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The Modern Quarterly *is published by Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., 81 Chancery Lane, W.C.2. Subscriptions* (11*s. per year, post free*) *should be sent to Central Books, 2 Parton St., London, W.C.1.*

Editorial Communications should be sent to the Editor, Dr. John Lewis, 28 Leaside Avenue, Muswell Hill, N.10.

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Stalin: A Novel Biography

BY ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

I

SOME months ago, when a reviewer was trying to make up his mind about a new biography of Stalin,[1] he expressed his uncertainty in these all too eloquent words (*Times Literary Supplement*, June 10th, 1949):

> "Is Stalin the disciple of Marx or an Oriental despot? Has he fulfilled or renounced the heritage of Lenin? Has he built 'socialism in one country' or blighted the prospects of socialism throughout the world for a generation to come? Has he—a second Peter the Great—Europeanised Russia, or—a second Genghis Khan—made Russia part of a vast Asiatic empire? Is he a nationalist assiduously seeking to increase the prestige and power of Russia, or an internationalist concerned to bring about the universal triumph of a revolutionary creed? These questions are susceptible of many different answers."

They are indeed: and the reviewer's bewilderment was not entirely due to his reading of Mr. Deutscher's book. The capitalist newspapers, politicians, priests and dons—and all who believe in the possibility of building Socialist society with the consent, maybe even the assistance, of the capitalists—have been asking these very same questions and answering them to their own satisfaction, often in opposite ways simultaneously, for twenty-five years. Moreover, before Lenin's death they had been doing the very same thing for him, ever since 1917. For in all the "questions" and "answers" they were propounding with such learned gravity, and on which they were assembling "materials" with such concern for "impartiality" and "scholarship," there was one constant—they hated the Socialist revolution in Russia as the beginning of world revolution, they hated the Bolshevik Party which had brought it about, they hated the leaders who guided the Party and the revolution.

[1] I. Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography*, Oxford University Press (Geoffrey Cumberlege), 25*s*.

That still is the case: and those who take at their face value the outraged outbursts against Lysenko, in the name of "pure science," against the Soviet Communist Party's resolutions on art, literature and music, against alleged Soviet contempt for human rights, without seeing in all these manœuvres the single deadly hatred of the first people in the world to overthrow capitalism, miss the key to the very question they are studying. And that holds good for even the most learned and outwardly dispassionate works dealing with the U.S.S.R. or its leaders.

Mr. Deutscher's book provides ample evidence, in its 570 pages of text, of the industry and wide reading of its author. It abounds in references to original sources—even, some of them, the writings and speeches of Stalin himself, although these are very much in a minority. The overawed reviewer mentioned earlier felt as a consequence that the reader would be enabled, if not to answer the series of striking questions he had propounded, "at any rate to ask them with greater understanding."

Is this claim justified? If one were to judge by the universal praise (not, of course, always unmixed) bestowed on the book by the capitalist Press, there could be no doubts about it. But then, for reasons just explained, the capitalist Press—and that of the friends of "socialism-by-consent-of-the-capitalists"—is not entirely disinterested in such matters. Moreover, Mr. Deutscher's book appeared in a year which provided a new and stupendous justification in China of a warning given by Stalin at the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1934 (*Leninism*, 1944 edition, pp. 479, 480–1):

> "As is well known, during the first imperialist war it was intended to destroy one of the Great Powers, viz., Germany, and to profit at her expense. And what was the upshot of this? They did not destroy Germany. . . . But they did get the smash-up of capitalism in Russia, the victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia, and, of course, the Soviet Union. What guarantee is there that the second imperialist war will produce 'better' results for them than the first? Would it not be more correct to assume that the opposite will be the case? . . . And let not Messieurs the bourgeoisie blame us if some of the governments so near and dear to them, which to-day rule happily 'by the grace of God,' are missing on the morrow of the outbreak of such a war [*against the U.S.S.R. A. R.*]. . . . It can hardly be doubted that a second war against the U.S.S.R. will lead to the complete defeat of the aggressors, to revolution in a number of countries in Europe and in Asia, and to the destruction of the bourgeois-landlord governments in those countries."

When Mr. Deutscher's book appeared, a *third* war against the U.S.S.R. was being eagerly discussed, in public and private, by leading American and British generals and politicians. It was even more desirable than before, in their eyes, to blacken the reputation of the Soviet people and their leaders—whether this implied greater understanding of them or less—for fear that such a war would provide the final and catastrophic evidence that Stalin knew what he was talking about.

How does Mr. Deutscher's book fit in?

II

In the first place, it is inspired throughout by the thought that the Soviet nations were, until quite recently, "a primitive, semi-oriental people" (p. 269), a "vast mass of uncivilized humanity" (p. 367), and "might, apart from small groups of educated people and advanced workers, rightly be called a nation of savages"—a nation, moreover, into which "much of the barbarism thrown out of Russian life has crept back" (p. 568). These are no chance reflections on Mr. Deutscher's part. Although, at the beginning of his book (p. 12), he mentions the incessant struggles of the Georgian peasantry for freedom in the nineteenth century, this does not prevent him a little later from writing of Stalin as the son of ex-serfs who "had inherited something of the peasant-like immobility and inertia, born from fear of change" (p. 23). "The whole fabric of Russian society was un-European," he writes ambiguously (p. 94), and contrasts it with "that dazzling rainbow which was called European civilization," of which Stalin was unaware (p. 97). After the Revolution, when Stalin became People's Commissar for Nationalities, he became responsible for the "Asiatic and semi-Asiatic periphery," "Russia's vast, inert, oriental fringe," whose "spiritual climate became, in a sense, decisive for the country's outlook" and helped Stalin "to orientalize his party" (pp. 229–30).

In reality, this Asiatic periphery amounted in all to some 30 millions out of 140 million people of the U.S.S.R.: its "inertness" had shown itself in a vast insurrection of the Central Asian peoples in 1916 and a Turkestan Soviet Republic which held out against

Kolchak's armies from 1917 to 1919, when it made contact again with Soviet Russia—not to speak of the guerrilla struggle in the Caucasus against German, Turkish, British invaders and their native nationalist agents. Moreover, Mr. Deutscher himself, forgetting his own words about "orientalizing" the Communist Party with the "devoted support" of Bolshevik leaders of the borderlands, goes on in a little while (pp. 239–41) to depict Stalin as speaking to the Georgians "with the voice of Moscow . . . an undertone of 'Great Russian chauvinism,' " and erring "in the direction of over-centralization." True, Mr. Deutscher here has started a different hare—not Stalin's introduction of the "spiritual climate" of the East, but his alleged "equivocation" with the reconciled professional classes of the old Russia (p. 243). Naturally, just as our author omits to mention the realities of the "Asiatic periphery," so he forgets to say—when claiming to quote Stalin in 1923 about the growth of Great Russian nationalism owing to the New Economic Policy's revival of petty capitalism—that Stalin called, not for "equivocation" with it, but for a "resolute repulse . . . cut it down at the roots . . . knock down flat on its back at all costs . . . pillory" (*Works*, Vol. V, pp. 239–46).

It goes without saying that Mr. Deutscher does not point out that the "dazzling rainbow which was called European civilization" was chiefly known to the various peoples of Russia from the savage exploitation and lack of human rights against which St. Petersburg textile workers in British and German mills were already fighting in the 'nineties, from the still worse conditions at the foreign-owned Baku oil wells which the workers there fought in 1903 and 1904, from the loan of £90 millions made to Tsardom by French and British bankers in 1906 (just in time to prop up its bankrupt Treasury against the revolutionary people) and from the bullets which killed and wounded over 600 workers on April 4th, 1912, at the Lena Goldfields (managed by a Russian company drawing its financial support from a British concern, which paid dividends to its shareholders by selling each year a block of shares of the Russian firm).

But why does Mr. Deutscher need to denigrate the peoples of the U.S.S.R.? Precisely in order to depict them as helpless raw material in the hands of Stalin, one of "the great revolutionary despots" (p. 566). The people whose stubborn and continuous agrarian disturbances frightened Alexander II in 1856 into deciding to "abolish serfdom from above before it begins to abolish itself from below,"

which was the first in Europe to provide the example of a truly nation-wide General Strike, and of national insurrections under Socialist leadership, in 1905–6, and which overthrew the despotism of Tsardom and capitalism, despite their foreign backing, in 1917—without counting the costs in lives and personal liberty—are to be regarded, according to Mr. Deutscher, as bewildered and bemused, stupefied and helpless since 1923–4, in the hands of "an ordinary, prosaic, fairly sober man, whose mind had suddenly become possessed by a half-real and half-somnambulistic vision . . . a modern super-Pharaoh" (p. 326). That is the picture which he draws of the condition in which the Russian people—"lured, prodded, whipped and shepherded"—entered upon the period of the Five Year Plans in 1929–30: and, without much change, it applies to what he says of them throughout his book.

Needless to say, Mr. Deutscher does not once call upon the evidence of innumerable eye-witnesses of the spirit of the Russian people in their life since the revolution, who might have told a very different story: Arthur Ransome in his *Six Weeks in Russia* (1919) and Philips Price in his *Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution* (1921); Walter Duranty in his collections of *New York Times* articles over the years from 1922 to 1935; Maurice Hindus in his books on the first Five Year Plan; the British T.U.C. Delegation's report in 1925 and the many reports by workers' delegations from 1927 to 1937; the wartime books of Alexander Werth—*Leningrad, The Year of Stalingrad*. But if he did, Mr. Deutscher would have fatally injured the whole foundation of his "political biography" of Stalin. For how can you build up the reputation of a "revolutionary despot" for one whose policy and speeches appeal above all to the tremendous unleashed energy, and ability to think and act for themselves, of tens of millions of people who, before 1917, really did have nothing to do but obey orders?

III

Equally characteristic of Mr. Deutscher's book is its systematic presentation of the Bolshevik Party as a helpless and on the whole passive instrument in the hands of its leaders, above all its careerists. Of the real activities of the Party, and of how it won and maintained its influence with the working class and the people generally, his readers would be geniuses if they got the slightest inkling.

In 1898, when Stalin first joined a Marxist organization, there were throughout Russia "only small groups of propagandists consisting mostly of intellectuals," he says (p. 27). This involves Mr. Deutscher himself in a dilemma he does not attempt to resolve: among whom were these intellectuals doing their propaganda? In reality, however, his assertion is in flat contradiction to the facts. After the brilliant success of Lenin's group in St. Petersburg in founding the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class (1895), composed of a score of Marxist factory groups which led a series of strikes, culminating in the great "summer strikes" of 1896 and the extortion of a legal limitation of working hours, every centre of industry in Russia saw the formation of similar organisations among the workers. Mr. Deutscher need not have had recourse to "Stalin's hagiographers" to learn this: Lyadov's *History of the Russian S.D.P.* (1906), Chapters XIV and XVII, and Vols. 2 and 4 of Lenin's *Works* (1895–1901) contain enough evidence to prove it, not to speak of Mavor's *Economic History of Russia* (1912), Vol. II, pp. 419–21. Mr. Deutscher, who refers to Lenin's "three-year banishment" (p. 33), does not even take the trouble to ask why he was banished—for it would have been impossible then to write of "small groups," etc.

The "underground was beginning to breed its caucus, its hierarchy, its bureaucracy," writes Mr. Deutscher (p. 61) of the first years of struggle between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks (1903–4), adding for full measure that this hierarchy "was in no way inferior to the officialdom of any normal, respectable Western European party." In what way "inferior"—in salary, in respectability, in detachment from everyday struggles, in numbers? Mr. Deutscher is discreetly silent. By his silence, addressed to a Western reader, he hides the truth about this "hierarchy" and "bureaucracy"—that it was composed of a handful of workmen with a few intellectuals: living (and continuing to live up to 1917) a half-starved existence, whether on the run in Russia or in emigration, out of tiny funds collected with difficulty; constantly arrested, exiled or sent to hard labour; working to exhaustion day and night, their "bureaux" an underground cellar, a camouflaged printshop, a garret in Geneva or Paris; thinking themselves useless, above all, if they or the equally illegal committees they linked up—by personal visits or by cyphering and decyphering messages—were not in constant contact with the day-to-day problems of the workers, inspiring and where possible leading them in struggle, in conditions

where strikes meant gendarmes' bullets and Cossack whips, meetings and demonstrations meant volleys of rifle fire and cavalry charges.

Why must Mr. Deutscher hide this by talk of "caucus" and "bureaucracy," and by references to "party headquarters," where Stalin found "an air of inefficiency" in 1909 (p. 103)? Because, just as he cannot admit the existence of a Russian people fermenting with courageous and self-sacrificing revolt against capitalism and tyranny, so he cannot afford to admit the growth of the party bound up, flesh and bone, with the working class, with its committees, organisers and leaders meaningless if not part and parcel of the working class.

So detached were these leaders from the people in 1905, so "beside themselves with polemical frenzy" in their controversy with the Mensheviks, writes Mr. Deutscher, that "they hardly noticed the outbreak of the first Russian revolution" (p. 62). This can hardly apply to Stalin, as he admits a few pages later (pp. 66–8). It would be too much to expect the author of such an audacious generalisation to have consulted a file of the Bolshevik paper in emigration, *Vperyod.* But he does look, when convenient, at Lenin's *Collected Works*. How comes it, then, that he fails to notice Lenin writing on December 22nd, 1904 (N.S.), that "political excitement in the most varied sections of the people is ever widening, sharpening and extending" (VII, p. 480); on January 4th, 1905, that a revolution "has begun in Russia," and that some spark "will lead to a vast popular movement," in which the proletariat "will rise at the head of the revolt" (VIII, pp. 8, 12); on January 14th, that there is "universal belief in revolution," which is itself "the beginning of revolution" (*ibid.*, p. 39); on January 23rd (before news of Bloody Sunday had arrived), under the headline "revolution in Russia," that "the insurrection is beginning. Force against force. Street fighting is boiling up, barricades are going up, volleys crackle and guns are thundering" (VIII, p. 53)? The news of the massacre of January 22nd itself, and of the workers' reply, Lenin proclaimed "the greatest historical events," heading it "The Beginning of Revolution in Russia." Why did Mr. Deutscher require to hide these—and many similar—facts with the sneer quoted above? To sustain his main thesis: of an "oriental" people and a party not living in and by their struggles.

