers is not the cadre manual or the export primer for sympathetic Western communists. It is a bid for parity: a demonstration, aimed at the international philosophy-of-science conversation, that dialectical materialism belonged in it as a live participant rather than a museum exhibit.

What, precisely, is the doctrine it defends? It is the Marxist-Leninist theory of cognition, and its architecture is worth stating carefully, because the criticism to come depends on getting it right. Knowledge, on this account, is a relation between a subject and an object; the object exists outside and independently of the knowing subject; and knowledge is a reflection (*otrazhenie*) of that object in the subject — not a passive mirror-image, the book insists, but reflection all the same. The pedigree is Lenin's: it was in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1908), Lektorsky notes, that "an all-sided Marxist analysis of the revolution in natural science was given," and it is Lenin's reflection theory that the whole edifice is built to defend and update. Against idealism — the doctrine that the object is constituted by consciousness — the book asserts the primacy and independence of the material world. Against what it calls "metaphysical" or mechanistic materialism — the doctrine that treats knowing as a merely physical interaction between two natural systems, the object stamping its imprint on a passive subject — it asserts that the subject is active, and that this activity is social, practical, and historical. And the criterion that decides between knowledge and illusion is not contemplation but practice: "Lenin stressed repeatedly," Lektorsky writes, "that Marxism made practice the basis of its epistemology." This is the same doctrine expounded, at the level of a schoolroom, in the fifth chapter of Anatoly Rakitov's *The Principles of Philosophy*, the reference primer whose introduction in this series should be read

alongside this one. Rakitov gives the catechism — matter primary, consciousness a reflection, practice the criterion, and the whole underwritten by partiinost, the party-spirit that assigns every philosophy to a class. Lektorsky gives the research-frontier version of the identical framework, and the interest of putting the two books together is precisely that the sophisticated version and the crude version fail, in the end, at exactly the same seam.

But the failure must wait, because the credit comes first and it is substantial. Lektorsky is a real philosopher and it shows on every page. His central positive idea — that cognition is a "socially-mediated historically developing activity of reflection" — is an honest attempt to repair the weakest point in the inherited doctrine, the passivity of the mirror. He does it by fusing the reflection theory with the "activity approach" of Soviet psychology (Leontyev, Rubinstein, and behind them Vygotsky and Ilyenkov), and the fusion produces genuine philosophical results. His treatment of perception is the best of them. Naïve realism holds that we perceive the object directly; Lektorsky shows, with a working command of the experimental psychology of vision, that perception is itself an active, mediated construction, that it "builds something like object-hypotheses," and that these hypotheses are tested and corrected in practical dealings with things. His worked examples are the real texture of philosophy, not illustration pasted onto dogma: "A stick immersed in water seems broken," and it is not sensory error that corrects the illusion but the hand — "once one starts handling that same stick... one perceives it as straight." The account of how the norms and standards of perception are not innate but sedimented into the man-made objects a child learns to use is subtle and, within its frame, persuasive.

The same seriousness governs his engagement with the West. He does not caricature. Of the epistemologies he rejects he says he has tried "to take most careful stock of the arguments used in these theories and to analyse them critically in detail" — and he keeps the promise. His critique of Piaget is a case in point: he credits the Swiss psychologist with a major contribution to understanding how cognitive structures grow out of action, and then locates the precise philosophical limit — "this fundamental fact was discounted by Piaget," namely that the norms mastered in activity are social in origin, not the outcome of an individual's equilibration with a physical environment. His long analysis of Popper's "third world" of objective knowledge is the sharpest passage in the book. Popper had argued that the content of knowledge, once written down, becomes autonomous, a "knowledge without a subject" inhabiting a third realm alongside the physical and the mental.

Lektorsky's reply is not a denunciation but a better theory: the objectivity and autonomy Popper rightly noticed are real, but they belong not to a ghostly third world but to what Lektorsky calls the collective subject — the scientific community, the language community, the society whose shared practice carries knowledge across generations. As philosophy of science answering philosophy of science, this holds its own, and a reader who has waded through the rote productions elsewhere on this shelf will feel the difference at once.

One example deserves singling out, because it is exactly the service the export commission wanted and exactly the kind of thing the rote volumes could not perform. Since the 1920s, idealist philosophers had read the measurement problem of quantum mechanics as proof that mind and matter are inseparable — that in observing an electron the physicist half-creates it, so that, as some concluded from Heisenberg, "the distinction between the cognising subject and the cognised object is obliterated." A crude materialism has no answer to this beyond a thump on the table. Lektorsky's answer is patient and correct: the measuring device is itself a material object, its interaction with the quantum object is a material interaction, and the ineliminable role of the apparatus in fixing a result is not the intrusion of a mind but the mediation of one material system by another. The subject does not dissolve into the object; a particular, socially constructed instrument stands between them. This is dialectical materialism doing real work in a live scientific controversy, refereeing a dispute that working physicists actually had — and it is the sort of passage that justifies the book's claim to belong in the international conversation rather than merely to comment on it from outside. The tragedy of the book is that the very acuity Lektorsky brings to the material mediation of physical knowledge deserts him the moment the mediation to be examined is social and close to home.

And yet the book fails, and it fails at the point where its sophistication should have saved it, and the failure is the more instructive for that. The doctrine Lektorsky wields contains a universal solvent, the same acid every book in this series pours over its enemies: the claim that knowledge is class-conditioned, that the practice of a definite social class sets the horizon of what its members can know. Lektorsky applies it with unusual rigour and unusual honesty. In the book's culminating chapter on the collective subject, he builds a whole hierarchy of such subjects — the individual, the scientific community bound to a paradigm, the community of speakers of a language, and finally the social class — and states the class principle in its most general and most dangerous form: "The type of social practice characteristic of a

given class determines the horizon of the cognitive possibilities open to its members." This is a powerful and genuinely reflexive thought. It says that no knower stands outside society; that what any collective subject can know is bounded by what it does; that cognition is always somebody's, produced from a particular social location for particular practical ends. Carried through, it would oblige the philosopher to ask of his own knowledge the question he asks of everyone else's: from what social practice does it proceed, and whose interest does it serve?

He does not carry it through. At the decisive line the solvent is switched off. "The Marxist theory of society expressing the interests of the proletariat provides, for the first time, a scientific basis for the study of the social processes." The horizon of every class's cognition is set by its practice — except one. The proletariat, and the doctrine that speaks for it, is the single collective subject whose social location yields not a bounded, interested view but objective science as such. The category that explains all thought as the practice-bound product of a class is never turned on the thought doing the explaining. This is exactly the exemption the introduction to Rakitov's primer identifies at the level of general doctrine — there stated as the rule that error is admissible but the category is not, that a Bolshevik may be granted a mistake so long as the classification never turns inward. Lektorsky performs the same operation in the pure theory of knowledge, and the sophistication of his version makes it visible in a way the primers' does not. He has told us that the proper object of epistemology is not the lone consciousness but "the functioning and development of systems of collective, inter-subject activity based on practical transformation of external objects." Very well: which system, whose activity, transforming what, in whose interest? The whole book is a demonstration that objective knowledge is the product of a determinate social practice — and the one social practice it never submits to that analysis is the practice of the society producing the book: the practice, that is, of a particular ruling apparatus with a direct and material interest in what shall count as known. "Practice" is the criterion of truth; but practice in this book is an abstraction, a philosopher's praxis in general, never the concrete practice of the Soviet state in 1982, which had its own quite specific view of which cognitions were permissible and which collective subjects were entitled to have them.

Here the reply tradition can be exact, and it can begin from a text Lektorsky himself puts on the table. The intellectual charge against the reflection theory has always been that "reflection" is too passive a metaphor for Marx's materialism

— that a mirror registers but does not act, and that Marx's whole break with the older materialism lay in making the subject active. Lektorsky knows this perfectly well; he quotes the founding text of the objection, the first of Marx's Theses on Feuerbach (1845), that "the chief defect of all previous materialism (that of Feuerbach included)" is that it grasps its object "only in the form of the object, or of contemplation, but not as sensuous human activity, practice, not subjectively." He knows, in other words, that Marx's materialism is a materialism of practice, and his answer is to graft activity onto reflection and call the compound "a consistent defence of the unity of reflection and activity." But the graft can never quite take, and the reason is not philosophical incompetence — Lektorsky has more than enough of the necessary skill — but political constraint. The master-category has to remain reflection, because reflection is Lenin's word, fixed in Materialism and Empirio-Criticism as the boundary marker of orthodoxy, and a Soviet epistemologist of 1982 could extend Lenin, refine Lenin, modernise Lenin, but not displace him. So activity is admitted as far as the psychology of perception and no further. It is never allowed to reach the one place where an active, practical, self-critical materialism must finally arrive: the practical, interested, criticisable character of the knower's own society. Marx's eleventh thesis — that philosophers have interpreted the world and the point is to change it — is safe so long as the world to be changed is always someone else's.