Both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, says Mr. Deutscher, held the same view of the general objective of the revolution: "it was to be

'bourgeois-democratic' and no more" (p. 75). This is plainly untrue: they agreed that it was *bourgeois* in its historic role—in its direction against the survivals of feudalism, in the character of some of the forces taking part in it, in the absence of Socialist aims. But it was the Bolsheviks alone who underlined its bourgeois-*democratic* character, i.e. that it would be a revolution of the common people, led by the modern industrial proletariat, overcoming the hesitations and treacheries, and even breaking down the direct opposition, of the bourgeoisie. Its logic, if it were successful, must be the establishment of a *new* type of government for such a revolution—a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry"—not a Liberal capitalist government such as the Mensheviks, with their eyes on 1649, 1792 and 1848, looked for. What was the difference? That victory in such a struggle would be "the end of the democratic revolution and the beginning of a decisive struggle for the Socialist revolution. . . . The fuller the democratic revolution, the speedier, wider, purer, more resolute the development of that new struggle." Was this made clear by the Bolsheviks? Was their "cumbrous and self-contradictory formula" never clearly explained, as Mr. Deutscher asserts (p. 72)? Of course it was—by Lenin in his booklets, *The Revolutionary Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry* (April, 1905) and *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* (June–July, 1905), both of which were widely circulated in Russia. Why does Mr. Deutscher, who could have referred to both these works in Vols. VIII and IX of Lenin's *Works*, write as though they did not exist? Not, of course, because Stalin has written in the Preface to his *Collected Works* (printed in *Labour Monthly*, December, 1949), that he and other young practical workers had not yet grasped the full significance of what Lenin was proposing. Mr. Deutscher requires to conceal the full force of Lenin's analysis in 1905—adopted by the whole Bolshevik Party within a few years—in order to build up the conception of a party without any guide to or influence on events, to be overtaken "in a state of confusion" in 1917, without "any clear policy that would fit the unforeseen circumstances of revolution" (p. 131)—a party in which Lenin would have to carry out a "*coup*" (p. 138).

And in fact, when it comes to 1917, Mr. Deutscher passes that judgment on the Party leadership in Russia—the illegal "Bureau of the Central Committee." He mentions "strikes and demonstrations" which led to the uprising of March 11th–12th, in which the

garrison came over to the people. It was "from the people itself." If there was any help, it came from a palace revolt against the Tsar by Liberal politicians, foreign diplomats and court officials. The Bolshevik Party does not appear. Yet the full account of this organisation during the years 1914–17—the only one existing in the capital—has been published (M. C. Fleyer, *The Petersburg Committee of the Bolsheviks in the War Years*). It shows, despite constant arrests and repressions, fifteen sub-districts in existence in December, 1916, holding regular meetings of the City Committee, connected with scores of factories, issuing at least eighty-seven illegal leaflets, with a circulation of 300,000, in the course of the war, setting up nineteen illegal printing establishments, one after the other, and calling most of the 480 strikes, with a total of half a million participants, between the summer of 1915 and the end of 1916. It was this organisation which bore direct responsibility for the great strikes, involving nearly 600,000, of January and February, 1917. Why does Mr. Deutscher need to hide all this? In order to strengthen the picture of the Bolshevik Party as counting for nothing in the great events of March, 1917, and in fact as overwhelmed by them, a flock of sheep looking for a leader: in order to overemphasise the short-lived difficulties which the leaders available in Russia, and particularly Stalin, had in approaching the policy of "All Power to the Soviets," clearly formulated by Lenin when he arrived on April 16th. (Mr. Deutscher does not mention, although he hints at, Stalin's declaration on March 31st that only an "All-Russian Soviet of Workers, Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies" would have the authority to "become the organ of revolutionary power at the necessary moment": just as he does not mention the resolution of the Bureau of the Central Committee of April 8th in the same sense.)

And he needs this, in turn, in order to represent Lenin's "*coup*" as lining him up with Trotsky, as will be seen later.

After these characteristic excursions by Mr. Deutscher into the history of the Bolshevik Party up to 1917, however, the reader will be prepared for the role he assigns to it in the years that followed. Those who have ever seen Trotskyist literature will be familiar with the absence of any picture of the day-to-day party struggle against Menshevism among the workers and soldiers throughout 1917, so that, when Bolshevik shop stewards and regimental delegates are not "wielding a steadily growing influence" (p. 143), they may turn out to be "impatient, semi-anarchist groups of workers,

soldiers and sailors" fretting at Lenin's prudent tactics (p. 147)—not to speak of their Congress itself suffering "incipient panic in the ranks," which Stalin however was able to "quell" (p. 155). Needless to say, the November Revolution itself is depicted as carried out by "insurgents," identified here and there only as "troops" and "detachments" (pp. 165–7). Why? Because the truth—that the main fighting forces were some 14,000 armed factory workers (Red Guards) and a few thousand Baltic Fleet sailors, which emerges even from John Reed's impressionistic account in *Ten Days That Shook The World*, let alone such direct evidence as that given by Podvoisky, the chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee, in his *The Red Guard in the October Days*—would have brought out once more the leading and organising role of the Bolshevik Party in the capital, the real strongholds of which were the Petrograd factories and the Baltic Fleet.

For the complete submergence of the role of the Bolshevik Party since Soviet power began, the reader need not even be familiar with Trotskyist literature: the yellow columns of the capitalist Press will be ample preparation. Once again we find it reduced to the "daily drudgery" and "kitchen cabals" of thousands of functionaries (pp. 231–2), with never a word of the enormously large mass of members in the factories, offices and countryside who have from 1917 had to struggle for leadership of the mass of Soviet citizens, explain policy to them, get their voluntary assent. Once again we get the familiar charge of the party's "divorce from the people" (p. 234), with never a scrap of proof—and how could there be, with some five-sixths of the Party living ordinary lives among the people, on the same wages basis and living standards, distinguished from the rest only by greater activity in social or public affairs? Once again we get the rubbish about the personnel department moving Communists about where it pleases, and thus able to procure "the punishment of a somewhat restive member"—and the authority of Stalin's speech at the Twelfth Party Congress in April, 1923, quoted as evidence (pp. 256–7). Yet the very volume of Stalin's works which Mr. Deutscher uses shows Stalin publishing the fact that, out of 500,000 members, only about 2 per cent. ever passed through the personnel department at all—and half of those through sickness, leave, going to study, etc. (V, p. 390). When the debates with the Trotskyists are mentioned, over many pages of the book (e.g. pp. 264–6), no reference is made to the Party newspapers filled with discussion articles, or to the special "Discussion

Sheet" issued before Congresses. When the fight for industrialisation is on (1925), the Party—without the slightest evidence—becomes a "hesitating mass," hoping to be "steered along the 'middle of the road' " (p. 296), and by the eve of the Five Year Plan (1929) it is "a body of frightened and meek men, always ready to do his bidding" (p. 330). Needless to say, "the party had a guilty conscience" by the eve of the Second World War (p. 460). Mr. Deutscher has even the brazen assurance to say—without attempting to give his evidence—that the evacuation of the Government from Moscow "was followed by riots and disorders," in which "crowds stormed food stores," Communists "destroyed their membership cards," and "symptoms of anarchy appeared in many places all over the area between the fronts and the Volga" (pp. 468–9). Mr. Deutscher ought to know very well that this contemptible and slanderous gossip was the invention of those diplomatic missions in Moscow—and particularly of one—whose hatred of the U.S.S.R. even exceeded their fear of the Nazis.

At least three foreign journalists by no means friendly to Communism exposed these Fifth Columnists in their books in 1942—Wallace Carroll (U.S.A.), Philip Jordan and Charlotte Haldane.

IV

Against this dim and shadowy background of a savage and politically inert people and a scarcely more alive Communist Party of spineless timeservers, which bears not the faintest resemblance to reality, Mr. Deutscher draws his real *dramatis personae*—who may indeed serve the purpose of imaginative fiction, but are quite unrecognisable to students of history.

Lenin comes forward as a bookish, impulsive creature, very much stamped with his middle-class origin, remote from the working class even while directing it—and on the whole, at crucial moments, in complete agreement with Trotsky. His early writings, we learn, "read almost like apologies for Liberal Western European capitalism" (p. 30): how early, and what writings, we are not privileged to learn. When he was fighting the Mensheviks in 1903 over the conditions of Party membership, it was not primarily because he wanted a disciplined Party: no, it was that he "was now distinctly making his bid for leadership" (p. 53). We have already seen Mr. Deutscher's insinuation that Lenin "hardly noticed" the

outbreak of the 1905 Revolution: he also tells us (p. 64) that he "did not appear on the stage at all." This, of course, by way of contrast with Trotsky, "who did rush to the battlefield" and "became the chief leader of the First Revolution" (p. 65). In fact, Trotsky's "rush" in February, 1905, was to Kiev, where there was no particular battlefield, and then on to Finland (*via* Petrograd), where he stayed throughout the summer and until October. He left Finland when the General Strike occurred in that month and the Soviet was formed—just as Lenin left Geneva! The truth is, of course, that the Petersburg Soviet was throughout under Menshevik control, and—despite its great achievements—threw away even greater opportunities of carrying the revolution to success (refusing to arm the workers, refusing to organise propaganda among the soldiers, etc.).

A characteristic example of Mr. Deutscher's method of writing history occurs in his treatment of Lenin's famous book vindicating dialectical materialism against the fashionable idealists of the day, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. Lenin, we learn (p. 106), "detached himself from day-to-day politics and, to the grave embarrassment of his pupils, shut himself up in the Paris libraries." He refused "to return to practical politics." By p. 118 it becomes "a year off from practical politics." This caused Stalin to become irritated and impatient, the omniscient Mr. Deutscher informs us: "the émigrés' aloofness from Russian reality, *he must have reflected*, had reached the limits of mental aberration," and so forth. What are the facts? They are revealed clearly by the biographical notes in Lenin's *Works* (Vols. 13–15) and in Krupskaya's *Memories of Lenin*, p. 141. He began work on the book in February, 1908. In May he went to London to use materials in the British Museum which were not available in Geneva, and spent just over a month there. By September he was writing the preface to his book, and by mid-October it was finished. And what kind of "a year off" was this? A long series of articles by Lenin in the Bolshevik paper *Proletarii* and other papers on current political events, his famous articles on "The agrarian question in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century" and on "Marxism and Revisionism," public lectures at Geneva (March 5th and April 24th) and Paris (May 1st), meetings of the Bolshevik group in Paris (May), the Central Committee of the Party in Geneva (August 11th–13th), the International Socialist Bureau and international conferences of Socialist journalists and M.Ps. in Brussels (September 27th–29th), meetings

of the Editorial Committee of *Proletarii*. . . . No practical politics here?

In January, 1917, Mr. Deutscher informs his readers, Lenin "did not yet believe the second revolution to be near." The reader, unfamiliar with Russian, and therefore unable to read Lenin's articles and letters, takes this as gospel and thinks what a short-sighted man, aloof from Russian reality, Lenin must have been. "A few weeks before the downfall of Tsardom," Mr. Deutscher continues, Lenin in a lecture to young Swiss Socialists assured them "that, though his generation would not live to see the second revolution, they, the youth, would certainly witness its triumph." Very impressive—only it happens not to be true, as all who care to look up the speech in its English translation will find (Little Lenin Library, *The Revolution of 1905*, or *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 19). Lenin was speaking, *not* of the second Russian Revolution, but of "popular uprisings under the leadership of the proletariat" *in Europe*, which he foretold would come out of the war. And he did not *assure* his audience that they would witness its triumph: neither prophecy nor the preaching of passive contemplation were in Lenin's nature. He expressed the *hope* that the Socialist youth throughout the world "will be fortunate enough not only to fight, but also to win, in the coming proletarian revolution." Mr. Deutscher should be more careful.

Mr. Deutscher has a field-day when he comes to Lenin's return to Russia in 1917 and his alleged "coup." Under cover of quotations from Lenin's speech introducing the famous *Theses*, Mr. Deutscher smuggles in the suggestion that Lenin had become a Trotskyist! The task of the Bolsheviks—according to the "Deutscherised" Lenin—"was to establish proletarian dictatorship." The revolution "had entered the Socialist phase." Yet the *Theses* (April 20th) are available in English—in the *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, part 1, and in the *Selected Works*, Vol. VI. Search through them, through the explanatory *Letters on Tactics* which followed them, through Lenin's *Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution* which developed them (April 23rd): you will find not one word about proletarian dictatorship as an *immediate* aim—the distinguishing point of Trotsky's platform. You will find explicit repudiation of the idea that the revolution was in its Socialist phase, and explanation that "the Republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies" which Lenin was demanding would be in fact the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry," freed

from the slavish support of the capitalist Provisional Government which the Soviet's Menshevik leaders were then maintaining. And Lenin explicitly repudiated Trotsky's formula: "No Tsar, but a *Workers'* Government"—just because this would have meant attempting a Socialist revolution at the wrong moment (*Selected Works*, VI, p. 37).

Lenin's insistence on immediate practical plans for insurrection, beginning with September, 1917, strike Mr. Deutscher as "a somewhat naïve essay in adventure," "military incongruities" and so forth (pp. 158, 164), and he tries to enlist even Stalin's recollections on the subject (*Works*, IV, pp. 317–18), which he says are "not without irony." Unfortunately for Mr. Deutscher, Lenin's general plan for the rising coincided most precisely with just what happened (it is printed in *Selected Works*, VI, pp. 223, 231, 302)—as can be tested by any contemporary description, let alone the fully-documented *History of the Civil War*, Vol. II—and Stalin's recollections don't refer to the military plans at all, but to the question of whether the insurrection should be timed to coincide with the "Democratic Conference" of September instead of the Second Soviet Congress of October. This is neither the first nor the last example of Mr. Deutscher's peculiar method of quotation, to which we shall return.