Trotsky drew the consequence for Soviet thought half a century before Lektorsky wrote, and drawing it holds our own tradition to its standard as much as it convicts his. In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) — the book against which every Soviet account of Soviet society in this catalogue must be read — he observed that "in spite of the fact that Marxism is formally a state doctrine in the Soviet Union, there has not appeared during the last twelve years one Marxian investigation — in economics, sociology, history or philosophy — which deserves attention." The Marxian works of the bureaucracy, he wrote, do no more than "shuffle over the same old quotations according to the demands of the current administrative conjuncture," so that from a comparison of successive editions of one book one could "trace infallibly the process of degeneration of the thought and conscience of the ruling stratum." Now, in strict fairness — the kind this series owes its own side no less than its opponents — Subject, Object, Cognition is a partial refutation of that sweeping verdict. It is a Marxian philosophical investigation that does deserve attention; it does not merely shuffle quotations; a real mind is at work in it. The interstices of the stagnation were wider than Trotsky's 1936 polemic, written in the white heat of the Terror, allowed. But the deeper half of his point survives

the correction intact, and it survives it precisely here. The one thing the state doctrine forbids, even to its ablest servant, is the turning of the method upon "the current administrative conjuncture" itself — upon the ruling stratum as a social formation with interests of its own. Lektorsky's collective-subject hierarchy climbs from the individual through the paradigm and the language to the class and stops, one rung short, at the society; it never asks what stratum within that society had appointed itself the guardian of the collective subject's knowledge, or what its interest in that guardianship was. The degeneration Trotsky traced in the doctored footnotes to Lenin is the same exemption, meaner and cruder in the primers, elegant and self-aware in Lektorsky, but the same: the analysis of everyone, offered by a "we" that is never itself analysed.

There is a smaller reply that completes the frame, and this series has printed it before. A living dialectic must be able to turn on its own formulations; a state philosophy cannot afford to. The point is made in the companion primer George Novack wrote for worker-activists during his party's Smith Act trial — *An Introduction to the Logic of Marxism* (5th ed., New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971, from the lectures of 1942) — which opens by refusing the very move Soviet epistemology is built on: dialectics is "not a closed system" but "an open system," and "all formulas must be provisional, limited, approximate... This must also apply to the science of dialectics." This must also apply to the science of dialectics. That clause is the one a certified state doctrine cannot say, because a method obliged to turn on its own certification will sooner or later be turned on the authority that issues the certificate. Lektorsky's book is the most sophisticated demonstration in this whole catalogue of exactly how far a genuine philosopher can travel while leaving that clause unsaid — and of where, invariably, the road stops.

Which is the reason to read it, and to read it with more sympathy than contempt. Subject, Object, Cognition is not a bad book pretending to be good; it is a good book with one prohibited thought at its centre, and the prohibition is not the author's cowardice but the frame's condition of existence. Everything Lektorsky does well — the fine anatomy of perception, the fair and searching arguments with Piaget and Popper and Quine, the real feel for the sciences he draws on — is what makes the single silence audible. He could describe with great precision how the collective subject constructs its objective world, and he could not name the collective subject he was writing inside. That a philosopher of this calibre came so close to the reflexive turn, took it in every direction but one, and stopped exactly at the threshold of his own society, is the most exact record we have of what it cost to think seriously

about knowledge in the Soviet Union at the end of the Brezhnev years. The book is worth the shelf it occupies. So is the question it could not put to itself.

HISTORY

The Road to Great Victory

The Grand Alliance from the Soviet side - the second front, Lend-Lease, Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam - by a diplomatic historian working from the documentary record, in the fullest such account in English.

Vilnis Sipols

Introduction to the 1984 Edition

A book on Soviet wartime diplomacy has to begin somewhere, and where it begins is the first thing it tells you. The Road to Great Victory announces its subject on the title page — "Soviet Diplomacy 1941–1945" — and its opening chapter is headed "Soviet Diplomacy at the Outbreak of the Great Patriotic War." The outbreak, for Vilnis Sipols, is 22 June 1941: "At daybreak on June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union." Everything the book covers — the forging of the Grand Alliance, the second-front question, Lend-Lease, Tehran, Yalta, Potsdam, the shape of the post-war world — flows from that morning. The choice of terminus is legitimate; the Great Patriotic War did begin then. But it means that the two years of Soviet diplomacy immediately before June 1941 fall outside the frame by design, and those two years are the ones on which the whole moral standing of the story depends.

Watch how the Introduction crosses them. It sets the scene at length: the Soviet campaign for collective security from 1933, the convention defining aggression, the mutual-assistance treaties of 1935, Chamberlain's "appeasement," the American Neutrality Acts. Then, in two sentences, it clears the ground between the failure of collective security and the German invasion: "The policy of acquiescence in the predatory ambitions of Germany, Japan, and Italy, pursued by Britain, France and the United States, gave the bloc of fascist aggressors an opportunity to trigger off the Second World War. Having started the war on September 1, 1939, the German Reich brought Poland, France and most of other countries of Europe under its sway." The next paragraph jumps clean to 1941: "Only after Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, in June 1941, did a coalition of the U.S.S.R., Britain, and the United States and a number of other countries begin to take shape." Between 1 September 1939 and 22 June 1941 nothing happens that the diplomatic historian of Soviet foreign policy needs to record. The Treaty of Non-Aggression signed in Moscow on 23 August 1939, its Secret Additional Protocol, the entry into eastern Poland on 17 September, the partition

treaty of 28 September, the war with Finland, the annexation of the Baltic states and Bessarabia in the summer of 1940 — all of it lies in the gap the Introduction steps over.

This is the same author who, two years earlier, wrote *Diplomatic Battles Before World War II* (Progress, 1982), the companion volume in this series and the direct prequel to this one. That book ran up to 1 September 1939 and had to reach the Pact, because negotiation was its declared subject; it described the treaty article by article and left the Secret Protocol out — an omission the introduction to that volume treats at length. The Road to Great Victory is the sequel, and its period spares its author even the awkwardness of arriving at the document. In a study explicitly devoted to Soviet diplomacy across the war years, the phrase "non-aggression pact" does not occur once. The most consequential treaty Soviet diplomacy signed in the decade has been placed just outside the book's opening date, and the book opens exactly where the placing is invisible.

The date, and what it was for

The date needs no detective work. The spine reads 1984, the copyright line reads "© Progress Publishers 1984," and the text cites Soviet sources published in Moscow in 1984. This is not one of the lagged Progress reprints — it is a genuinely contemporary book, written for the fortieth anniversary of the victory of 1945. The Introduction says as much in its first line: the war "came as so much of a shock to so many peoples as not to have been forgotten to this day, four decades since it was over." The Conclusion closes the circuit: "After the Second World War, Europe has been living in peace for forty years now. That is the best indication of how far this major problem was then solved."

Forty years of peace is the book's argument, not merely its arithmetic. It was written into the Second Cold War — Reagan's first term, the Euromissile crisis, the Pershing II and cruise deployments of 1983, the sharpest East–West freeze since the early 1960s — and it deploys the wartime alliance as

a double reproach: to a West that once needed Soviet arms and now rearmed against Moscow, and as a title-deed to Soviet legitimacy as the peace-keeping power. The book was made for export in the language of international circulation, and its back matter advertises its neighbours in the Progress catalogue — L. Teplinsky's *Danger: NATO!* among them. "The book is intended for the general reader," the colophon states: the Western peace movement, the sympathetic lecturer, the diplomatic historian who could be trusted to weigh a footnote. Its final sentence turns 1945 directly on 1984 — the victory, it says, is a lesson for the aggressors of the present day.

Sipols himself is worth placing, because he is not a hack drafted in for the anniversary. He was a Latvian, a professional historian of Soviet diplomacy, and this book carries his own trade in its footnotes — among them his 1959 monograph *Behind the Scenes of the Foreign Intervention in Latvia, 1918–1920*. He works from Soviet published document series, from Churchill's and Eden's and Woodward's memoirs and histories, from the Public Record Office by Cabinet file number, from the German and American diplomatic collections. This is a real apparatus, and the citation habit runs the right way for most of the book: the claims about Anglo-American conduct are documented from Anglo-American sources. It is the more striking, then, where the citations stop.

What holds, and what must not be conceded to the other side

A reader who takes this book for a tissue of propaganda will be disarmed the first time they check it against a serious Western history, because a great deal of it is right, and the central grievance it presses is a real one.