In dealing with the Civil War period (1918–20), Mr. Deutscher has hit upon a simple but original way of reducing Lenin's stature. Basing himself on Klara Zetkin's reminiscences—and evidently on nobody reading them, *since the phrase he puts in quotation marks occurs nowhere in the Russian text* (1925)—Mr. Deutscher fathers on Lenin the wish in 1920 to probe Europe with the bayonets of the Red Army. He desired to "effect a junction between the Russian and the German revolutions," states Mr. Deutscher, because he was "in despair at the continued isolation of the Soviets": and it was Trotsky who opposed a march on Warsaw (p. 215). In reality, the talk recorded by Klara Zetkin does not contain the slightest reference by Lenin to the "junction" or to "the German revolution" either, for the excellent reason that the latter did not exist: nor is there any sign of Lenin being "in despair" at Russia's isolation. On the contrary, he told Klara Zetkin that he thought it quite possible for Russia to have continued the war and defeated Poland: but that, bearing in mind the great hardships already borne by the Russian people at which workers and peasants were grumbling, it was wiser to come to terms (K. Zetkin, *On Lenin*, 1925, pp. 44–7).

Lenin certainly spoke of their hopes of a Socialist revolution in Poland being disappointed, but nowhere did he give the slightest indication that it was *because of these hopes* that the war, begun wantonly by the Polish ruling clique and supported by Britain and France, was carried into Polish territory. As for Stalin's warnings against bragging advocates of a "march on Warsaw," which Mr. Deutscher has the audacity to quote from his collected works, it is common knowledge that these were directed against none other than Trotsky and his military henchmen.

Reviving almost word for word Trotsky's accusations against Lenin in 1904, when Mr. Deutscher's hero was fighting for Menshevism, our author now charges Lenin with presiding over a transition in which "the party ceased to be a free association of independent, critically-minded and courageous revolutionaries" and "submitted to the ever more powerful party machine" (p. 226). If the party had in the years that followed supported Trotsky in disrupting discipline by setting young against old and army against State (1923–5), in opposing *gradual* accumulation of resources for industrialisation and advocating their collection at the expense of the peasantry (1924–6), in opposing transition to industrialisation when the time was ripe (1927–8) to the formation of State farms (1928–9) and to collectivisation (1929–34)—why, then it would have been independent, critically-minded and everything else that a flatterer could think of. Of course, this might have meant the loss of Soviet power and defeat by foreign invaders—but what would that have mattered, compared with the overthrow of Stalin and the hated "party machine"?

Perhaps Mr. Deutscher's most outrageous defiance of recorded facts, however, comes when he is dealing with the turn to industrialisation in 1926–7, as the essential preliminary to building a Socialist society. The decision to do this precipitated a vast discussion in the U.S.S.R. on the possibility of building Socialism in one country, if there were no Socialist revolutions elsewhere. Trotsky and others, who had considered it impossible in Russia under such conditions, fought the idea tooth and nail, and prepared actively to fight it by sabotage and worse methods when they were defeated. In this situation—the most crucial since the revolution of 1917—the Trotskyists flatly asserted that Lenin was on their side; and Mr. Deutscher follows them without stint. Lenin denied, he states, "Russia's intrinsic capacity to embark upon Socialism before western Europe" (p. 284). In fact, up till now, i.e. in Lenin's day,

"Bolshevism looked upon Russia as upon a periphery of modern civilisation . . . western Europe still remained the real centre of modern civilisation; and, in the old Bolshevik view, it was there in the centre and not on the periphery that the forms of a new social life were eventually to be forged" (p. 293).

But what did Lenin really say? Mr. Deutscher had ample evidence, in his collected writings, of what Lenin really thought at the end of his days. "There is quite enough economic power in the hands of the proletarian State in Russia to ensure the transition to Communism. What is lacking? It is obvious. That stratum of Communists which is managing the country lacks culture" (March 27th, 1922). "Socialism is now not a question of the remote future, or of some abstract picture. . . . All of us together, not to-morrow, but in a few years' time, will solve the problem (of efficient management) at all costs, so that Nep Russia will become Socialist Russia" (November 21st, 1922). The very proposition set forth by Mr. Deutscher was stated and challenged by Lenin on January 16th–17th, 1923. What if the peculiar conditions created for Russia by the world war, he wrote, and the absence of any other way out, "increasing thereby tenfold the forces of the workers and peasants, opened up for us the possibility of a different approach to creating the basic premises of civilisation from those of other, west-European States? . . . If for the creation of Socialism a definite level of culture is needed (though no one can say what is that definite 'level of culture') why can't we begin with conquering by revolutionary means the preliminaries for that definite level, and thereafter, on the basis of workers' and peasants' power and the Soviet order, go forward to catch up with the other peoples? . . . For creating Socialism, you say, civilised conditions are necessary. Very good. Then why couldn't we begin by creating such prerequisites of civilised conditions in our country as expelling the landlords and the Russian capitalists, and then starting to move forward to Socialism? In what books have you read that such variations of the usual historical period are impermissible or impossible?" And in his very last article, "On Co-operation," Lenin wrote on May 26th, 1923: "The power of the State over all the large means of production, the power of the State in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of that proletariat with the many millions of small and tiny peasants, the assuring for that proletariat of guidance of the peasantry, etc., is not that all that is necessary with co-operation alone . . . to build a complete Socialist society. . . . A system of

civilised co-operators in a society owning the means of production, with the class victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie—that is the system of Socialism."

Why does Mr. Deutscher ignore these crying facts? Because he needs to reduce Lenin to a pale shadow, to justify his fantastic attempts at glorifying Trotsky—and to conceal the plain historical fact that Stalin has continued and developed Lenin's work.

V

As to the glorification of Trotsky, Mr. Deutscher does not stint his imagination. He tells us, as we saw, that Trotsky was "the chief leader of the First Revolution" of 1905; as President of the Petersburg Soviet, he "put his imprint upon events as an individual standing almost alone" (p. 65). In reality, as we have seen, Trotsky returned from Finland to Petrograd only in October, 1905, after the General Strike, and when the Soviet was already in existence. He took his seat in it as a representative of the Mensheviks. The President for six weeks was a Radical lawyer, Khrustalyov-Nosar; and only on his arrest (November 26th) did Trotsky become President—*for one week*, until the whole Soviet was arrested without a blow being struck, thanks to the Menshevik tactics which Trotsky had supported by pen and speech. Practically the whole of Trotsky's career on the side of Menshevism, from 1903 to July, 1917—a career which was bankrupted by the course of events in the later year—disappears or is glozed over in Mr. Deutscher's account. He describes how in July, 1917, when the Bolsheviks, despite Kerensky's persecutions, were visibly gaining influence, Trotsky brought his small group of intellectuals into the Party (p. 145)—but omits to mention that Trotsky resisted this fusion as long as he could, declaring at the conference of his organisation in May, 1917, that he could not agree to call himself a Bolshevik, the Bolsheviks having "debolshevised themselves": whereupon the conference rejected Lenin's proposals for unity (Lenin's own notes, taken as a fraternal delegate at the conference and published in the *Lenin Review*, No. 4, 1925).

Of course we have the usual extravagant descriptions of Trotsky's role in the insurrection of November 6th–7th—as President of the Petrograd Soviet he "dominated all its activity," was chairman of the "General Staff of the insurrection" (the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet), had "all the

threads of the insurrection" in his hands, the troops were "under Trotsky's command," and so forth (pp. 161–6). In reality (i) the minutes of the Petrograd Committee of the Bolshevik Party from mid-September onwards show the Party leadership of the Bolshevik fraction in the Petrograd Soviet (now the majority) more and more assuming direction of its main policies—particularly on forming a Red Guard (October 7th, N.S.) and a "fighting centre," i.e. the Military Revolutionary Committee (October 28th, N.S.). A Petrograd City Conference of the Party also adopted directions for the Party members of the Soviet on the Red Guard (October 23rd, N.S.). The fact is that Trotsky could not break down, after some three months in the Bolshevik Party, the traditional and useful practice of the Party—collective leadership and united working of all the Bolsheviks as a fraction—or replace it by his own personal leadership. (ii) Although Trotsky was *ex-officio* a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee, he never was its chairman—as is attested, not only by the memoirs of Podvoisky already mentioned, and by John Reed, but also by the minutes and documents issued by the M.R.C. (Piontkovsky, *The Soviets in October*, 1928, and *Documents of the Great Proletarian Revolution*, 1938, where many of them are reproduced). The chairman was first a Left Socialist Revolutionary, Lazimir, and later Podvoisky: moreover, on the crucial day of the insurrection (November 6th–7th) Trotsky, as John Reed shows, was entirely occupied by his duties as President of the Petrograd Soviet, which was in permanent session. (iii) Mr. Deutscher attempts to pooh-pooh the Bolshevik Central Committee's delegation on October 29th (N.S.) of its five strongest organisers—Stalin, Sverdlov, Dzerzhinsky, Uritsky and Bubnov—to the Military Revolutionary Committee, and even to suggest as a "queer and undeniable fact," Stalin's "absence or inactivity" during the rising: and this on the ground that there are no documents recording either (pp. 167–8). In reality, the Military Revolutionary Committee came into being, not on October 26th (N.S.), as Mr. Deutscher says, but only a week later, after (i) the Petrograd Party Military Organisation had established itself at the Soviet headquarters to provide the nucleus of the M.R.C., (ii) the Party leadership had delegated the five organisers mentioned, (iii) other Party leaders, like Molotov (for the agitation section) had also been appointed. From the moment it got to work, four days before the insurrection as its own announcement of November 2nd shows, the M.R.C. was in permanent session at the Soviet building, the

Smolny Institute, all its members working in it without stint, for as long as their physical powers lasted. A great deal of its work was done by special messenger and by telephone: what documents were issued were signed by whoever was on duty. It was here that Stalin, Dzerzhinsky and Sverdlov in particular were almost permanently—all the more because the *Minutes* of the Bolshevik Central Committee (published in 1929) show it deciding on November 6th that not one of its members may leave the Smolny Institute that day.

There is much else in Mr. Deutscher's glorification of Trotsky that is founded on similar flimsy propaganda or wrong-headed misquotation of documents. But the foregoing may be sufficient to give an idea of its character and its weakness. It may also, by now, find the reader prepared to find what kind of a political biography Mr. Deutscher assigns to Stalin. For just as Lenin fought Trotsky relentlessly as a cowardly and double-dealing Menshevik from 1903 to 1917, and had twice to call him to order in public after that date—in 1918 over Brest Litovsk and in 1920 over the trade union controversy—so equally certainly Lenin treated Stalin as one of his closest and most reliable helpers and followers, from his very first contact with the "wonderful Georgian," as he called him in 1913.

VI

From the wealth of hostile anecdote and Trotskyist misinformation upon which Mr. Deutscher has drawn with a lavish and carefree hand, it is difficult to make a selection of reasonable length. Here are a few examples. To discredit those whom he describes as "official biographers," our author says (p. 8) they attribute Stalin's first study of Marxism to his days in the Church school at the country town of Gori—and learnedly proves that Marxism could hardly have spread beyond Tiflis by then. In fact, the biographers say it happened at the Tiflis Seminary. Mr. Deutscher sneers (p. 125) at the suggestion that nothing written by Stalin during his four years' exile in one of the most remote wildernesses of Siberia—"a land of the size of Scotland" with 10,000 inhabitants—has been recovered, and thinks it more likely that Stalin "did not take to the pen," since "his writings could not have been destroyed by the Okhrana." Why not? Many of Lenin's writings disappeared in transmission: the police burned 15,000 copies of Part II of Lyadov's *History of the Russian S.D.P.* in the autumn of 1906.

"Imagination and originality were not his characteristic . . . his sociological reasoning was crude . . . [he had] learned to use an elementary Marxist idiom. . . . The most indulgent reader of that [first] volume [of his *Works*] could hardly find in it any proof of striking intellectual or political attainment . . . [his] writings were neither numerous nor intellectually startling . . . his mental uncouthness . . . [he] contributed no imaginative idea to a discussion," etc., etc., Mr. Deutscher tells us again and again (pp. 26, 44, 78, 97, 101, 119, 121) with an insistence only equalled by the stinginess with which, over 570 pages of text, he gives his readers a chance to see what Stalin actually wrote. Yet the same Mr. Deutscher has to admit that, in his very first article (1901), Stalin deliberately wrote on the subject nationalities of Russia in such a way as "to put the Georgian problem in a wide international perspective. . . . The author was clearly determined to counteract the political self-centredness so characteristic of any oppressed nationality" (p. 41). Moreover, in 1901 he was already arguing—as "the Bolsheviks were to argue" in 1905—that the bourgeoisie could not be relied upon to fight the autocracy: and Mr. Deutscher (because of his prejudices) has to admit that he finds it "surprising" that long before the split with the Mensheviks, when Stalin was only twenty-two, "his outlook was already that of the future Bolshevik" (pp. 42–3). Also, in the same article he forecast that, if workers' street demonstrations went on, the spectre of a "people's revolution" would appear in two or three years' time. It did, in 1905: "rarely has a political prophecy been better confirmed," says Mr. Deutscher (p. 44). These, of course, are not signs either of imaginative ideas or of intellectual attainment! Nor, of course, is the fact that, in the first elections fought after the Tsarist counter-revolution (1907), it was Stalin who wrote the *Instruction of the Baku Workers to Their Deputy*, which (adopted at many workers' meetings) remained "a model of Bolshevik parliamentary tactics" (p. 99) —and, one may add, did not have its equal in any other country, although Stalin himself improved on it in the similar document that he drew up for the Petersburg workers in 1912. In the resolution of the Baku Party Committee which Stalin drafted at the beginning of 1910, when all ahead seemed dark as night, but Stalin already discerned signs that "the state of depression and torpor" of the years of reaction (1907–10) was passing, he was once more "ahead of most *émigré* writers" (Mr. Deutscher, p. 107). All this, of course, showed no imagination—nor did the remarkable article

"Marxism and the National Question," on which Stalin worked in Vienna for several months in 1912–13, which aroused the enthusiastic praise of Lenin, and on which Mr. Deutscher, while scrupulously refraining from giving his readers the slightest idea of its content, can only comment *au bout des dents*, as the French say, that "almost certainly the 'old man' pruned the essay of the stylistic and logical incongruities with which the original must have bristled" (p. 122). What a pity our author did not display his far superior imagination and originality by conjuring up the text of those "almost certain" incongruities!

But there was an even more amazing example of Stalin's lack of originality at the very threshold of the November Revolution. In August, 1917, at the Sixth Party Congress, there was a discussion on a motion tabled by Stalin, that the revolutionary workers and peasants should take State power and "direct it, in alliance with the revolutionary proletariat of the advanced countries, towards peace and the Socialist reconstruction of society." Preobrazhensky, one of Trotsky's closest friends (this has to be mentioned because Mr. Deutscher has the nerve to suggest that Stalin's ideas on this occasion "appeared to be identical with Trotsky's") moved an amendment: "direct it towards peace and—given a proletarian revolution in the West—towards Socialism." In other words—no revolution in the West, no Socialism in Russia: Trotsky's precise position. How did Stalin reply? The full text ought to be quoted:

> "I am against such an amendment. The possibility is not excluded that precisely Russia will be the country laying out the road to Socialism. Up till now not a single country has enjoyed in war conditions such liberty as has Russia, or has tried to put into effect workers' control over production. Moreover, the base of our revolution is broader than in Western Europe, where the proletariat stands face to face with the bourgeoisie in complete isolation. With us the workers are supported by the poorest strata of the peasantry. Lastly, in Germany the machinery of State power works incomparably better than the imperfect machinery of our bourgeoisie, which is itself, also, a tributary of European capital. We must cast aside the out-of-date idea that only Europe can show us the way. There exist dogmatic Marxism and creative Marxism. I take my stand on the latter."

This did not show imaginative ideas, did it, Mr. Deutscher?

Mr. Deutscher himself does his best to make up for Stalin's deficiencies. But before we close with a survey of his efforts in this sphere, there are two more typical examples of his historical method to be noticed.

One is on p. 231, where he describes the system of Party management which gave Stalin his "position of vantage." From the beginning of 1919, Deutscher explains, Stalin "was the only permanent liaison officer between the Politbureau and the Orgbureau . . . he marshalled the forces of the Party. . . . Like none of his colleagues, he was immersed in the party's daily drudgery and in all its kitchen cabals" (it is by kitchen cabals, of course, that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has raised the U.S.S.R. to front rank among the world Powers). Let us take a look at the biographical details for the year mentioned (*Works*, Vol. IV, pp. 456–68). *Nearly all January*—at Vyatka, in the north-east, repairing the dreadful defeat inflicted by Kolchak on the 3rd Army. *Mid-May—end of June*—at Petrograd, organising defences against Yudenich's offensive. *First week in July—end of September*—on the Western Front (except for ten days in Moscow). *Beginning of October—end of December*—on the Southern Front (except for twelve days in Moscow). And 1920 shows much the same picture for most of the year. What a lot of kitchen cabals Stalin had to deal with at the fronts!

The other is the famous affair (1922–3) of Lenin's alleged "last will and testament"—allegedly directed mainly against Stalin, allegedly hidden from the Party, allegedly followed up with an attack on Stalin's management of the People's Commissariat for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, allegedly communicated only "to picked delegates" at the Party Congress of 1924. In all his narrative (pp. 247–52, 272) Mr. Deutscher faithfully follows the writings of Trotsky on the subject. In reality (i) the document in question was not a last "testament" at all, but the fragment, as its text itself reveals, of a longer letter: and that document in turn was one of a number which Lenin dictated during his illness, to serve as a record of his views on a variety of subjects (Trotsky's article of September, 1925, in the fortnightly *Bolshevik*); (ii) the letter criticised Stalin as "too rude," and suggested that someone else might be found for his post who had all his positive qualities without his defects: but it also spoke of the "non-Bolshevism" of Trotsky and of his tendency to oppose himself to the Central Committee—a basic political criticism. It also made searching political

criticisms of Bukharin and Pyatakov, Kamenev and Zinoviev. Incidentally, Stalin *twice* offered his resignation after the letter—in 1924 and 1925; (iii) the letter, although not intended for general publication, was intended for the Thirteenth Party Congress in 1924—the first after the death of its writer. It was communicated, not to "picked delegates," but to every single delegation separately—so that, while the whole Congress should know of it, the letter should not appear in the Congress minutes (Stalin's speech on October 23rd, 1927, published in *Pravda* on November 2nd, 1927, and containing much of the personal criticism mentioned). The delegations decided against publication. But the Fifteenth Congress, in December, 1927, decided—on the motion of the Central Committee—to publish the full text in the *Lenin Review*; (iv) when Lenin in February, 1923, wrote his criticism of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (Mr. Deutscher carefully leaves out all the positive estimates of Soviet achievements, and Lenin's positive proposals), it was not "a devastating attack on Stalin . . . reflections on its vices under Stalin's leadership . . . [a] publicly delivered blow" (pp. 251–2)—for the simple reason that Stalin had not been People's Commissar for the W.P.I. since May, 1922, when he took over the General Secretaryship of the Party. The People's Commissar was A. D. Tsuryupa, with V. Avanesov as his deputy.

There is so much else that tempts investigation in Mr. Deutscher's way of writing history—yet so little space to record the results! Suffice it to say that in his later chapters—on the years of the Five Year Plans and on Soviet foreign policy—there is ample material for at least as many exposures of his slipshod and—putting it mildly—somewhat unceremonious way of handling texts and quotations.

The one thing that is lacking is any reliable information which would answer the questions so worrying for the *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer—questions which in reality can be reduced to one: if Stalin has not led the Soviet Union into a Socialist society, why is he so universally hated by the capitalists of all countries?

VII

At this point we might usefully stop and strike a balance. On the one hand, Mr. Deutscher displays undoubted industry, very wide reading, ability to combine scraps of information, a light and readable style. On the other hand, he shows the most grotesque

prejudice against quoting texts correctly or carefully separating facts as they are from what he would like them to be. Moreover, these defects accompany (as they must) strongly marked symptoms of Trotskyism which it takes no practised political physician to detect—contempt for the Russian people, ignorance of elementary principles of Bolshevik party organisation, ill-concealed enmity to Lenin who is only forgiven because he is dead, adulation and laudation of Trotsky beyond all rhyme or reason, and above all the most implacable hatred of Stalin, who dared to be successful in continuing Lenin's policy. In short, Mr. Deutscher's book might be truthfully described as the latest, perhaps the best-written, version of the "Trotskyite Encyclopædia"—yet none the more reliable for that.

As such, it is called upon to play its part in the propaganda for a third world war—to which Mr. Deutscher may himself be discreetly alluding on his last page, when he writes of "history" having to "sternly" reshape and "cleanse" Stalin's work, *as it did Napoleon's.*

We must be fair, however, and give Mr. Deutscher credit for sincerely believing all he writes. It is prejudice, not design, that makes him see texts which are not there and present a picture of men and events wildly remote from reality. And there is one original feature of his writing which illustrates this point, and which is lacking in any of his predecessors in the field of Trotskyite "history."

This is the remarkable element of thought-reading—*clairvoyance*—which runs all through his book. When Stalin at nineteen began taking workers' study-circles, "his labours were rewarded by the satisfactory sense of his own promotion" (p. 22). But "he would not at heart give himself to sanguine hopes or idealistic generalisations about the working class" (p. 25). No, Socialism appealed to him because it "seemed to give moral sanction to his own emotion" (p. 26). Moreover, reading *Iskra* in 1901 enabled him to "get from the people on the spot some of the credit due to those who had briefed him" (p. 34). However, some of the "undercurrents" in Lenin's mind "were quite beyond the mental range of the pupil" (p. 43). When Stalin returned from exile to Tiflis in 1904, he found the process of splitting among both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks "exasperating," and "probably he refrained at first from committing himself to any group" (p. 59). Finally, however, Lenin's demand for professional revolutionaries "had a soothing effect on

his own mental and emotional tensions": for here was he, "who had no recognised standing in official society," able to "see himself as the Atlas on whose shoulders rested the future of mankind" (p. 61). At Petrograd in 1909 "he must have been given to unpleasant reflections" at the poor state of Party organisation (p. 103); and, looking for "promotion" while still in exile, he "did not neglect to make a few discreet and well-calculated moves" (p. 110). When there was the booklet on the national question to be written in 1912, "discreetly, without hurting his disciple's *amour propre*, Lenin probably suggested to him the synopsis" (p. 117). Stalin was one of those who "enjoyed Marxism as a mental labour-saving device, easy to handle and fabulously effective" (p. 118): but thanks to the booklet just referred to, he won the spurs of a theorist as well—and he "had secretly nurtured that ambition for a long time" (p. 122). In 1917, "the thing cannot be sheer fantasy if Lenin stands for it, he must have said to himself" (p. 141). "He had no attachment to and no organic tie with any tradition, not even Socialist tradition" (p. 171): but from youth had had a "yearning for distinction" and a "nagging sense of inferiority" (p. 200). When, in after years, he criticised "Moslem Communists" for nationalist tendencies, this "gave him a queer, not unpleasant sensation" (p. 241). When Lenin was ill in 1922, "he had the feeling of obscure happenings behind his back" (p. 247): yet every other member of the Politbureau "felt his own intellectual superiority to the General Secretary" (p. 248). And so on, without end. One last example: on the eve of Hitler's attack on the U.S.S.R., "the party had a guilty conscience. The army suffered from a vague sense of humiliation" (p. 460).

How, you may ask, did Mr. Deutscher discover all these interesting things? How can he read in the minds of such a vast number of beings, from Lenin and Stalin to the C.P.S.U. and the Red Army? That is his secret: it is the secret of what the publishers call "fictional biography." And you can't deny that it is a great gift—although more for the fiction writer than for the biographer.

Describing himself at work on his book, we are told on the wrapper, Mr. Deutscher compared the life-story of Stalin to an enormous palimpsest: "I do sometimes feel as if I were a medieval monk, pondering over a fascinating ancient piece of parchment in a strenuous attempt to wrest an important event from age-old oblivion." Alas, there was someone else who wrote about monks and palimpsests! After reading Mr. Deutscher's work, one is

irresistibly reminded of that immortal passage in *The Communist Manifesto* dealing with the German philosophers and "literary pundits" who seized on French Socialist ideas without deserting their own philosophic point of view:

> "It is well known how the monks wrote silly lives of Catholic saints *over* the manuscripts on which the classical works of ancient heathendom had been written. The German literary pundits reversed this process with the profane French literature. They wrote their philosophical nonsense *behind* the French original."

To manufacture palimpsests while claiming to unravel them is a rare art indeed. But why call it *political* biography?

Full Employment and Capitalism

By Maurice Dobb

It is only since the world economic crisis of the early 'thirties that full employment has been seriously talked about as an objective of policy. In the nineteenth century there had been talk in labour circles of "the right to work," and socialists had used the existence of chronic or recurrent unemployment as a leading count in the indictment of capitalism for its inhumanity and inefficiency. Meanwhile, economists of the bourgeois schools either turned a blind eye to the problem or treated it as necessary to the flexible working of an economic system that was subject to change and development. In the present century books came to be written around the theme of "the clash between progress and security"; and more recently the notion has been canvassed that unemployment is inevitable if consumers are to retain freedom of choice. What was lacking (at any rate explicitly) in all this talk was any appreciation of the character and imperatives of capitalism as a class system, and of the function performed for such a system by a surplus of labour in keeping that particular commodity cheap. And if this was so manifestly lacking in economists' talk until so recently, it is unlikely, to say the least, that the deficiency has been remedied now that the tune has been changed, and we are told that, given the appropriate policies, a stable condition of full employment is possible under capitalism.

Talk of the possibility of full employment in a capitalist world derives from the publication in 1936 of Lord Keynes' famous theory of the factors which determine the general level of employment. There is no doubting the profound jolt which this doctrine administered to traditional notions at the time when it broke upon the world. Child of the crisis of the early 'thirties, its novel and striking feature was that it presented a system of "crisis economics," whereas its predecessors (termed by Keynes "classical economics") had been nurtured in what for the bourgeoisie was the more tranquil epoch of the nineteenth century, when trade depressions could be more easily ignored as temporary aberrations or incidental growing-pains of the system. The breath of fresh air which the new doctrine seemed to introduce—a novel sense of up-to-date actuality—was largely because of the fusty atmosphere surrounding the orthodoxy which it replaced: the restrictiveness of the assumptions of the older doctrine and its remoteness from a world of chronic

excess-capacity and large-scale unemployment. To economists schooled in the old tradition the new theories seemed at first to move in an Alice-through-the-Looking-Glass world. Actually it was the theoretical model of a smoothly-equilibrating, crisis-free world of full employment that deserved the name of "through-the-Looking-Glass economics"; and once the conjuring trick had been exposed, it could never again pass off illusion for reality in quite the simple manner which had previously bewitched its audience.

That the new doctrine should have stirred up controversy and reawakened doubt in what for long had passed for accepted wisdom was natural enough. Like the old, the new was a theory of equilibrium; but its chief novelty was the postulate that equilibrium was possible at any level of employment; this level being dependent on the volume of effective demand (consumption *plus* investment). Hence the corollary which came as such a shock to minds reared in the nineteenth-century bourgeois tradition (with its animistic stress on the creativeness of thrift): that a high rate of saving was actually detrimental (instead of conducive) to a high level of national income and employment, and that investment, on the contrary to being limited by some pre-existent fund of saving, created its own saving (from the extra income it induced). It was this latter proposition which became the basis of policy-proposals whereby investment was to be financed by a simple expansion of bank-credit; the orthodox "Treasury-view" being unseated in the process. A further novelty was that the rate of interest was treated as a purely monetary phenomenon, determined by the preference for holding wealth in liquid or money form (including bank balances) instead of as securities, carrying a risk of capital loss when the market-price changed. This view replaced the traditional supply-and-demand-for-real-savings theory, and carried the implication that the rate of interest could be lowered by the monetary policy of the government and the central bank.[1] This became the *rationale* of the "cheap-money policy." Since the current rate of investment depended jointly upon the profitability of investment and the rate of interest at which money could be borrowed in the market, this doctrine implied the corollary that the road to full employment lay in stimulating investment—by monetary policy so

[1] By making more money (or bank balances) available to satisfy the desire to hold wealth in liquid form. The theory was that when individuals and institutions were as liquid as they wanted to be (at existing interest-rates), there would be a tendency to hold more securities until the market-price of the latter rose sufficiently to offset this preference for securities. A rise in security-prices is *ipso facto* a fall in interest-rates.

far as possible and where this failed by public investment by the State financed by bank-credit (the so-called "deficit spending").