The core claim is true and should be stated without hedging. The Soviet–German front was the decisive theatre of the war; the Red Army broke the bulk of the Wehrmacht; and the Soviet people paid a price no other combatant approached. The book gives the toll as "over twenty million lives" against British losses of 370,000 and American of some 300,000 — the official figure of its day, since revised upward toward 27 million, but of the right and terrible order. Against the durable Western habit of remembering the war as an Anglo-American story with a Russian sideshow, this is a necessary corrective, and Sipols documents it partly from the enemy's own mouth: he quotes the British and American command's private assessment of 1943 that "the Russian Army was the only land force that could yield decisive results," any force they could land being "merely a drop in the bucket."

The second-front grievance is the strongest thing in the book, and it is not manufactured. The Western powers did promise a landing in France in 1942, did postpone it to 1943 and then to 1944, and did leave the Soviet Union to bear the main weight of the German army for three years. Sipols tracks the diplomacy of that delay closely and fairly, and he catches the Western leaders being candid in private. He records that Roosevelt "did not even conceal from his close associates that the purpose behind his assurances regarding the Second Front" was "to reassure the Soviet Government" — assurance as a substitute for action. He shows the 1942 second-front communiqué being drained of content into the "urgent tasks" of creating a front rather than a pledge to open one. And he is entitled to Churchill's own coldest line, cabled to Sir Stafford Cripps in the desperate autumn of 1941, when the ambassador reported Soviet anger at the taunt that Britain was "prepared to fight to the last drop of Russian blood": the Russians, Churchill wrote, "have no right to reproach us"; they "brought their own fate upon themselves." Litvinov's suspicion — that the Western calculation was for Soviet forces "to be exhausted and worn out to the utmost so as to reduce its role in resolving the post-war problems" — was not simple paranoia, and the historiography has largely borne out that the delay had political as well as logistical motives.

Even the book's minimising of Lend-Lease is defensible on its own terms. Sipols argues that the tide turned at Moscow in 1941 "before any Lend-Lease supplies first reached the Soviet Union," that the bulk of deliveries came in 1943–45 when Soviet industry was already outproducing Germany, and that the supplies amounted to "2 per cent of the artillery, 10 per cent of the tanks and 12 per cent of the aircraft" the USSR fielded. The proportions are broadly sound; the one-sidedness is in the omission of what those deliveries disproportionately were — trucks, locomotives, radios, aviation fuel and food, the sinews of mobility rather than the count of tanks — but the corrective against the Western myth that American aid won the war on the Eastern Front is a fair one.

All of this must be credited, and credited precisely, because the criticism that follows is not the reactionary one. There is a long tradition in Cold War writing that sets Stalin's crimes beside Hitler's, files the two states under a single "totalitarianism," and quietly deflates the anti-fascist war into a quarrel between equivalent tyrannies. That equivalence is false, and the revolutionary socialist tradition from which this introduction is written has always rejected it. The Soviet Union was not Nazi Germany's moral twin; the war against it was a war of liberation for the peoples of Europe; and the victory was the achievement of a society the October Revolution had built.

Ernest Mandel, whose *The Meaning of the Second World War* (Verso, 1986) is the Fourth International's own full-length reckoning with the war and the counterweight to this volume, is emphatic that "there cannot be the slightest doubt that German imperialism deliberately and brazenly unleashed the war" (ch. 2), and equally emphatic that it was the planned economy created by the Revolution that let the USSR survive and win (ch. 5). Nothing that follows chips at that. The quarrel is not with the victory. It is with what the diplomacy of the victory was made to conceal.

The document that is never cited

Return to the gap the Introduction steps over. The Pact is not the only casualty of the book's opening date; so is everything the Pact set in motion — and the events could not be omitted entirely, because the wartime diplomacy the book does narrate consists, in large part, of the Soviet effort to get those events ratified.

The single most persistent Soviet diplomatic objective of 1941–42, in Sipols's own telling, was to make Britain and the United States "recognise the Soviet Western frontiers as of June 22, 1941." He states plainly what that meant: at the Moscow talks of December 1941 the Soviet government "stressed the fundamental importance of having the British Government recognise the Soviet Western frontiers as of June 22, 1941, notably, the incorporation of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia in the U.S.S.R." Here is a Latvian historian, writing in Riga's imperial capital, describing the diplomatic campaign to secure Western recognition of the annexation of his own nation — and describing the annexation only as an accomplished "incorporation," a frontier that simply exists as of a certain date, never as an act with a cause. The one place the Baltic states enter as living societies, the book has them extinguished by someone else: the "reactionary bourgeois States of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia," it says, were established after 1918 by German and Entente bayonets and were "alien to their peoples' aspirations." How they ceased to exist in 1940 is not a question the book asks. The eastern Polish territories get the same grammar: seized by Poland "during the armed intervention of 1920," they "were reincorporated in the U.S.S.R. in 1939" — reincorporated by whom, under what treaty, in what month of 1939, the reader is not told.

The frontier "as of June 22, 1941" is the frontier the Secret Additional Protocol drew. Mandel names it exactly. In his chapter on the aftermath he lists what Stalin spent the first eighteen months of the war pressing Churchill to accept: "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" (ch. 17). (Mandel's own text elsewhere misdates the Protocol's signature to 27 August; it was signed on the night of 23 August 1939.) Sipols narrates the entire diplomacy of getting that frontier recognised and never once describes how the frontier was made. The prequel volume performed the suppression the hard way, reaching the treaty and cutting the annex; this volume performs it by geography, beginning its clock the day after the annexations were complete and treating their result as the natural state of the world. The reader who wants the missing two years should turn to the introduction to *Diplomatic Battles Before World War II*, where the same author is caught in the act of drawing the veil; here he does not have to draw it, because the frame already hides the room.

The rupture that is dated but not explained

The book's period does contain one great Soviet–Polish crisis, and it is a diplomatic crisis, squarely inside Sipols's remit: the rupture of relations with the Polish government-in-exile. He narrates it to the day. The London Poles under General Sikorski had pressed territorial claims and grown hostile, he writes, and its "anti-Soviet declarations became so virulent before long that the Soviet Government found it necessary to sever diplomatic relations with it" — the rupture of 25 April 1943.

The date is exact. The cause is a blank. What made April 1943 the moment of rupture was Katyn: on 13 April the Germans announced the mass graves in the Katyn forest, and the London government asked the International Red Cross to investigate the bodies of some 22,000 Polish officers, policemen and members of the intelligentsia — men shot in the spring of 1940 by the NKVD, on the direct authorisation of the Soviet Politburo. It was the request for an independent investigation that Moscow treated as the "anti-Soviet declaration" justifying the break. The word Katyn does not appear anywhere in this book; neither does NKVD; neither does deportation. A diplomatic history that can fix the rupture to 25 April 1943 but cannot say what the two governments had fallen out about is missing the load-bearing fact of its own chapter. The massacre itself, and the Soviet lie maintained until 1990, are set out in the introductions to the companion volumes in this series — Grechko's *Liberation Mission* and Minasyan's *Great Patriotic War* — and need not be re-argued here. The point that belongs to Sipols is narrower and, in its

way, sharper: this is the one book of the three whose declared subject is the diplomacy of 1943, and it dates the diplomatic wound precisely while amputating its cause.

Having removed the cause, the book must supply a replacement, and the replacement is an escalation. The London Poles' agents in Poland, Sipols writes, "were not fighting against the German invaders, and were even cooperating with them in the extermination of the Polish guerilla fighters." This is worth pausing on by the standard this series applies to Progress books generally. It is an accusation with no described act a reader could check — no place, no date, no unit, no document — laid against the government whose army, the Home Army, was at that moment the largest armed resistance in occupied Europe. It is essence, not evidence: the London Poles are "reactionaries," and reactionaries collaborate, and so the charge writes itself. Set beside it the treatment of the Warsaw Rising of 1944, which the book blames on its victims in the identical vocabulary — a "reckless and fearful gamble" by "power-seeking criminals" — exactly as Grechko and Minasyan do, because all three are executing one institutional line. That episode is treated in full in the companion introductions; here it is enough to note that the diplomatic rupture of 1943 and the military catastrophe of 1944 are narrated by the same device, the victim reclassified as the aggressor so that the thing done to him need never be named.

Yalta, and the sphere that is only ever liberation

The book's largest single theme after the second front is the post-war settlement — the Polish question at Tehran and Yalta, the Curzon Line, the fate of Eastern Europe — and here the critique has to be made with care, because the book is not simply lying and the reactionary reading of Yalta is not the socialist one.

Sipols presents the Sovietisation of Poland as the diplomatic defeat of a "reactionary" émigré government by the "new popular democratic Government" that "gained more esteem and support of the mass of the people with each passing day." The Curzon Line as Poland's eastern frontier, the "reorganisation" of the Warsaw provisional government with a few London Poles admitted, the promised elections — all of it is rendered as legitimate security and liberation, never as the drawing of a sphere. The tell is the vocabulary of the Conclusion, where the book states its thesis without ornament: "The Soviet Government pursued the fair objective of liberation," while Britain "fought to keep her empire" and the United States "sought to establish its world-wide supremacy."