Hence the emphasis of the doctrine was upon deficiency of investment and the need to repair this lack. While consumption equally with investment was a main determinant of the level of output and employment (and the need to raise consumption, e.g. by more equal income-distribution, was stressed by Left-Keynesians), the mould in which the doctrine was cast was such as to focus attention upon investment. Investment was depicted as subject to the greater[1] variation, and its variation as leading other events in the trade cycle; and it was the growing deficiency of investment in the course of progress (owing to a decline in profit-expectations) that was regarded as being responsible for the chronic stagnation of a mature capitalism—that tendency towards growing stagnation in the twentieth century which was the crux of the much-debated "stagnation thesis" associated particularly with the name of Alvin Hansen. Keynes himself said that "the theory can be summed up by saying that, given the psychology of the public, the level of output and employment as a whole depends on the amount of investment."[2]

In the immediate pre-war years this new brand of theory furnished the intellectual tools of Roosevelt's New Deal, and was hotly opposed by American "big business" and conservative circles at the time. At the end of the war it played a role in the popular campaign for a liberal policy of drastic income-redistribution, low interest-rates and State expenditure on social reconstruction; echoing the popular moods and aspirations which brought a Labour majority at the polls in 1945. But the progressive role which a doctrine and policy of full employment played in the special situation of those years should not blind us to the fact that as a practical doctrine it was always a "save-capitalism," or "make-capitalism-work," doctrine, and never pretended to be more. It was in no sense a socialist doctrine; and only by contrast with the spent and decayed ideology which it supplanted could it really pose as a fundamental critique of capitalism (despite some shrewd thrusts at stock exchanges and apostles of *laissez-faire* and its taint of pessimism with regard to the prospects for capitalism). To fail to appreciate this may make us the victims of "the seven devils" of

[1] Compared, that is, to the ratio of consumption to a *given* income.

[2] In *The New Economics* (ed. Seymour Harris), p. 191. He added: "I put it in this way, not because this is the only factor on which aggregate output depends, but because it is usual in a complex system to regard as the *causa causans* that factor which is most prone to sudden and wide fluctuation."

new illusions about the possibilities of "full employment under capitalism," in place of old illusions from which we had complacently begun to think ourselves free. What this doctrine can be said to have reflected as an ideology is certain tendencies towards salvage-measures of State capitalism in a situation of general crisis for capitalism; and, for all its novel features, it was an ideology which in essence stemmed from the tree of traditional bourgeois economic theory.

To elaborate this might seem unnecessary, were it not that as a doctrine and a policy full employment has been so largely adopted to-day as the ideology of the particular brand of State capitalism which is being passed off to the Labour movement as the true coin of "democratic socialism." Full employment, we are told, is not merely a product of special conditions following the war (with the large volume of pent-up demand and back-log of reconstruction needs), but can be a permanent feature of our society, given no more planning than some global steering of investment, a willingness to contemplate a large sector of public expenditure as a normal element in public finance, and some negative controls over the location of new factories. Except that the policy is not called socialism, similar claims are being made by the Truman Administration in the United States.

To speak first of what was claimed by the theory, before we come to practical application: Keynes' *General Theory* leaves us in no doubt that he considered that his theory offered an *alternative* to socialism and required no more planning than some planning *at the financial level.* He himself wrote that his theory was "moderately conservative in its implications." He spoke of "the socialisation of investment" as a weapon against unemployment and economic stagnation, for the reason that "it seems unlikely that the influence of banking policy on the rate of interest will be sufficient by itself to determine an optimum rate of investment." But he was quick to contrast such a measure with "socialisation of production." "This need not," he wrote, "exclude all manner of compromises and of devices by which public authorities will co-operate with private initiative." "Beyond this no obvious case is made out for a system of state socialism which would embrace most of the economic life of the community. It is not the ownership of the instruments of production which it is important for the State to assume."[1] He adds the surprising statement: "I see no reason to

[1] *General Theory*, pp. 377–8.

suppose that the existing system seriously *mis*employs the factors of production which are in use. . . . It is in determining the volume, not the direction, of actual employment that the existing system has broken down."[1] While he was prepared to be ruthless with the *rentier* who lived on interest, he was always favourably inclined towards the active *entrepreneur* or captain of industry, the recipient of profit. The famous "euthanasia of the *rentier*" *via* interest-rate reduction, which he championed, was designed to leave more profit for the ambitious *entrepreneur*: to cut out the passive deadwood of capitalism so that the live and active part of the tree might flourish more abundantly. In other words, he thought he could separate the parasitic elements of capitalism from capitalism itself in order to save the life-blood of the system from exhaustion. One hardly needs to add that when he spoke of the role of State policy, he conceived of the State as an institution which not only stands above classes, but stands also above the warring interests of particular monopoly-groups: as an impartial institution which can represent the "general interest of society as a whole" and hence steer capitalism in the social interest.

The disciples of what came to be termed "the new economics" both in this country and in U.S.A. very soon divided into a left and a right wing. The former developed the more radical implications, such as raising mass consumption and extending the sphere of nationalisation; the latter tended to limit the significance of the theory to that of an anti-slump economics and concentrated upon financial prescriptions for giving stimulants to private enterprise. During the past ten years, however, alignments have shifted a good deal, and a stage of assimilation between the old orthodoxy and the new seems to have set in. On the one hand, there have been attempts to integrate the new ideas into the *corpus* of traditional theory; on the other hand, there have been reformulations which smoothed away the sharper edges of the new and treated its more radical corollaries as special cases. In the process there has been some blurring of frontiers between the camps; although doctrinal controversy continues to rage on special points and old battles to be re-fought with enthusiasm. Previous antagonists have "made their peace" with the new doctrine on the theoretical plane, while abating nothing of their previous affection for uncontrolled private enterprise and a so-called "free price system"; and there are very few academic economists who would deny that they had trimmed

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 379.

their sails in some degree to the new wind. This has been easier for many to do, since the plea could be made in these years that, as a system of slump-economics, the doctrine had no immediate relevance to policy in the post-war world. In conditions of post-war boom (it could be argued) most of the traditional precepts about the blessings of thrift and the dangers of rising wages and of too much governmental spending returned into their own. Indeed, at least one prominent disciple of the new school has figured during the past three years as a forthright spokesman of deflationary policy (including cuts in the building programme and in social services).

An important feature of to-day's situation in the capitalist world is that the fear of slump has abated since the 1930's. Memories of the acute crisis years, with their shrinking markets and empty order-books, under-capacity working and derelict plants, have grown rather dim. In its place, business circles have the more recent preoccupation with the inconveniences, even dangers (had not a Labour Government been in power to restrain the unions), of a situation where the sack had lost a good deal of its sting as a disciplinary weapon, with the virtual disappearance of the industrial reserve army. There can be little doubt that an obsession with the dangers for capitalism of too-full employment has eclipsed in recent years any sense of the hazards of the reverse situation; and that traditional policies of restoring profit-margins by wage-cuts and economising on the burdens of government expenditure have come into their own again, both among industrialists and among the economic advisers of the government. Even in the 'thirties reluctance was being shown in U.S.A. to sponsor "full employment" as a policy-objective: the more cautious term "high employment" being preferred even by many spokesmen of "the new economics" and of the fashionable "functional finance." To-day in England a journal such as *The Economist*, which a few years back gave qualified approval to the Beveridge plan for boosting effective demand, preaches the need for a margin of unemployment, to "reintroduce flexibility into the labour market" and to "restore the force of economic incentive." Following devaluation, discussion has been focused upon the size of the cuts in government expenditure which are necessary to stave off "inflationary pressure." We see the wheel turned full circle to the position where Right-wing Labour Party economists and their more conservative brethren differ merely as to whether half a million or a million and a half unemployed will suffice to restore the capitalist mode of production to

an even keel. These are the realities of the situation of which theory and its corollaries must take account.

It commonly happens that schools of thought and movements in a class society fulfil an objective role which is different from (sometimes contrary to) their subjective design. This, indeed, can be said to be the element of illusion in all ideology in class society—that the aims it serves are not the aims and ideals with which it beguiles men's minds. The well-known references (in the *General Theory*) to pyramid-building and digging holes in the ground as means of raising the level of employment could always have been treated as an oblique apology for armament expenditure: as no longer a wasteful expense to be kept to a minimum, but as fulfilling a constructive function in the shape of a buoyancy-factor for industrial activity. At any rate, the fact remains that the ideas inherited from the days of New Deal economics have become an apology for the large armament expenditures in U.S.A. which are to-day maintaining both the activity of American heavy industry and the current American war-psychosis. Of this there had been already a foretaste before the war, when spokesmen of German Fascism adopted some of the new ideas about employment-policy to defend both German war-expenditure and the gamut of Schachtian policies.

It has been frequently suggested, indeed, that armament-building is the only form of anti-slump expenditure that is at the same time adequate in scale for the purpose and stands any chance of being acceptable to capitalism. The experience of these years seems likely to show this to be true. Investment in armaments is highly profitable to various industries (e.g. to heavy industry, for which it opens a market) as well as for the firms directly involved, while, unlike ordinary investment, it does not affect adversely (by competing with them) the values of existing capital assets. Experience has shown it to be an insatiable appetite, once acquired, feeding upon the war-scare which it cumulatively generates. To-day, with America's greatly enhanced productive powers, a new crisis, once it had gathered momentum, might well eclipse that of 1929–31 in its magnitude and in its repercussions on the rest of the (now shrunken) capitalist world. And the momentum of decline may well come rapidly if American business (as seems very likely) takes advantage of the reappearance of an industrial reserve army to "settle accounts with labour," to cut wages and to call for economies in government finance. The sponsors of full employment policies anticipate that in such a situation their nostrums would be

recognised as the only hope of salvation for capitalism, and that they would come into their own again. It seems probable that if State expenditure-schemes were mooted to halt the downward-spiral of a slump, it would be stock-piling of strategic reserves and the construction of atom-bomb piles and atom-bombers that would find favour.

But the utopian character of full employment under capitalism does not derive only from its political non-acceptability both as a means and as an end—unless within the framework of a policy of rearmament and war. It derives also from the diagnosis on which as a policy it is based. We have seen that it conveniently ignores the contradictions which lie within the class structure of society, and focuses attention upon measures which operate within the sphere of financial relationships and relationships of exchange. In this connection, it is a weakness, and not strength, in the new theories of employment that they operate in terms of *aggregates*—investment, consumption, income, etc., as totals. The inadequacy of this procedure is apt to pass unnoticed at the theoretical level, and only to obtrude when one comes to the detailed operation of policies which rest upon the theoretical analysis. As soon as one examines actual situations, it becomes evident that under conditions of capitalism a position of full employment (or any position in the neighbourhood of it) is a highly unstable one: unstable in the sense that a small pressure in either direction is likely to give rise to a rapid cumulative movement, uphill (into inflationary conditions and subsequent collapse) or downhill into falling production and falling demand. If this is the case, stabilisation policies framed in terms of aggregates (e.g. certain investment totals) will be too general and unselective to smother the *de*stabilising tendencies at (or even near) their source. They will be too clumsy as steering instruments, and their effects too little calculable, for lack of any detailed "feel" of the situation which they are intended to control. And be it noted that steering measures which operate purely at the financial level imply (because of their indirectness and remoteness) dealing in terms of aggregates, as well as the converse.

An example which may serve to illustrate this has been pointed out by Kaldor. It may happen that there is a large amount of excess capacity in industries producing capital goods and relatively little in consumer goods industries (or *vice versa*). Unless the increase in demand is distributed between capital goods and consumer goods in the appropriate proportions, expansion may lead

to full-capacity output in one department of industry and consequential price-rises, while there still remains a substantial unemployment problem in the other department of industry. Moreover, even if full employment has been attained in both departments, any shift of expenditure between investment and consumption may upset the position and start a tendency to decline in one of the two departments, which may later communicate itself to the other. "Full employment, therefore, not only means a certain level of real income; it also implies a real income of a certain composition . . . (it) presupposes a division of real income between real consumption and real investment in a certain proportion."[1] If one breaks down industry into smaller segments, the same thing may apply at this level: unless there is some correspondence between the distribution of excess productive capacity and the distribution of the additional demand, expansion is likely to be arrested, and may relapse, because of the appearance of "bottlenecks" at certain key points, long before substantial inroads have been made into excess capacity and unemployment elsewhere. If the policy were being canvassed as no more than an anti-slump measure, to be switched on when a crisis had already gathered momentum, such considerations would not have much relevance. (On the other hand, once a slump has got under way, it will be much harder, if not impossible, for financial measures to arrest its downward spiral and to put the process into reverse.) But for a policy which claims to forestall crises these are serious difficulties. In other words, without a much more comprehensive and particularised control and planning, embracing production itself and co-ordinating financial expenditures in detail with conditions of production, stable-employment policies are likely to prove unable to ride their steeds.

Connected with and enhancing this difficulty is the danger of monopolistic organisations and monopolistic practices thwarting expansionist policies by responding to increased demand with price-raising and enhanced profit-margins, instead of with expanded output. Moreover, the investment-policy of firms, especially in monopolistic sectors of industry, may well prove stubborn against all attempts to influence it in a particular direction. So long as industry remains in private hands, the bulk of investment expenditure will be controlled by individual firms, acting on the basis of profit-expectations; and State expenditure will be confined to the periphery of the economic system, where it may be too weak

[1] N. Kaldor in *Economic Journal*, December, 1938, p. 644.

or too removed from the main spheres of activity to counter those strong deflationary tides which periodically arise from the depths of capitalist production. It was Sir William Beveridge who pointed out, with reference to the White Paper of the war-time coalition government on Employment Policy, that a public works policy, turned on or off like a tap when the state of trade required it, was impracticable as a stabiliser as well as undesirable in principle. He himself based his hopes on a sphere of social expenditure intermediate between public works of the traditional type and ordinary industrial investment—precisely the kind of expenditure which business circles (here and still more in America) regard with suspicion as wasteful and unproductive, and which is to-day being subjected to an economy-axe in the interest of "restoring Britain's competitive position in world markets." But even he was forced to admit that this might not suffice without direct control over industrial investment itself.