Two of the three powers have spheres and interests; one has only a fair objective. The Red Army's westward advance installs governments that are, by definition, the free choice of their peoples, because the book's grammar has no word for a Soviet imposition.

But the correction here is not the émigré legend of a Poland "betrayed" at Yalta, and it is important to say so, because that legend is false too and the book is at its most honest in refuting it. Sipols records, accurately, that Roosevelt and Eden had privately agreed as early as 1942 to concede the Baltic states and Bessarabia to the USSR, treating the concession as "a bargaining counter"; that by Yalta even Churchill accepted the Curzon Line; and that Poland had in fact been liberated "by Soviet, not British or American, forces." Mandel makes the same refusal from the other side. The shape of post-war Europe, he argues, was determined "to a large extent" on the battlefield rather than at the conference tables (ch. 16); the Western powers were in no position in 1945 to alter where the Red Army stood. What Mandel adds, and what Sipols cannot, is that this was not liberation in the sense the word carries in the book. The buffer states of Eastern Europe were assimilated to the Soviet model from around 1947–48 by "military-bureaucratic compulsion" — "revolution from above" — over the independent organisations of the working class rather than through them (ch. 17). Capitalism was indeed abolished there; landlords and industrialists did lose their property; but it was done by an occupying army and a political police, precisely so that it should not be done from below. Mandel sets 1944–48 alongside 1939–41 as two instances of one method — the same method whose first instance the book's opening date conceals. The standing measure of the whole argument remains Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936): the Soviet bureaucracy as a privileged, nationally-minded caste whose foreign policy served its own security and the status quo, conducted, in Mandel's phrase, in the traditional mould of European power politics, spheres and all. "The fair objective of liberation" is the phrase that caste used for the results of its own frontier-making.

How to read it

The two questions this series has learned to put to any such volume separate the scholarship from the operation cleanly. First: is each accusation attached to a described act that could be shown not to have happened? For the second-front delay, yes — Sipols names the meetings, quotes the cables, cites the files, and a reader can check him and will mostly find him right. For the London Poles "cooperating with them in the

extermination" of the resistance, no — there is no act, only an essence. Second: could the book's own category ever be turned on the author's side? "The fair objective of liberation," as the book defines it against imperialist "spheres," can never describe a Soviet action; the annexation of the Baltic states is not an annexation but an "incorporation," the rupture with Poland is caused by Polish virulence and never by a Soviet grave, the tanks that install the Warsaw government are liberation by definition. A charge that cannot rebound on the speaker is the finding, and it is not about any single word.

So read the middle of this book as diplomatic history and read its seams as instruction. The chapters on the forging of the alliance, on the long diplomacy of the second front, on the conference-table manoeuvring at Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam are the work of a real archival historian, and they contain material — the private Anglo-American assessments of Soviet weight, the cynicism of the second-front assurances, the documented reality of the delay — that a serious reader will want and can trust. The seams are three, and each falls where the answer had been decided before the file was opened: the opening date of June 1941, which places the Pact and the annexations just off the page; the rupture of April 1943, dated to the day and severed from Katyn; and the frontier "as of June 22, 1941," whose recognition the book pursues through two hundred pages of honest diplomacy without once describing how the frontier came to be.

It is worth holding both facts at once, because a Latvian wrote this book. Sipols was not lying about the second front, and the reader who dismisses him there will simply be wrong. He was a historian permitted to publish everything he found in the Soviet and Latvian archives except the documents that bore on how his own nation lost its independence — and he wrote the book that permission allowed, opening it on the one date that made the permitted silence look like the natural order of things. What that cost is not recorded in the text. It is only visible in the shape of it, in the two years the road to great victory is made to begin after.

HISTORY

A History of Afghanistan

Afghanistan from the Palaeolithic to the 1980s by named Soviet orientalists and archaeologists - genuinely strong on the deep past, the Durrani empire and the Anglo-Afghan wars.

Yuri Vladimirovich Gankovsky

Introduction to the 1985 Edition

The copyright page carries two dates. The Russian original is Izdatelstvo Mysl, Moscow, 1982; the English translation is Progress Publishers, 1985. The body of the book is a 1982 text, and it reads like one — the political narrative reaches its natural end at the first national conference of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan in March 1982, described at length and in the present tense of a thing just accomplished. But somebody went back over the last pages before the English went to press. The 1985 edition mentions PDPA membership figures for the summer of 1983, a Soviet–Afghan agreement of March 1984, statements by the US administration "in 1981-84", and, in its final paragraphs, the meeting at which "On March 14, 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CC CPSU, received Babrak Karmal in the Kremlin." So the argument runs from 1982 for almost everything and from March 1985 for the last two pages. That matters, because those two pages are where the book has to answer for the intervening three years, and it does not.

What it is, though, is not a pamphlet. This is a full national history of Afghanistan from the Palaeolithic to the present, roughly 130,000 words, with 141 numbered references citing French, British, American, German and Afghan scholarship alongside the Russian. The foreword prints the division of labour, and the division is the most useful single fact about the volume:

A History of Afghanistan has been written by M. R. Arunova (Chapter Two, "Afghanistan in the Middle Ages"), Yu. V. Gankovsky ("The State of Durrani" in Chapter Three), V. G. Korgun (Chapter Four, "Afghanistan in Contemporary Times", except for the concluding part), V. M. Masson (Chapter One, "Ancient Afghanistan"), G. A. Muradov ("The Victory of the National-Democratic April Revolution and the Foundation of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan" in Chapter Four, jointly with G. A. Polyakov), and V. A. Romodin (Chapter Three, "Afghanistan in Modern Times", excluding the first part).

Gankovsky, who headed the group, was a serious orientalist; Masson was one of the leading archaeologists of Soviet Central Asia; Romodin and Masson had jointly written the two-volume Russian History of Afghanistan of 1964, which this book cites as a source. Read that list again and notice what it says. The scholarship and the propaganda in this volume have different authors, and the authors are named. Everything from the Stone Age to the fall of Daoud is by Masson, Arunova, Gankovsky, Romodin and Korgun. The final section — the April revolution, Amin, December 1979 and after — is by Muradov and Polyakov, who wrote nothing else in the book. It is not a case of scholars corrupted. It is a case of a scholarly manuscript with a section bolted on, and the seam is visible to the naked eye.

The first three chapters

Say this plainly: chapters one to three are good. Not "good for Progress" — good.

Masson's ancient Afghanistan is working archaeology, not illustration. It moves through Dasht-i-Nawur, Darrah-i-Kur, the Kara-Kamar cave, Ak-kupruk and Mundigak on the evidence, cites Jean-Marie Casal's Mundigak excavations and the French work at Mehrgarh, discusses microlith typology and the stratigraphy of the northern caves, and is willing to say what is not known: "It is not as yet known if the territory of Afghanistan was one of the zones that were initially settled by man." A footnote corrects a previous Soviet dating of the Kara-Kamar lower layers — "A detailed analysis of man-made stone artifacts found there did not confirm this" — which is a small thing and the kind of small thing that only appears in a text written by someone who expects to be checked. The notes cite Dyakonov's "Aryans in the Middle East. The End of a Myth", a demolition of a racial thesis, and the botanist N. I. Vavilov on the wheat varieties of Herat and Qandahar. (Vavilov is cited without comment; he was arrested in 1940 and died of starvation in a Saratov prison in January 1943. The book that quotes his Afghan fieldwork was published by the state that killed him.)

Arunova's medieval chapter is the section of most value to an English reader, because it draws on a Soviet literature on the Pashtun lands that was largely untranslated. The treatment of the Roshaniyya — the sixteenth-century movement of Bayazid Ansari, its social base among the Khalils, Muhammadzais, Momands and Hughianis, its programme of dissolving the tribal division in favour of a territorial one, its half-century of war with the Mughals — is fuller than most English surveys of the period offer, and it does not romanticise: opponents were "often annihilated," their property confiscated and distributed among the sect. Then Khushhal Khan Khattak, then Qandahar and Herat, then Gankovsky on the Durrani state. The Marxist framework is there, and at points it is schematic — the "slave-owning system was giving way to nascent feudalism" is doing more asserting than showing — but it is a framework applied by people who know the material, not a substitute for knowing it.

Romodina on the nineteenth century is where a reader might expect the machine to switch on, and largely it does not. The First Anglo-Afghan War is narrated soberly and without gloating: the twenty-thousand-strong Army of the Indus with its thirty-eight thousand camp followers, the bribing of the Qandahar sardars, the storming of Ghazni where "The British troops took the city by storm and massacred its population," the British command's decision to quarter its troops in a marshy lowland outside Kabul, the rising. This is standard, competent military and political history.

More surprising is the candour about Russia. The tsarist state is not exempted from the analysis applied to Britain. Vitkevich's mission to Kabul in 1837 is described as an instrument of imperial policy that St Petersburg abandoned the moment it needed British goodwill over the Turco-Egyptian crisis and the Straits: "substantial changes were taking place in the policy of the Russian tsarist government which obstructed the pursuance of the former policy of countering British expansion". Stoletov's mission of 1878, the immediate pretext for the Second Anglo-Afghan War, is stated as fact — "In the spring of 1878 the tsarist government sent a diplomatic mission to Kabul headed by General Stoletov which was received with great honour" — and the book does not pretend Russia was an innocent bystander to the war that followed. On the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 it quotes Lenin's summary of what the two empires had done: "divide Persia, Afghanistan, Tibet (preparing for war against Germany)". The Great Game is described as a game with two players.

Where the candour stops

Two omissions mark the boundary.

The first is Panjdeh. On 30 March 1885 a Russian force under General Komarov attacked an Afghan detachment at the Tash-Kepri bridge on the Kushk; the Afghans were driven out and the Panjdeh oasis passed to Russia. The book describes the clash — and describes it as a British provocation. "The clash, which had in fact been provoked by the British colonialists, was far more detrimental to Britain than had been expected at the outset." It then moves directly to the London protocol of September 1885 and the final boundary protocol of July 1887 without ever saying that Afghanistan lost the territory. The word Panjdeh does not appear anywhere in this book. The one piece of Afghan land taken by Russia in the whole period is the one piece the reader is not told about.

The second is April 1929. The book gives a good account of the collapse of Amanullah's reforming monarchy, and then reports: "In April 1929, Ghulam Nabi Khan, former Afghan Ambassador in Moscow, gathered together a sizeable detachment of Uzbeks and Hazaras and seized Mazar-i-Sharif in a surprise attack." He did not gather it in Afghanistan. The column crossed from Soviet territory and was commanded by a Red Army officer, Vitaly Primakov, travelling under an Afghan name; it withdrew when Amanullah's cause was lost. The Soviet Union's first armed intervention in Afghanistan is in this book, correctly dated and correctly placed, with the Soviet part removed.

What the 1929 chapter knows

And yet the same chapter contains the best answer to the last section of the book, written by a different hand and fifty years earlier in subject.

Korgun's account of why Amanullah fell is materialist history of a high order, and it refuses every consoling explanation. The clergy and the khans opposed the reforms, yes — but so did the peasants, and the book explains why. "Some of the social measures of the Amanullah Khan government, in particular, abolition of various additional taxes and requisitions, elimination of slavery, and proclamation of religious equality eased feudal oppression on these sections of the population, but on the whole they had got no direct benefits from the reforms. On the contrary, at the initial stage of the country's transition to bourgeois development, their economic situation deteriorated seriously. The land tax increased to reach 45 per cent of the harvest cost by the end of the 1920s. For the most

part, the government reforms were carried out at the expense of the peasants." The commutation of taxes in kind into cash drove peasants to the moneylender. And so: "the peasants, who were dependent on feudal lords and khans, came out in protest against reforms which made their conditions still worse, and against the new regime, constituting the main driving force of the anti-government movement."

That is the analysis. A modernising urban regime, moving faster than its social base, financing progress out of the countryside, and losing the countryside. It applies without alteration to 1978 and 1979 — to a land reform decreed from Kabul in six months, to literacy classes enforced by cadres who had never lived in a village, to a party that had taken power by military coup and had no rural organisation to speak of. Muradov and Polyakov's section does not make that argument, and could not, because it would have made the war explicable without the CIA.

The last section

The vocabulary is exact and it does not slip. In roughly 130,000 words, the phrase "Soviet troops" occurs twice. Here is the first:

The danger looming over the April Revolution and the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan was seen clearly not only by foreign political scientists, but also by Afghan leaders who, proceeding from the provisions of the Treaty of Friendship, Good-Neighbourliness and Cooperation, signed between the USSR and the DRA on December 5, 1978, and in keeping with Article 51 of the UN Charter, repeatedly requested the Soviet Union during 1979 to send Soviet Army units into the DRA. In response to these repeated requests a limited contingent of Soviet troops was sent to Afghanistan.

The second occurrence is the announcement that some of them left again: "All this made it possible to withdraw some of the units of the limited contingent of Soviet troops sent in the country in December 1979, as their presence there was no longer necessary." That is the whole of it. Six years of war, and the army fighting it is named twice, once arriving and once partly leaving.

The overthrow of Amin belongs to the Afghans: "On December 27, 1979, the patriotic majority in the PDPA, in the Revolutionary Council and in the armed forces overthrew the Amin regime." Karmal then simply appears, forming a government on 28 December; the book never explains how a

man who had been shipped out as ambassador to Prague in 1978 came to be in Kabul that week. Unlike the Novosti volume of 1980, this book does not call Amin a CIA agent — a small mercy, and a real one, since that charge was never supported by a document then or since. Amin here is guilty of factionalism, of the murder of Taraki, and of "inadmissible methods in carrying out major reforms, such as the agrarian reform and the elimination of illiteracy". Which is the whole trick in a sentence: the reforms were right, the methods were Amin's, and therefore the insurgency has no domestic cause at all. Of April 1978 the book states flatly, "Therefore the revolution met actually no resistance."

Now the silences, which are the finding.

The insurgents are never called mujahideen; the word does not occur. Hekmatyar and Rabbani appear once each, in endnote 129 — which is, to its credit, accurate: it records that Hekmatyar "had emigrated to Pakistan in 1976, after an abortive attempt to stage an ultra-right mutiny against the Daoud regime," correctly establishing that the Islamist opposition predates the April revolution. But the leaders of the war being fought as the book went to press are confined to a footnote.

The refugees get one sentence, and it is about Amin: "The Amin administration subjected peaceful residents, specifically in the border regions, to unjustified repressions. Thousands of refugees fled across the Afghan borders." Thousands. By 1985 something between four and five million Afghans — roughly a quarter of the population — were living as refugees in Pakistan and Iran. The largest refugee movement in the world at the time is in this book as a subordinate clause about the previous year's leader.

The fighting is inventoried as damage, never as war. Twenty-five provinces are listed where "armed revolutionary units" — the translator's slip for counter-revolutionary — operated in 1980–83; schools burned, bridges blown, irrigation ruined, named individuals murdered. All of that happened. But there are no Soviet offensives, no bombing, no depopulated valleys, no Panjshir, no casualty figure of any kind on any side. The word war appears only as something done to Afghanistan from outside: "the unprovoked and undeclared war and aggression being waged against the DRA". The closest the book comes to acknowledging what was actually happening is a phrase it puts in Karmal's mouth at the March 1982 conference — "People are dying in Afghanistan because of the fratricidal war provoked by the counter-revolutionaries" — and even there the adjective does the work of the alibi. The

UN-mediated talks that had been running since 1982 under Diego Cordovez are not mentioned; neither Geneva nor Cordovez appears. In 1985, seven years on, the book reports that the DRA "maintained diplomatic relations with almost eighty countries," and closes with Engels on revolutions passing "in five years over more ground than it would have done in a century under ordinary circumstances."

What is not in dispute

A reader should not come away thinking the opposite of this book is the truth. The old order was genuinely reactionary; the book's own figures on landlessness, usury and illiteracy are not inventions. The April 1978 decrees cancelling peasant debt, capping holdings at thirty jeribs, opening literacy courses to women and outlawing bride-price were real, and the people who taught village women to read were murdered for it. And the external backing was real, documented at the time by people with no interest in helping Moscow. Intercontinental Press of 30 May 1983 reported, from a New York Times story it named and dated, that "Beginning last December, the officials said, the Central Intelligence Agency was ordered to provide the Afghan insurgents for the first time with bazookas, mortars, grenade launchers, mines and recoilless rifles" — and noted, correctly, that "the U.S. intervention began well before Moscow dispatched its troops in December 1979." The same journal on 23 July 1984 reported the CIA spending some \$75 million a year, the Saudi and Egyptian conduits, and a detail this book would have loved: that three weeks before a Soviet offensive in the Panjshir valley, US satellites detected the preparations and the rebels were warned. On the sponsors of the insurgency, Muradov and Polyakov were substantially right.

They were right about that and silent about everything else, which is why the section fails as history while chapters one to three succeed.