Meanwhile the tendency of post-Keynesian writing on the subject has been to play down the role of the rate of interest as a factor governing industrial investment. This defeatist view was already foreshadowed in the *General Theory*, where it was emphasised that, not only might there be limits in a capitalist society below which interest-rates could not be forced down, but in an acute crisis investment might fail altogether to respond to the stimulus of low interest-rates—unless interest-rates were actually *negative*. Such empirical evidence as is available indicates that changes in interest-rates (at least within what may be termed the "practicable range") exert very little influence at all on the level of industrial activity.[1] If this be the case, there is no lever by which the investment policy of private capitalist industry can be influenced by financial policy;[2] and while high or low interest-rates may be of vital importance in determining the size of government expenditure on the service of the national debt and the size of *rentier*-incomes, they can claim no place in any causal theory of economic crises. One seems to be left with deficit-financed armament expenditure as the only item on the capitalist agenda for combating a slump.

Even if it were possible to maintain industrial investment at a boom level by various buoyancy-devices, there would be no sure

[1] With the possible exception of building in normal times, and even the importance of this effect has been questioned.

[2] Investment controls through an Investment Board have often been spoken of in this connection. But these are essentially negative—instruments for restraining investment but not for expanding it.

ground for supposing that the crisis-tendencies inherent in capitalist economy (due to the conflict between enhanced productive power and profitability) were any more than postponed; since the very investment activity would be augmenting productive capacity and thereby undermining the profitability of existing capital equipment. This conclusion seems inescapable so long as production and investment remain in capitalist hands and are controlled by the profit-motive. To quote Kaldor again: "As investment activity continues at a high level, excess capacity of equipment is bound to make its appearance. Once redundant capacity appears, it will be almost impossible to maintain activity undiminished, unless State investment activity is extended so wide as to replace private investment." He proceeds to liken a boom to "a peculiar steeplechase, where the horse is bound to fall at one of four obstacles"; adding that "it is probably a rare horse which survives until the last hurdle."[1]

To depict capitalism as though it were a "system of social production" (as Marx termed it), motivated by social purposes instead of by class ends, has always been an essential part of the illusionist function of bourgeois ideology. So it is no less to-day with the ideology of the "third force," which depicts itself as suspended in history between the epoch of capitalism and the epoch of socialism and impartially mixing ingredients from both worlds. If capitalism could be made to operate as though it were socialism, then of course we could have full employment as a stable and permanent condition of things, and much else besides. One can recall the statement of Stalin in a speech during the crisis of the early 'thirties: "If capitalism could adapt production, not to the acquisition of maximum profits, but to the systematic improvement of the material conditions of the mass of the people . . . there would be no crisis. But then, also, capitalism would not be capitalism. To abolish crises, capitalism must be abolished." Once economic theory is allowed to employ the *deus ex machina* of an impartial, classless State, actuated by social purposes and ironing out the conflicts of actual economic society, all manner of attractive miracles can be demonstrated, even without the aid of algebra. One might dismiss such attempts as harmless pastimes, were it not that ideas play a role in history, and can not only disseminate the opium of false hopes, but in the cold war of to-day weave dangerous illusions about the grim realities of present-day capitalism.

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 653, 657.

Against the Reactionary Ideas in the Work of Dostoievsky[1]

By V. V. Yermilov

REACTIONARY bourgeois writers are to-day mobilising all their forces in order to abuse and defile everything human, in order to demonstrate the insignificance, the feebleness, the contemptible character of human nature.

Take any contemporary fashionable writer of a reactionary tendency, such as the American, Henry Miller, or the Frenchman, Sartre, and you will see for yourself that all these people, however different may be the form of their slanders, are alike in their efforts to plant in men's minds the same idea, that man is a feeble, repulsive animal and really deserves nothing better than annihilation.

In the world to-day the progressive and reactionary tendencies in literature are divided in a stubborn, relentless struggle over human values. What part is played in this present struggle by the works of Dostoievsky? On which side do we find Dostoievsky to-day? Our critics are bound to give a clear, unequivocal answer to this question.

I

We see Dostoievsky heading reactionary tendencies to-day, just as he did in his lifetime. On every side wide use is being made of his work in the violent attacks upon the human race. And this is quite understandable, because Dostoievsky devoted all his gifts to demonstrating the feebleness, the sinfulness, the criminality of human nature.

Gorky wrote of Dostoievsky that "he feels himself to be in some sense the spokesman of certain obscure forces which are hostile to man, he continually points out the destruction caused by man's efforts to seek complete personal freedom by demanding the recognition of his right to take advantage of everything, to enjoy everything, without subordinating his own person to anything." Gorky remarked "as one reads Dostoievsky, one is aware of the

[1] A Public Lecture delivered in Moscow before the All-Union Society for the Propagation of Political and Scientific Knowledge. Translated from the Russian by Peter Tempest and slightly abridged.

overpowering fear lurking in the dark recesses of his own soul."

Dostoievsky proclaimed certain "absolute laws" of human nature, and above all the "law" of the eternal attraction of man towards cruelty and meanness, an attraction which in Dostoievsky's opinion, lives within a man side by side with a yearning for goodness and beauty.

One of Dostoievsky's favourite characters was Mitenka Karamazov. Judged from the point of view of his creator, this character is a typical representative of the "mass" of human kind, a man exposed to all, even the most repulsive temptations. Voicing the thoughts of the author himself, Mitenka Karamazov propounds the following view of human nature: "Though I be accursed, though I be a wretch and a villain, though I kiss the border of the vestment wherein my God is clothed even at the same time that I follow the Devil, yet am I nevertheleless Thy son, O Lord, and I love Thee, and I feel the joy without which a man cannot stand up and live." Grushenka, who falls in love with Mitya, agrees with Mitya's opinion of himself: "I know that even though you are a wild beast, yet you are honourable."

According to Dostoievsky, man is too feeble to offer any opposition to this attraction towards evil and vice. Mitenka Karamazov says about himself: "I loved corruption. I loved also the shame of corruption. Am I not a louse, an evil insect?"

It is worth remarking upon a turn of phrase which is typical of Dostoievsky's characters. Mitenka does not say that he is cruel. He says that he *loves* cruelty. He takes pleasure in degrading a young girl just because she is proud and beautiful.

What normal human being can find pleasure in the thought of degrading and outraging another human being, of committing an outrage simply from the love of inflicting pain? Yet, according to Dostoievsky, the impulse towards such "pleasure" is an absolute law of human nature. Dobrolyubov called Alyosha, the character in *The Insulted and Injured* and a pure lamb by comparison with Mitenka, "an evil-smelling black beetle." What would he not have called Mitya Karamazov? It is true that even Mitya is unsparing in his criticism of himself, and in fact calls himself "an evil insect." But this does not prevent him considering himself to be an honest man: "Though a villain, yet am I honest." And here is the whole essence of the matter. We are all like this—that is what Dostoievsky means.

Every man ought to have a main guiding principle. Dostoievsky's

characters have no such guiding principle. Both Dostoievsky and his characters are frightened and fascinated by the simultaneous manifestation of these two "equal" principles: "Good" and "Evil," beauty and ugliness. The very same Mitya Karamazov remarks, "What the intellect conceives as infamy, the heart conceives as sheer beauty." At the trial of Mitya Karamazov, the public prosecutor observes: "Remember the two abysses, gentlemen of the jury, remember that Karamazov can view two abysses, and both at the same time!"

Mitya Karamazov wraps up his deliberations about human nature in exultant, ecstatic language. But everything which he says in his "confession" is basically a calumny against the human race. Mitya Karamazov declares that the dual personality, peculiar to himself, is a permanent characteristic of the human soul. Moreover, he considers that the urge towards "Sodom"—that is, towards sin, anarchy, evil and vice, is shared by "the vast majority of people." "Man overreaches himself, he must be constrained"—subdued and bridled. According to Dostoievsky, inside every man there dwells an evil insect, possessed of the desire to insult and besmirch others, and consequently, if man is left to his own devices, given "freedom of action," he will "insult" and cover with wounds—literally and spiritually—both himself and everyone in his power. And this is what Mitya in fact does. Dostoievsky tries hard to persuade the reader that all men are thus essentially anarchic and destructive.

Linked with this we find a distrust of human reason. Dostoievsky would have us believe that if one gives freedom of action to human reason, and abandons belief in God, it will inevitably bear out the truth of Karamazov's dictum "all is permitted!"—that so-called principle upon which the obscurantist Nietzsche, the direct precursor of fascism, subsequently constructed his theory of the "superman." The supreme authority of religion must be recognised, says Dostoievsky. Dostoievsky considered it impossible for men to live without "fear of God," without the ties of religion. Men are irresistibly drawn towards crime and violence. "There is nothing one can do about it, such is man!"—says, or, rather, shrieks, Dostoievsky through all the types depicted in his novels. And for that reason men must be constrained by religion, disciplined by suffering, reduced to submissiveness and driven to make atonement. Only through suffering can men be "cleansed." Here indeed is Dostoievsky's main point, and he devoted all the more important of his works to proving it.

Wretched and feeble is man without a bridle!—this was what Dostoievsky tried to show. Moreover, the "bridle," as he understood it, was of both a religious and a political character, because in order to "curb" men there must exist both the Church together with the "Tsar-Father" and the whole apparatus of autocratic coercion by the police. It was not for nothing that Dostoievsky became the personal friend of Pobiedonostsev—one of the most villainous representatives of obscurantism and reaction, a cynical bigot, a cruel and merciless "repressor" and hangman, a deadly foe of Russian culture and freedom.

In his *Conversations about My Craft*, Gorky describes his early years as a writer: "I considered that a passive role was unworthy of literature. I knew very well that 'if men's faces look crooked, they blame the mirror'; and I was already divining the truth that 'faces are crooked' not because they wish to be so, but because there is operating in the world a certain force which disfigures everything and everybody, and that it is this force which one must 'reflect,' and not what is distorted by it."

But Dostoievsky explained these facts not as the consequence of an ugly social reality, but as a constant feature of unchangeable human nature, independent of social conditions. Linked with this there was in his work a metaphysical approach, a method of subjective psychology, which broke away from the traditions of realism and prepared the ground for the decadent period which followed, a period which held high as a "banner" the name of Dostoievsky.

Dostoievsky is often called the poet of the "insulted and injured." Yes, he did sympathise with and "share the sufferings" of unimportant folk, the sufferings of mankind. But by calling upon men to be peaceable and submissive, he did in fact betray the people who were "insulted and injured." In his writings he constantly misrepresented characteristic features of the Russian people. He attributed to them and tried to foist upon them the ideal of humility and submission as being the only means whereby men might be "cleansed." He represented the great Russian people with their strivings towards freedom, the people whom nobody had ever brought to their knees, in the guise of a lamb, led meekly to the slaughter. This was a clear break with the best traditions of Russia, with the traditions of freedom-loving Russian literature and social thought.

In Dostoievsky's work a "humanitarian" sympathy with the

sufferings of men is interwoven with the idealisation of suffering. Very typical of this point of view is the dream of Mitenka Karamazov, in which he hears the weeping of children, sees destitute villages, sorrowing peasant-women, and he is sad because "the children" in the world are abused. Mitya feels a passionate urge to do something immediately "with all the zest of a Karamazov" so that "the children" in the world should never again weep. On the face of it, you might detect here the theme of revolt in Dostoievsky. But alas, Dostoievsky often uses this technique. He allows the theme of revolt, of revolution, to which he is hostile, to ring out strongly only in order to stifle it thereafter, to overturn it, to "demonstrate" its incorrectness and "harmfulness." Mitya's sadness at the fact that "the children" in this world are abused, leads him to the central motive in all Dostoievsky's characters—that it is necessary to humble oneself, to "be crucified" with the world, to suffer for the "children" of the universe, to lose oneself in the sufferings of all mankind. This false and unseemly notion was in fact a trite, sanctimonious and inane perversion of Christian morality—it justified and sanctioned the whole mode of life in which "the children" are tormented. The central idea of the whole of *The Brothers Karamazov* really consists in this, that everyone is guilty before everybody else, and all before each, because an eternal, primogenital sin weighs down upon the whole of mankind. Consequently, everybody ought continually to repent before one another, ought to "share suffering," and bless suffering as the supreme ethical ideal of "righteous living," as the ideal which "cleanses man from every kind of abomination and temptation." It matters not whether Mitya Karamazov did or did not kill his father Fedor Pavlovich. He *could* have killed him, since according to Dostoievsky every man is capable of crime. If that is so, then Mitya Karamazov is guilty. Though the court may be mistaken in its charge of murder, though the worldly judge may condemn an innocent man, yet the "divine judgment" is a just one, and Mitya welcomes prison with joy. He gladly agrees to "suffer" in order to atone ever so little the guilt he shares for the "children" who are abused, and for all human suffering. Posing the problem of suffering in this way, leaving aside the question of responsibility for social injustice, giving a free hand to those who insult and injure—this meant the betrayal of those who are insulted and injured.

II

This mistrust of man, of his free intelligence and will-power, was linked with preaching about the necessity of religious and political restraints.

Our Russian critics of the revolutionary-democratic school, with remarkably keen insight, perceived the pathological peculiarities of Dostoievsky's work, his departure from the traditions of the "realist," or, as they said in the time of Belinsky and Chernishevsky, the "naturalistic" school of Russian literature. Belinsky sensed this departure from realism at an early date, in the story *The Double*, which appeared immediately after *Poor Folk* and expressed the young writer's deep mistrust of man. Dobrolyubov noticed it in the novel *The Insulted and Injured.*

Dobrolyubov saw the essence of this novel to lie not so much in its humane feeling, not so much in Dostoievsky's undoubted sympathy for the bottom dog, as in the portrayal of a new type of villain. Dobrolyubov saw the really central figure of the novel to be the character, Prince Valkovsky, from whom later were developed Dostoievsky's more complex villains. Dobrolyubov wrote that "*the foundation of the novel, its core, is precisely the portrayal of the character of this prince*. But, if you look closely at the portrayal of this character, you will find *absolute indecency depicted with love*, a collection of villainous and cynical features. . . . Because of this, you can neither feel compassion for this person, *nor can you hate him with that supreme hatred which is directed no longer against the particular person, but against the type*. . . . What made the prince the man he is, and how? . . . If he has quite lost his soul, then in what manner, and by what means did this interesting process take place? . . . We know how Chichikov and Pliushkin, for example, came to their present state, and we even know to a certain extent how Ilya Ilyich Oblomov became a sluggard. . . . But Mr. Dostoievsky has completely ignored this requirement." (My emphasis.—V. Yermilov.)