The reply, and its divisions

It would be false to say the anti-Stalinist left met this with one voice. It did not, and the record is public and awkward. In 1980 the Fourth International printed three rival resolutions side by side; the majority refused political support to the intervention but also refused to demand withdrawal, and only a minority said plainly that Soviet troops had overthrown Amin and installed Karmal and should leave. By the time this English edition appeared, the argument had been settled — and the settlement is recorded in the resolutions of the Twelfth

World Congress of the Fourth International, held in January 1985 and printed that year in *International Viewpoint*. On the war then in its sixth year:

Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the occupation of the country and the type of war that the USSR army is carrying out, have facilitated the international imperialist counter-offensive and the campaigns aiming to discredit socialism.

And on what the Soviet military apparatus was for, the same resolution set Afghanistan alongside Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland: the bureaucracy's armed power defends the workers' state, but also "defends the bureaucracy's own interests either against the workers of the workers states (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland) or against the self-determination of peoples (Afghanistan)." It quoted Trotsky, from *In Defense of Marxism*, on the Kremlin's orientation "towards the Balkans, Persia, and Afghanistan: In other words, the Kremlin continues the policy of Czarist imperialism."

An interview in *International Viewpoint* no. 76, May 1985, is more direct still, and includes something rare in the literature of any tendency — an admission of error in one's own name: "This is what happened to us at the start of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan." The reason given is the one this book denies: "In Afghanistan, the great majority of the population was opposed to the Soviet intervention."

Even then, not everyone had moved. Intercontinental Press, by then edited in New York by the American Socialist Workers Party as it broke from the Fourth International, was still on the other side of the argument in 1986. Its issue of 24 March that year carried Doug Jenness attacking an open letter against Reagan's Nicaragua policy for the offence of also mentioning Afghanistan — "Why is the Soviet Union dragged into what is purported to be a protest against Reagan's Nicaragua policy?" Among the signers of that letter, as the same article notes, was Petr Uhl, a Czechoslovak revolutionary socialist who had by then served nine years in prison. A journal descended from the Trotskyist movement rebuking a man jailed by the bureaucracy for putting Kabul and Managua in the same sentence is a low point worth recording, and it is recorded here so that no one imagines the reply was unanimous or easy.

Two more things can be said with the benefit of what neither side then had. The Soviet Politburo took the decision to send troops on 12 December 1979, before any of the requests this book describes could have been made by the government that

emerged on 28 December. And on 24 December 1989 the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR declared the decision to send troops into Afghanistan deserving of moral and political condemnation. The publisher's own state repudiated the last forty pages of this book within four years of its appearing in English.

That is why it is worth reprinting whole rather than filleted. Read chapters one to three as what they are: a serious, well-sourced survey by real scholars, in places the fullest account available in English, honest even about the empire that paid for it — up to the point where honesty would have cost something. Then read the final section as a document of a different kind, and notice that its own book, a hundred pages earlier, already explained why the peasants of Afghanistan rise against governments that improve them at their own expense.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM

Aggressive Broadcasting, Evidence Facts Documents: Psychological Warfare

The Soviet case against Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, the VOA and the BBC External Services - budgets, transmitters and congressional appropriations - closed in 1985, three years before the jamming stopped.

Gennady Alov and Vassily Viktorov

Introduction to the 1985 Edition

This is a book about jamming that never uses the word about itself. Aggressive Broadcasting: Evidence, Facts, Documents — in the Russian, Radioagressiya (radio aggression) — was published in English by Progress in 1985 under the names G. Alov and V. Viktorov, two authors who do not otherwise exist in the record and are almost certainly pen-names of the kind these exposés carried by convention. It is a survey of Western international broadcasting into the socialist bloc: Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, the Voice of America, the BBC External Services, Deutsche Welle, and a supporting cast of smaller stations, all treated as a single apparatus of "psychological warfare" directed by Washington. The subtitle is the genre. Evidence, facts, documents: the book means to be a dossier, and much of the time it is a good one.

The date on the spine is the date of the text. Nothing here lags. The book argues from the sharpest year of the second Cold War and knows it: Reagan's June 1982 address to the British Parliament, with its promise to leave "Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history," is the hinge of the whole argument; the shooting-down of Korean Air Lines flight 007 in September 1983 gets a full chapter; Reagan's secret Directive 75 of early 1983, instructing his administration to "exert a steady influence on the internal political life in the USSR," is quoted and named. The budget figures run through the 1985 fiscal year, and the newest event the authors can cite is the August 1985 congressional appropriation of 250 million dollars to RFE/RL. This is a real-time book, closed in the middle of 1985. It shows no awareness of what was already beginning: Gorbachev had been General Secretary since March, but glasnost is nowhere in these pages, and neither is any hint that the jamming war the book defends had less than three years left to run. In outlook it belongs to the Andropov–Chernenko winter that produced it, not to the year of its printing.

Who wrote it, and for whom? The apparatus answers part of the question. The authors thank TASS and the Novosti Press Agency — the state wire service and the state feature agency — for their material, along with "Soviet experts on the problems of Western radio broadcasting" and unnamed journalists who were "so kind as to make their documents and dossiers available." This is not a scholar's monograph assembled from open archives; it is a semi-official compilation drawing on the files of the organs whose job was to monitor exactly these stations. Its intended reader is double: the Western sympathiser who might be persuaded that RFE/RL is a CIA front (which it had been), and the domestic and bloc reader who needs the jamming of those stations explained as lawful self-defence rather than censorship. The book performs both tasks, and the tension between them is where it comes apart.

Begin, as this series always does, with what is true — because a good deal here is true, and the criticism that follows is worthless if this part is fudged.

The central factual case is sound and was sound. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty were created, funded and run by the Central Intelligence Agency, and the book documents this properly, from the American record rather than by assertion. It quotes Senator J. William Fulbright, who spent years trying to defund the stations, in his own words: "Each radio presented itself as a spontaneous creation, run by freedom-loving refugees financed by dimes from free-world schoolchildren. Secretly, each was the organizational and financial instrument of the CIA, staffed by expatriates who sought the overthrow of Soviet rule." It quotes Joseph Whelan of the Library of Congress's own research service conceding that Radio Liberty "is clearly a United States Government operation and an integral part of this Nation's foreign policy apparatus." It reconstructs the "white," "grey" and "black" propaganda structure accurately, and it is right that the National Committee for a Free Europe was fronted by the CIA's Allen Dulles, that the fiction of donations "from schoolchildren" was cover for

state money, and that the émigré staffs included men who had collaborated with the Nazi occupation. The Fulbright campaign, the CIA funding exposed in 1967, the reorganisation that moved the stations under the Board for International Broadcasting in the 1970s — all of this is real history, and the book gets it right.

It is right, too, about intent, and this is the part a Western reader is likeliest to want to wave away. The men running American broadcasting in the early 1980s did talk about it as warfare, on the record, and the book has caught them at it. Congressman Robert Michel's judgment that "the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty are worth three divisions of troops — at least" is a real quotation from the Congressional Record, not a Soviet invention. So is the newspaper column, cited approvingly on the House floor, calling short-wave radio "our only means to erode the Soviet System." So is the VOA commentary chief Philip Nicolaides urging in an internal memo that the station work "to 'destabilize' the Soviet Union and its satellites by promoting disaffection between peoples and rulers." The book's flat report of the VOA's operating creed — that "it is more important to be credible than truthful" — is a fair paraphrase of what American propaganda professionals actually wrote about their own trade. On the question of what these stations were for, the dossier holds. A reader who comes away believing that Western international broadcasting in the Reagan years was a disinterested public service has not reckoned with the evidence this book assembles.

The architecture the book lays out is genuinely useful as a record of the moment, and the numbers are largely right. It traces the 1980s reorganisation in detail — Frank Shakespeare installed at the Board for International Broadcasting, the CIA veteran George Bailey given Radio Liberty, Charles Wick's transformation of the USIA into what a serving officer inside it called a return to "all the cold-war rhetoric." It reconstructs "Project Truth," the counter-propaganda programme the National Security Council authorised in 1981, and the "total ideological war" the administration built around it; it catches Wick telling a Washington audience in 1981, "We are at war /with the Soviets/, whether de facto or declared." It quotes, at length and accurately, the CIA operations chief Frank Wisner's description of his own propaganda machine as a "mighty Wurlitzer" he could play "just about any tune he liked." These are real documents, mostly from American and West German sources, and the book's willingness to quote the adversary in the adversary's own words is a genuine strength — the same strength this series has noted in its more careful siblings. The dossier is not the problem. What the book does with it is.

And now the thing that is wrong with it, which is one structural thing, and which this book displays more purely than almost any other in the series, because its entire subject is who may speak, who may listen, and who may be silenced.

The category the book is built on — "information aggression" — is wired to point in only one direction. Broadcasting a signal across a frontier is aggression when the West does it. Blocking that signal is self-defence when the East does it. The book does not arrive at this asymmetry shyly or by omission; it states it as law. Its long chapter on international law argues that the free flow of information guaranteed by Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights "applies only to individuals and not to states" — and then, having confined the right to individuals, spends no further sentence on whether the individual Soviet listener possesses it. It concludes instead that a target country may lawfully "organize a system of interference against the broadcasts of these radio stations, e.g. by jamming these and other radio stations." Jamming, in other words, is not something the book must explain away. It is the book's positive recommendation, argued as a right under international law.

This is worth dwelling on, because it is the reflexive test this series applies to every volume: can the category the author prosecutes ever be turned back on the author's own state? Here the answer is written out in full, and it is no. The Soviet Union in 1985 ran the largest international-broadcasting operation on earth. Radio Moscow beamed more hours, in more languages, to more of the world than the Voice of America and the BBC combined. In this book it appears exactly once — in the opening pages, as a benign "visiting card on the air," alongside Radio Beijing, a station by which "a citizen of one or another country" keeps "in touch with his people." Everything the book indicts when Washington does it — the transmitter aimed across a border, the broadcast in the target population's own language, the intent to shape opinion inside another state — the book's own state did on a larger scale, and the category simply does not reach it. The authors were not unaware of the symmetry; they were untroubled by it, because for them aggression is defined by the politics of the broadcaster, not by the act.

The listener never appears as a bearer of rights at all. This is the absence that decides the case. The book can write, and does, that "there is a need for an open and honest dialogue on a global scale" and that "there is no room for a war of words." It can allow that "the battle of ideas presupposes recognition of the equal right of the various ideologies." But the right that would follow from any of this — the right of a Soviet citizen

to tune a radio and hear what a foreign station is saying, and decide for himself — is never stated, never defended, never so much as raised to be dismissed. The whole apparatus of the argument is about the rights of states: the sovereign right not to be interfered with, the state's right to "form their own information policy," the state's right to jam. The individual on the receiving end, in whose name a free flow of information would have to be claimed if it were a value at all, is present only as a target to be protected from misinformation — which is to say, as someone whose access to information the state is entitled to control.

Nor does the book acknowledge what its own reader in Moscow or Warsaw knew perfectly well: that in 1985 the jamming it recommends in the abstract was in fact total and ongoing. The USSR had resumed jamming all the major Western stations in August 1980, over Poland, and had not stopped; the racket of it filled the Soviet short-wave band as the manuscript was written. The book mentions Soviet jamming only in the past tense and only defensively — noting, of the late-1970s détente, that "the USSR had long since stopped jamming" the Voice of America, as though that condition still held. The vast, expensive, continuous jamming campaign that was the largest single fact about Soviet reception of foreign radio in the year of publication is present in this book only as a legal entitlement, never as a practice. A state confident of its own account of the world does not spend a fortune to prevent its citizens from hearing another. That it did so is the confession the book cannot make and cannot quite suppress.

The asymmetry has a sharp factual cost, and it falls on the peoples of Eastern Europe. Because aggression is defined as something transmitters do, every popular movement inside the bloc has to be recast as the product of a foreign signal. The June 1953 rising of East German workers becomes, in this book, a thing RIAS manufactured: the station's programmes "gave a signal for the commencement of the disturbances," and its "instructions were the main factor in the organized nature of the disturbances." Hungary in 1956 is "the counter-revolutionary events," radio-instigated; the Prague Spring of 1968 is "brainwashing"; Solidarity — a workers' union of some ten million members — appears in the chapter headings as a matter of "foreign currency for 'Solidarity'" and diplomats "on spying missions." Western broadcasting certainly covered all of these, and RFE's conduct in 1956 in particular has a real case to answer. But a book written from the tradition of Marx cannot explain the largest workers' movements in the history of the socialist states as artefacts of Munich transmitters without emptying its own politics of

content. It denies the East German building workers, the Hungarian workers' councils and the Polish shipyards any agency of their own, and treats the population the state claims to embody as a passive audience to be captured or protected — which is precisely the view of the listener the book elsewhere attributes, with contempt, to the psychological warriors of the USIA.

This is the same operation the sibling volumes in this series perform on adjacent ground, and the three are best read together. *A New Information Order or Psychological War?* (1984) prosecutes the West's dominance of the international news wires — accurately — while counting the word censor once in fifty-odd thousand words, and never once naming Glavlit, the Soviet censorship office that decided what could be printed while the book was being written. *Political Consciousness in the USA and Nihilism Today* manage the reader's picture of the adversary by the same means: the deforming pressures of the other system are anatomised with real skill, and the mirror is never turned. In each case the scholarship on the outward-facing side is genuine and the inward-facing silence is total. *Aggressive Broadcasting* is the purest of them because its subject is literally the control of information, so that the silence and the subject are the same thing.

The answer from within the Marxist tradition was written half a century before the book, by a man the book's own state had by then erased from its histories. Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) is the standard against which every Soviet account of Soviet society should be read, and on the monopoly of information it is exact. The Soviet bureaucracy, he argued, ruled not only by the firing squad but by the lie, and the lie had become structural — built into the very texts the state held up as its achievements. Of the 1936 Constitution, the document *Aggressive Broadcasting* still cites in 1985 as the guarantee of Soviet freedoms, Trotsky wrote that it was imbued with "the lie with which, as a mirror of the ruling stratum, the new constitution is imbued." He saw precisely what a monopoly of information does to the people living under it: "Wide circles of communists as well as nonparty citizens," he wrote, "keep up two systems of thought, one official and one secret." That sentence describes the exact condition a foreign broadcast threatens — the private, unofficial system of thought that jamming exists to starve. And he named the reflex the book performs: "The bureaucracy unfailingly represents its enemies as the enemies of socialism." *Aggressive Broadcasting* does nothing else. Every broadcaster it indicts becomes, by the act of broadcasting, a subversive; the possibility that a listener might simply want to know something is never entertained.

Trotsky also supplied the answer to the deepest premise of the book — that hostile radio is a mortal danger against which the state must defend itself with jammers. "Repressions do not kill thought," he wrote; "they merely drive it underground." A state that must jam is a state that has conceded it cannot win the argument in the open, and has chosen instead to prevent the argument from being heard. The jamming towers that ringed Soviet cities in 1985 were not evidence of the West's strength; they were a monument to the bureaucracy's fear of its own population, which is the fear this whole book is written to disguise.

None of which cancels the dossier. The reader should hold both halves at once, because both are true. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty were built and paid for by the CIA to destabilise the states they broadcast to; American politicians did describe their stations as weapons and their purpose as erosion; the book proves it, and the proof does not expire because the book that assembles it is a work of the Soviet propaganda apparatus. But a book that can see all of this in Washington and none of it in Moscow, that defines aggression by the flag on the transmitter, that argues the free flow of information belongs to individuals and then never lets an individual have it, is not an account of the radio war. It is one of its combatants, filing a dispatch — and, like the stations it exposes, more interested in being credible than in being true.

HISTORY

Blacks in United States History

A Soviet Civil War specialist on slavery, emancipation and Reconstruction - researched in the Russian foreign policy archives and the US National Archives, and reading Du Bois, Quarles, Franklin and Eric Foner seriously.

Robert Ivanov

Introduction to the 1985 Edition

Most of this book is good history, and the reader should be told so before anything else. Robert Ivanov was a working Soviet Americanist, a specialist on the Civil War, and the middle chapters of *Blacks in United States History* are the product of archival research rather than of a propaganda department. His notes cite the Russian Foreign Policy Archives by case and page, the US National Archives microfilm publications, the Congressional Globe, the War of the Rebellion official records, Basler's edition of Lincoln's collected works, and the Russian press of the 1770s and 1860s — Moskovskiye vedomosti, Sanktpeterburgskiye vedomosti, Severnaya pchela, Russkoye slovo. His secondary reading is serious and not confined to friends: Herbert Aptheker, William Z. Foster, Philip Foner and James Allen, but also W.E.B. DuBois's *Black Reconstruction*, Benjamin Quarles, John Hope Franklin, J.G. Randall, the Stamp and Litwack anthology of revisionist writing on Reconstruction, and Eric Foner's *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* and *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War*. Ivanov quotes Foner approvingly on the Reconstruction governments' "inability to protect Blacks against violence" — a Moscow historian in 1985 citing an American historian's judgement as a judgement, not as an exhibit. He had also been in the United States: he mentions in passing that he lectured to students in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Ithaca and California in the spring and summer of 1972.

What the book is for is a separate question, and Ivanov answers it himself, in the introduction, without embarrassment. Writing of the Carter administration's human rights campaign, he says that in "defending civil rights" in socialist countries, Carter "saw one of his main tasks as diverting the attention of the international and American public from the most crude violations of elementary civil rights of colored citizens in the US." That is the commission stated aloud. The book was written in the trough of the second Cold War — after the Euromissile deployments, after Reagan's "evil empire" speech,

in the last months of Chernenko — and its job was to answer an American human rights offensive with an American subject. Progress Publishers put it into English because English was the language in which the argument had to be made.