Thus Dobrolyubov points out that Dostoievsky completely ignored the basic demand of realism, that explanation of characters and phenomena in terms of society, which is a feature of the work of Gogol, Goncharov, and other realist writers. Because of this Dostoievsky did not give us a portrayal of social evil that was realistic, and had general significance. Putting forward as the prime source of every kind of sin and evil the "human soul,"

eternal, independent of any actual social conditions or of any "forces operating in the world," Dostoievsky was unable, indeed had no desire to arouse in the reader in his attitude to Prince Valkovsky that supreme hatred which is directed against a whole class, against oppressors, against those who humiliate and outrage, against the actual causes of evil in society.

Another wise remark of Dobrolyubov is also very important for an understanding of Dostoievsky; his remark that Dostoievsky depicts absolute indecency with love—in other words, that he himself really loves evil. If the attraction towards evil is a general characteristic of people, why is it necessary to arouse a particular hatred of Prince Valkovsky? Dostoievsky is obliging to all the rogues, to all the offenders whom he describes in his works; in his opinion they are all the victims of the urge towards evil which is inherent in every man. The reactionary critic, N. Strakhov, noticed with pleasure this feature of his work, and reckoned that Dostoievsky's special service lay precisely in the fact that he "did not class as un-human" any of his characters, including the torturers, the criminals and the arch scoundrels. Hence the great affection with which Dostoievsky portrays parasites and scoundrels like Svidrigailov.

In his acute and penetrating review of *The Insulted and Injured* Dobrolyubov gave forewarning of the vicious elements in Dostoievsky's work, which later developed with particular force in *Sketches from the Underworld* and the works which followed. The figure of Prince Valkovsky became more complex: Valkovsky became Stavrogin, Svidrigailov and Versilov. And these sadists, seducers, agent-provocateurs of the spirit were, like Valkovsky, depicted by Dostoievsky with unconcealed and especial love. As he wrote in his notes, Dostoievsky tried to make these types "both revolting and fascinating" to the reader. According to Dostoievsky every tortured man is capable of becoming a torturer, and similarly every torturer may become a tortured man who atones for all his sins through suffering. Consequently, there is a certain "fascination" in the torturer also.

III

Routine literary critics, nurtured on a diet of liberal phrases and woolly "humanism," love to linger over every expression of suffering, abasement, outrage and torture which awaken in them the

rosy glow of "pity and love" for the people. But not every portrayal of sickness and hardship is humanist; indeed it can even be anti-humanist if it idealises and makes poetry out of suffering, or if it suggests that torture is attractive, or, finally, if it makes use of themes of horror, sickness and oppression in order to intimidate the people, in order to preach submissiveness by affirming the view that man is sinful and petty. In his own work Maxim Gorky exposed two kinds of "preacher": the "comforting" deceivers such as Luka, and Christ-crazy "realists," making capital out of ulcers, hardships and children's tears in order to instil fear into the people, to paralyse their will and reason, to make them terrified of the dark "secrets" of the human soul.

Yet in spite of the well-known statements on Dostoievsky made by Belinsky, Dobrolyubov, Saltykov-Schedrin and Gorky, certain Soviet students of literature still continue in liberal fashion to praise the "humanism" of Dostoievsky, and his "faith in man." They try to prove that Dostoievsky was a realist artist like Pushkin, Gogol and Tolstoi, that he gave the "social determinants" of the experiences, the behaviour and the personal character of his heroes. Moreover, they even want us to believe that Dostoievsky to the end of his days remained a "socialist," and dreamed of the realisation of socialist ideals on earth. Such is the conclusion reached by combining the notions which underlie three works that were published at the end of 1947—Professor V. Kirpotin's *F. M. Dostoievsky* and *The Young Dostoievsky*, and A. Dolinin's *Dostoievsky at Work*. [Literally, *In the Creative Laboratory of Dostoievsky* P. T.] In order to realise to what extent certain Soviet students of literature who idealise Dostoievsky have retreated from the position of the revolutionary democratic critics, it is sufficient merely to set Dobrolyubov's remarks about *The Insulted and Injured*, which I have quoted, alongside V. Kirpotin's opinion of the same novel: "The scenes of cruelty, crudity and vice, which Dostoievsky came across during his exile, forced him to study more closely the nature of man, but they did not shake his trust in it. Bestiality was not the essential feature, but a distortion of human nature. Dostoievsky's humanism, nurtured and strengthened in the intellectual atmosphere of the 'forties, survived the trials of exile. . . . The novel *The Insulted and Injured* is remarkable for its pronounced anti-capitalist temper. In this novel evil is personified in the character of Prince Valkovsky, but the demon which has Valkovsky in its power and pushes him to cruelty and crime—is money. . . . The pages of this

novel breathe an awareness of moral responsibility for the social anarchy in the world. . . . Dostoievsky stirred up pity, but anger arose in reply. *The Insulted and Injured* was a work born of the muse of grief, but it aroused the 'muse of grief and revenge.' . . ."

We see the striking contradiction in these two points of view. Dobrolyubov says that in this novel there is nothing of general social significance, nothing of the social causes of evil, but that there is admiration of evil, a relish of indecency. Kirpotin, however, states that Dostoievsky gives a clear explanation in social terms of the evil, personified by the character of Valkovsky. Dobrolyubov points out that the novel does not arouse that supreme hatred of evil which is the product of a social jungle; yet Kirpotin assures us that evil, as portrayed in this novel, calls forth anger against "social anarchy." Dobrolyubov comments upon Dostoievsky's "completely ignoring" the main principle of realism —the explanation of phenomena in social terms; yet Kirpotin declares that "Dostoievsky remained a realist to the end of his life."

Such an idealisation of Dostoievsky has nothing in common with the scientific, Marxist-Leninist study of the work of a writer.

IV

In the works of Dostoievsky the strong and weak features developed in such close inter-relation and were so interwoven that any attempt to separate these features of his work necessarily calls for the most painstaking and scrupulous scientific analysis.

There is no doubt that Dostoievsky voiced the fear felt by the patriarchal and out-moded middle-class in the face of the irresistible advance of capitalism in Russia, with its new and frankly predatory law of life. Patriarchal Russia was torn asunder. The men, in whose name Dostoievsky was speaking, seemed to be entirely left to their own devices in the new, incomprehensible and terrifying world of reality. The minor official, the impoverished landowner, cast into the whirlpool of capitalism and experiencing all the hardships of being declassed, the new type of intellectual remote from the life of the people and from their ideals—such men, who are the characters in Dostoievsky's novels, were bent low beneath a two-fold burden, oppressed both by the system of serfdom and the completely arbitrary government of "the authorities" and also by the new social relationships of capitalism. The jungle character of the

new laws of life was revealed to them; but the triumph of democracy, the role and importance of the working class, the relatively progressive nature of capitalist development, that is to say, everything which, albeit confusedly and inconsistently, found expression in the future perspectives glimpsed by the more perspicacious representatives of the revolutionary-democratic grouping—all this terrified Dostoievsky's heroes and Dostoievsky himself.

"The ulcerous formation of the proletariat" appeared to Dostoievsky to be as terrible as capitalism itself. The "formation of the proletariat" was connected with ruin, with the destruction of patriarchal morality, of the "righteous way of life," of time-honoured principles. In other words, the "formation of the proletariat" was associated with all that which in the mind of Dostoievsky and of his heroes was connected with capitalism itself and with the bourgeois class. By a curious paradox, a perverted logic, Dostoievsky's hatred of the bourgeois class was inseparably bound up with his fear of the Fourth Estate, with his hatred of the revolutionary spirit of the working class. His extreme "anti-capitalist temper" gained strength, but that strength was the product of precisely this alarm at the approach of working-class revolution. Observing the life of Western Europe, Dostoievsky understood very well that capitalism is pregnant with the working-class revolution. While reflecting in this way in a distorted fashion actual historical processes and contradictions, actual horrors of capitalist life, Dostoievsky nevertheless manages at the same time to slander all the leading revolutionary elements of that life, all that constituted the significant content of that epoch, and contained within itself the present and the future of humanity.

Whereas Belinsky had divined the relatively progressive nature of capitalist development, Dostoievsky on the other hand fell far short of this understanding by his horror of social disturbances and of the upheavals characteristic of class struggles. Dostoievsky turned to the reactionary solution of constructing Utopias in an anti-capitalist spirit. He became a passionate supporter of a thoroughly timorous, and "hare-like," as Saltykov-Schedrin called it, mode of life. Trying to reverse the course of history, he became a fiery supporter of the three-fold formula—"Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationalism." Idealising all that was stagnant and out-moded in the life of the country, Dostoievsky extolled the reactionary superstitions of the peasantry, their trust in the Tsar and in dear God. From this sprang his preaching of a return to the "soil," his

spasmodic trust in the notion that Russia "will save the world" from working-class revolution, after rejecting the capitalist way forward.

V

Dostoievsky's characters painfully "select" one of two possibilities: either to be the hangman or the victim. Either to have the power of a despot over others, to be a "Napoleon" or a "Rothschild" (Raskolnikov, the Raw Youth), or to submit quietly to the power of the "Napoleons" and the "Rothschilds," kissing the hand that insults and abuses them (the teaching of Alyosha Karamazov, Prince Myshkin and of several "elders" of the Church). Hangman or victim, slavemaster or slave—Dostoievsky's characters know of no third choice, since they have abandoned the fight against the accursed laws of the capitalist world. In this setting of the problem we cannot fail to see an obvious reflection of the conditions of real life. This comes out clearly in the thoughts Dostoievsky expresses in his sketches, *Winter Notes of Summer Impressions*, where he criticises bourgeois "freedom": "What is *liberté*? Freedom. What sort of freedom? The equal freedom for all to do all that the law permits. When can you do all that you like? When you have a million francs. Does freedom give a million francs to everyone? No. Then what is he who has not got a million? A man without a million is not the one who does all he likes, but the one to whom it is done."

Raskolnikov—the hero of the most significant of all the works of Dostoievsky—wished to become a man who does "all that he likes." He anticipated the philosophy and ethics of Nietzsche. The most important point of the "theory" of Raskolnikov was the idea that "all people . . . are divided into the 'ordinary' and the 'extraordinary.' The 'ordinary' should live in subservience and have no right to break the law since they, can't you see, are only 'ordinary.' But the 'extraordinary' have the right to commit all manner of crimes and to break the law in every way, precisely because they are 'extraordinary.' " That is how the court prosecutor, Porfiri, states Raskolnikov's "idea," and the latter, affirming that the prosecutor's statement of his idea is "absolutely correct," makes the point even more explicitly. "It consists in the fact that by a natural law people are roughly divided into two categories: into the lowest type, material which serves solely for the procreation of more beings like themselves on the one hand, and into what are properly speaking real men on the other." The "experiment"

which Raskolnikov performs, aims to give an answer to the question: in which category am I? The murder of the old woman moneylender should give Raskolnikov the answer to this question: can he, Raskolnikov, "break a principle"? Is he a "superman," able to transgress in any way without feeling any twinge of conscience? Is he made of that same stuff of which real "masters," "Napoleons" are made?

Without doubt all this reflects the actual life of society. Bourgeois society by its very nature gives rise to "ideas" like those of Raskolnikov, and produces apostates like Raskolnikov. But in Dostoievsky's work every kind of reality appeared in crude distortions, interwoven with falsehood. Depicting bourgeois apostates in characters such as Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov, Dostoievsky tried—in fact, against the "evidence of history, and against the evidence of the life of his day," against the facts and common sense—to present these would-be "Napoleons" and bourgeois "supermen" in the guise of revolutionaries, atheists and "Nihilists." Specialising in the most abject slander of the revolutionaries, Dostoievsky strove to depict the members of revolutionary groups as Raskolnikovs, Ivan Karamazovs and other men "possessed of devils."

Bourgeois rapacity, licence and cruelty not only horrified, but also irresistibly attracted Dostoievsky and his heroes. Hence his relish for transgression, his relish for every kind of spiritual corruption, of the most repulsive filth, treachery and provocation. The notion of "supermen" to whom "all is permitted" attracted Dostoievsky just as it attracted his characters, with their instability, their lack of moral standards. These moral standards finally come crashing down, as Dostoievsky portrays, in the devastated souls of this group who are remote from the people, the climax of the break-up of the old order, of the patriarchal way of life. The fascination of Raskolnikov's "idea," the allurement of crime are attractively set forth in the novel, but Dostoievsky has nothing to offer as a counter to them.

VI

Dostoievsky, who began his career as a writer by being drawn towards Utopian socialism, and by taking part in the revolutionary circle round Petrashevsky, later turned into the most active intellectual leader of the reactionary forces.

"The revolution of 1848 brings the death blow to all . . . the

bustling, variegated and vociferous forms of pre-Marxist socialism. The revolution in all countries shows the different classes of society *in action*. The shooting down of the workers by the republican bourgeoisie in the June days of 1848 in Paris finally establishes the socialist character of the working class *alone*" (Lenin, XVI, p. 331). The watershed of 1848 also brought the death-blow to Dostoievsky's attraction towards one of the forms of pre-Marxist socialism. The revolutionary spirit of the working class scared him. Autocracy showed itself to be immovable. Prison finally dispelled his shaky, sentimental trust in man, as reflected in his first youthful work, *Poor Folk*. All this prepared for the transition to the side of reaction. The manifesto, the formulation of this walk-over, was the novel, *Sketches from the Underworld*, a book permeated with a fierce hatred of everything progressive and forward-looking.

Meanwhile certain critics idealise Dostoievsky and wish to persuade us that during the whole of his life he in effect sympathised with socialism and even sympathised with the approaching working-class revolution.