The unusual thing is how little that job deforms the historical chapters. They were evidently written by someone who wanted to get the history right and who then bolted a contemporary polemic onto either end. The seams are visible, and once you can see them you can read the two halves separately.

The strongest material is on the Civil War and Reconstruction, and it is strong for reasons that have to do with the tradition Ivanov was working in. He treats the war as a revolution and Reconstruction as its second, descending stage — "the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1861–1877" — which is a periodisation, not a slogan, and he sustains it. "Slavery was abolished by revolutionary, not constitutional, means." He is precise about why the northern bourgeoisie moved when it did and not before, precise about the Black Codes, precise about the land question and the meaning of its defeat. He gives the Union Leagues their proper weight and their half-million members. He records the extraordinary expansion of Black schooling — a more than five-hundredfold increase in pupils over the period — and notes that integrated schooling actually worked where it was tried, which he offers, correctly, as evidence against the segregationists of his own day. And he does not romanticise the labour movement he is otherwise committed to: "The workers and farmers of the North and West did not give Blacks direct aid during Reconstruction... This is one of the most important reasons that Blacks lost the struggle for their rights." That is an honest sentence, and a Marxist historian less confident of his method would not have written it.

He is willing to name betrayal as betrayal. "Reconstruction concluded with virtually the direct betrayal of the Blacks by the North's bourgeoisie." And he is willing to write about Reconstruction as an achievement rather than only as a defeat:

"The period of Reconstruction was a renaissance of the black people in America." A reader should register how unusual that sentence still was when Ivanov wrote it. It is worth being exact about the historiography, though, because the book's own framing is not. Ivanov repeatedly attacks "reactionary bourgeois historiography" as an anonymous mass; he never once names the Dunning School. He does not need to, because by 1985 he was not really fighting it — Stamp, Franklin, Woodward and Foner had substantially won that argument in the American academy, and Ivanov is citing them. The Soviet school's real merit on Reconstruction belongs to its founding decades, and the honour of standing against Dunning in the year it mattered belongs to DuBois, whose *Black Reconstruction of 1935* Ivanov cites. What the book preserves is the interpretation, not the priority.

The most original chapter is the one an English reader is least likely to have seen anywhere else: "The Russian Public and Slavery in America," in Chapter III. Here Ivanov is on his own ground and doing work nobody else had done in English. He traces how the two censored newspapers then publishing in Russia handled American slavery, and shows that they handled it as a coded argument about serfdom — Desnitsky writing in 1768 that in North America "the Europeans... do business in people just as with cattle," which was also a description of Russian landlords; Novikov's *Moskovskiye vedomosti* printing a pro-slavery traveller's letter and then appending an editorial note demolishing it; Radishchev on the American Revolution and its founding crime. Ivanov's own summary is the key to the chapter: "any mention of slavery in America involuntarily caused the reader to draw parallels with serfdom in Russia, which was hardly what the landowners wanted." He extends the method into the 1860s and 1870s, quoting a despatch from the Russian mission in Washington to Chancellor Gorchakov of 31 March 1871 on Klan terror. This is real scholarship, it is genuinely comparative, and it is the part of the book with the longest life.

It is also, unintentionally, the book's indictment of itself.

Because the comparison Ivanov teaches the reader to make — a state's writers attack a distant slavery in order to say something about their own — stops dead at 1917. Search this book for the Crimean Tatars, the Chechens and Ingush, the Volga Germans, the Kalmyks, the Meskhetians: there is nothing. Search it for the anti-cosmopolitan campaign, for the Doctors' Plot, for Birobidzhan, for the emigration question: nothing. The word "anti-Semitism" occurs exactly once, inside a quotation from the constitution of the Communist Party USA. In a book about the deportation and dispossession of a

people, the Soviet deportations of 1943–44 are not mentioned, not defended, not denied. They are simply outside the frame.

What stands where they might have stood is a set of positive claims. "The revolution in Russia destroyed the tsarist prison for peoples and smashed the doors of the multinational Russian Bastille." The socialist bloc "is the prototype of a future brotherhood of peoples in all countries of the world who will live together regardless of race, nation, or religion." And: "there is interest in the US as to how the national question has been solved in the USSR, that unique phenomenon in world history which convincingly proves the vital force and advantage of socialism." The tense is the point. Solved. Ivanov supports it with DuBois's genuine, and genuinely made, 1945 tribute to Soviet racial tolerance — words written by a man who did not know, and could not have known, what had happened in the Crimea eight months earlier.

This is not a matter of the book being wrong about America. On the substance it is largely right, and where it is right no amount of Soviet hypocrisy makes it less so. Reagan's cuts did fall hardest on Black Americans; Klan membership did rise in his first term; the Atlanta murders of 1979–81 were real. The point is narrower and harder to evade: a book that judges a state by how it treats a subject nationality was published by a state that had, within the living memory of its author, loaded entire nationalities onto trains. Ivanov taught his readers to read *Moskovskiye vedomosti* between the lines. He did not offer them the same service for his own book. Whether the silence was censorship or self-censorship or conviction cannot be recovered, and it does not much matter to the result.

A second silence is smaller but more revealing about the book's method. Ivanov claims the Communist Party USA "is the only party in the 200 years of the country's history which has from the very beginning of its existence consistently and steadily fought for the liberation of Blacks in the US from racial discrimination and segregation." He then declines to prove it. Scottsboro is not in this book — not the name, not the case, not the International Labor Defense. Neither is Angelo Herndon, nor the Alabama Sharecroppers' Union, nor the Unemployed Councils, nor the 1941 March on Washington Movement. The 1930s, the decade in which the party's claim on Black America was actually earned, receive a few paragraphs on the New Deal and nothing else. In their place the book substitutes quotation from Henry Winston, Gus Hall and party programmes of the 1970s and 1980s — testimony rather than history, from a historian who elsewhere goes to the archives.

The reason is not mysterious. Scottsboro cannot be told without the Comintern's 1928 "Black Belt" thesis of self-determination for a Black nation in the American South, which shaped the party's whole intervention; and that thesis cannot be told without its quiet abandonment, or without Harry Haywood, who formulated it and was expelled. The phrase "self-determination" does not appear in this book. "Black Belt" appears once, as a synonym for the cotton South. An entire theoretical episode has been converted into geography. Everything to the party's left gets a single sentence: "a number of leftist extremist groups strongly influenced by Maoists and Trotskyites stepped up their activities." Their arguments are not given, so they cannot be answered.

The contemporary chapters are also where the book's evidentiary standards slip. Ivanov reports, on the authority of "the American press," that Harry Truman "was once a member of the Ku Klux Klan" — a claim that rests on a disputed episode in 1922 in which Truman paid a joining fee and had it returned, and which the historian who cited Foner and Randall on Lincoln would not have let pass in Chapter IV. It is a small thing, but it marks the boundary between the two books bound together here.

The reply to the second of them was made in print, in the same tradition and often in the same years. On the deported nations, see G. Stepanovich, "Crimean Tatars: The Struggle of an Entire People," in *Inprecor* no. 44, 19 February 1976 — a long account of the deportation of some 238,500 people on the night of 18–19 August 1944, of whom only slightly more than half survived, and of the parallel fate of the Volga Germans, Balkars, Chechens, Ingush, Karachais, Meskhetians, Kalmyks and Black Sea Greeks. On the theory that connects the two halves of the question, Livio Maitan's "Trotsky's Views on the National Question" (*Intercontinental Press*, vol. 10 no. 30, 31 July 1972) defends "the validity of the principle of self-determination for Afro-Americans" within the same framework it applies to the nationalities of the USSR, which is precisely the framework Ivanov's book will not construct. And on the American ground itself, the same press was covering the subject as politics rather than as ammunition: Andrea Gonzalez on the Goetz shooting and the racial construction of "crime" (*Intercontinental Press*, vol. 23 no. 2, 4 February 1985), and Larry Cooperman's assessment of the Jackson campaign as an attempt to reform the Democratic Party rather than break from it (*International Viewpoint* no. 57, July 1984) — an argument Ivanov's framework, which sorts American politics into monopoly capital and its opponents, has no equipment to make.

Read this book for the Civil War, for Reconstruction, and above all for the Russian chapter, which is the work of a real historian doing something no one else had done. Read the introduction and the final chapter as what they are: a state's brief, filed in a case where the facts happened to favour it. And when Ivanov writes that "it is not racial, but class relations which are the chief watershed" — a proposition worth taking seriously — notice which watershed his own book was never permitted to cross.