We know that Dostoievsky was preparing a special "mission" for Russia—salvation from working-class revolution, and from the horrors of capitalism by means of "the unity of Tsar and people." Dostoievsky voiced this thought also in his speech in honour of Pushkin, when he turned to the revolutionary intelligentsia with the summons: "Humble thyself, proud man!" Kirpotin goes so far as to state that Dostoievsky's "prophecy" about the "mission of the Russian nation to guide the universe" has a revolutionary character. Kirpotin writes: "In the light of the historical experiences through which we have lived, we must surely recognise that the rational content of Dostoievsky's 'prophecy' harks back to the prophecy of Belinsky, and is a clouded premonition of the fact that the centre of gravity of the struggle for socialism shifted to our homeland. It seems to be a dim sensing of the fact that Russia will lead other peoples along the road towards social and national brotherhood."

To identify Belinsky's proud dream of a revolutionary, democratic and socialist Russia standing at the head of all mankind, with Dostoievsky's reactionary Utopian hopes that Russia "will save the world" not only from capitalism, but also from the revolution and socialism—that is such a degradation of Belinsky and such an exaltation, such an idealisation of Dostoievsky, that even the most thick-headed liberal critics have not accepted it.

Throughout the whole of his book, *The Young Dostoievsky*, Professor Kirpotin tries to prove the almost complete similarity of Belinsky's and Dostoievsky's views right up to the end of the 'forties. He does not attach serious importance to the bitter disillusionment which *The Double* provoked in Belinsky, whereas the one fact of that disillusionment overthrows Kirpotin's theory that Belinsky and Dostoievsky were in agreement during the 1840's. By making reservations, amending here and attenuating there, Kirpotin, nevertheless, is forced to admit that Dostoievsky's *The Double* expresses the "shakiness" of his attitude to man. But this admission goes only half way to the truth: *The Double* was without doubt the expression of Dostoievsky's mistrust of man. In his study, Kirpotin abruptly marks off the young Dostoievsky from the Dostoievsky of the second and third periods. But, on the contrary, the roots of Dostoievsky's desertion to the side of reaction exist already in embryo in *The Double* and in *The Hostess* and in *Netochka Nezvanova*.

VII

A. Dolinin's book, *Dostoievsky at Work*, is a straight apologia. Hiding behind reservations about Dostoievsky's hostile attitude to the revolution, Dolinin in effect develops, with rather more refinement than in his earlier works, the legend of Dostoievsky the revolutionary and socialist. In his latest book, Dolinin refers directly to his former works, for example, to his introductory article to the compilation, *F. M. Dostoievsky, Materials and Studies*. It was in this preface that Dolinin applied to Dostoievsky Lenin's judgment of Leo Tolstoi, and declared that Dostoievsky, being the intellectual leader of the petty bourgeoisie, was more revolutionary than Tolstoi. In his new book Dolinin depicts Dostoievsky as a "supporter of the Paris Commune." Without any foundation for the statement, Dolinin declares that Dostoievsky "was deeply grieved" by the fact that the attempt to construct "crystal palaces on earth" at the cost of such great sacrifice had failed. And at this point, in tragi-comic contradiction with his own statement, Dolinin adduces some notes made by Dostoievsky—a projected work which was never realised: "Fantastic poem-novel. Future society, rising in Paris, victory, 200 million heads, horrible ulcers, debauchery, massacre of art, libraries, tortured children. Strife, lawlessness. Death."

We can see over what dark design Dostoievsky was brooding. This is evidently what would have happened if the Paris Commune had been victorious. According to Dolinin, it would seem that Dostoievsky was "deeply grieved." Grieved by what, precisely? By the fact that all these prospects were never realised? Could there be a falsehood more crude than this? Yes, it seems there can be.

Quoting and summarising Dostoievsky's notes for the novel, *A Raw Youth*, A. Dolinin sets forth in the following manner Dostoievsky's thoughts and impressions: "Revolution is close at hand and terrifying, like Fate, which awaits all men inescapably. Revolution necessarily ends with the triumph of the Fourth Estate: already we have seen the prelude"—obviously a reference to the Paris Commune. "As for you"—he says to the raw youth—"you must prepare yourself, for you will take part in it. The time is at hand even at the very moment when the million armies, the explosive bombs, appear so strong."

"Million armies, explosive bombs," comments A. Dolinin, "nothing can help to sustain the old order. This is no longer the language of abstract theory, but the language of real life and of the bitter class struggle. Yet one more step forward—and the 'social' theme will arise in the novel in the same way that it was pondered and propounded in the conditions of the life of Russian society at that time."

Dolinin does not realise, or does not wish to realise, that Dostoievsky is scaring the reader by the prospect of working-class revolution, is malevolent, sneers at the instability of capitalist society, which is incapable of resisting the revolution of the working class, and against this insecure society sets his own ideal—that of "silent" patriarchal Russia, having escaped both capitalism and revolution, and complete with the "Tsar-Father," the Orthodox Church, Pobiedonostsev and all his other pet accessories! Yet the Soviet scholar Dolinin credits Dostoievsky with the revolutionary "language of the class struggle," and wishes to convince us that "yet one more step forward"—and Dostoievsky will be taking his place in the very front ranks of the leading Russian social thinkers of his time.

In order to "exalt" Dostoievsky, A. Dolinin has no qualms about degrading A. I. Herzen, one of the leading Russian writers of the revolutionary democratic tendency (in the same way that Kirpotin also degraded Belinsky's revolutionary thought to the level of Dostoievsky's reactionary Utopian dream). The collapse of the Paris

Commune, we are assured by A. Dolinin, was received by Dostoievsky "just as tragically as Herzen received the events of 1848."

We have seen that it was the events of 1848 that finally precipitated Dostoievsky on to the side of the reactionary forces, whereas these events played exactly the opposite role in the case of Herzen. On the one hand is Herzen, a man who experienced the bitter destruction of the illusion of bourgeois democratic government as "above classes," a man whose tragic experiences were, as Lenin pointed out, the expression of the period of transition to the strict, unbending, indomitable fight of the working class alone. On the other hand stands Dostoievsky, a man whom the events of 1848 threw on to the side of reaction, who wrote maliciously about the events connected with the Paris Commune. These two men are phenomena which one cannot place beside one another, they are incommensurable. Yet in Dolinin's version of the facts, they are identical.

Our study of Dostoievsky's work must be objective, not rejecting what is sound in his work, but remembering that on the whole his influence is harmful for the development of the progressive literature of the world. His influence is one that debases man, leads him away from the fight for the bright future of mankind, from the fight for the triumph of human reason, the victory of man's will to freedom and happiness.

The Crisis in the Universities[1]

BY HYMAN LEVY

THE conventional picture of the university, sedate and aloof from the hurly-burly of life, is now quite false. Ex-service men, bearded and mature, often beset with family responsibilities, worry their way through college to a qualification that they hope will open the door to a job. At all costs they must make good the precious years they wasted in army service. Rooms designed for small classes are packed sometimes to suffocation. Laboratories extending down the corridors are filled until there is hardly even elbow room. Building restrictions, shortage of apparatus and materials, each create their own bottlenecks. Lecturers find themselves faced with deputations bluntly criticising their delivery, their use of the blackboard, the presentation of their subject matter, querying the need for lectures at all, demanding more time for discussion, and so on. Compared with the students of last generation, a fever of criticism has gripped them.

In the Honours Schools the standard of entry has been raised if only to act as a sieve in selecting the numbers that can be coped with in present circumstances. Hardly a college exists in the country that could not fill itself several times over with students pressing for entry. How many students *should* be accepted by the overworked staffs? How many mathematicians, physicists, chemists, engineers, biologists, botanists, language students, historians, economists, will be required, when three or four years hence these people enter the market and are seeking employment? Who knows? There is no guidance. You take what you can cope with, and you hope for the best. Ought every student who shows a capacity for original work to be encouraged to embark on a professional research career? Where will he finally be absorbed? If each university is its own master how can it decide policy on such matters in isolation? Where is this game of blind man's buff leading us?

The picture of the old professor delivering one lecture per week to a small group of bored students has vanished. If the reality ever existed, times have changed. The volume and complexity of university administration have increased phenomenally during the past few years. The long summer holidays have diminished almost to vanishing point. Memorandum follows memorandum in steady procession until it becomes almost impossible to absorb their contents. Should students take their academic courses before or after their army service? How can a broad basis of judgment, values, and understanding be given to young men and women who are panting through specialist courses? How can

[1] *The Crisis in the University*, by Sir Walter Moberly. S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 316 pp. 15*s*. net.

colleges extend their hostels, refectories, libraries, when money is not available and building licences are refused? Will you please report on A, B, C, etc., to the X County Council with regard to their awards, or to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research on their research, or to the P, Q and R Trust? And with the gathering number of students there grows also *pari passu* the volume of testimonials and references for appointments to schools, colleges, industrial research laboratories, or Government Departments. Where can qualified staff be found? In this hurly-burly when is the staff to find time for reading and research? How are they to keep abreast of the most recent developments? How is their vision to be broadened?

Meanwhile other and deeper changes are taking place. Slowly but surely the technical colleges and polytechnics, initially concentrating on technological theory and practice, have broadened their bases, enlarged in scope, raised their standards of research and teaching, swollen in numbers of students until it is now impossible to deny them their place in the world of science. Are they to be refused the right of granting degrees because the universities hold a legal monopoly? Can the universities refuse to recognise them as institutions of university rank? Or is the structure of the universities so inflexible that it cannot be merged with this new growth? What in fact is a University? What is its purpose and are these modern developments consistent with the basic function of an institution of Higher Learning as it is called?

Nor are these by any means the only types of question that press themselves to the fore at the present time. For reasons which we shall examine in a moment, industry and commerce during the past few years have steadily increased their pressure on academic policy. One section wishes to have men who are thoroughly at home with the most modern techniques. As science and technology leap forward the Universities are faced with the task of compressing more and more into the syllabuses of students, during the limited time they are at college. Faced with this struggle between *content and form*, they turn to the schools and demand that the boys who come to them shall attain a higher and higher technical level before entry into the university. Partially at least the problem is thrown back on the already harassed school teacher; or they seek a solution by pressing for an increase in the number of years of university study. On the other hand another section of industry demands that the university trainees shall be men of broad vision and understanding, not necessarily gifted specialists with the latest techniques on the ends of their fingers. They must be "capable of handling men"—one of the most common of their demands—capable of becoming "the leaders and directors of Industry." And this is the type of demand that is echoed from the selection committees for Government administrative posts.

Here it may be noted in passing the university teacher smiles bitterly.

Faced with a multiplicity of demands, often conflicting, the university has frequently to beg, cap-in-hand, for the financial wherewithal to meet these needs. In general capitalist industry does not feel any financial responsibility for providing the means to achieve these things. It merely picks up the ready-made article produced at the tax-payer's expense and uses it for its purpose. If necessary it will even buy up the members of the university staff themselves. The educational system is a cow that can be milked, and, at the same time, if its meat is succulent enough, also slaughtered. Such is the parasitic relation between technical and scientific education on the one hand, and capitalist industry on the other. True, enterprising firms will establish research scholarships and fellowships but while this means a maintenance grant to the student, invariably it means added expenditure to the college in materials and apparatus, and more unremunerated work to an overburdened staff.

When we talk about the crisis in the universities these are some of the points that spring to the mind. These are the immediate practical issues through which the crisis expresses itself internally. It is obvious enough what has happened. The "isolation" of the university from social affairs has completely broken down. It never in fact really existed; the connection was merely ignored. To-day, at any rate, whatever barriers ever did exist have been swept aside, the universities have become almost completely dependent on governmental sources for their finance, their so-called independence has been shaken to its foundation, and their form and content are in a state of flux. Traditional modes of instruction, means of selection of students, are being transformed. The social composition of students is now drastically different from what it was a generation ago. The social purpose of the universities has altered. The theory and practice, and the atmosphere of these institutions are changing rapidly. They are in the throes of a crisis that will take years to resolve. That crisis springs from deeper changes within the framework of society itself.

The new generation of students in Britain is mainly of artisan origin. The day has practically gone when a young man of high social standing could pay his way through a university. At least he has now to attain the examination level of the others, and while it is true that the cost of a university education is still prohibitive for a large section of the population, even if there were accommodation for them, the selected fraction does in fact belong to a distinctly lower social level than that of a generation ago. What is true of students is therefore becoming true of staff. It follows that the new attitude to the function of a university that does such violence to the old tradition is held mainly among the younger generation of university teachers, and is consequently not often expressed.

What is this old tradition that is rapidly passing? With our growing understanding of the meaning of cultural patterns it sounds to-day

almost laughable. "We are the people," it held, "and culture will die with us." The purpose of the universities was to give a hall mark of cultural distinction to a selected class. An aristocracy of learning, it was a symbol of class division. Naturally it had its own ideology, its own formulations and justifications. "Learning for its own sake," when examined, meant in practice a certain kind of learning for the sake of a class. The cultural pattern of the great mass of the population, its way of life, its values, and indeed its knowledge, found no place there. Even crafts were decried because of their association with *work.* Culture was something which could be appreciated only by those with a special background, and that background was that of the leisured class who had by nature the qualities, the time and the inclination to dip into the finer things of the mind. The seat of culture, what kept it permanently alive and maintained it intact from generation to generation, was the university. "Do you realise," the Master of an Oxford College is reputed to have said to a recruiting officer who had dared to suggest that the cause of enlistment in the 1914–18 War should be put before the students, "Do you realise that *we* are the Culture for which you are fighting?" In the light of modern understanding the whole situation was childish, but let us also appreciate that this modern understanding is also itself an historical and social phenomenon. To-day it is the exception to find a student at Oxford, Cambridge, or at one of the so-called Redbrick Universities, who does not continually have in the forefront of his mind the question—not "Am I or am I not imbibing culture?" but, crudely spoken, "Where is my bread and butter to come from?"

The history of the university system of this country is a faithful reflection of the changing face of society. The earliest colleges were ecclesiastical foundations catering in the main for the theological education of priests and certain sections of the aristocracy. As befitted those who were to maintain intact the structure of feudal society, the content of education was theological and classical. Every college had its chapel, and its daily services.

It was with the coming of the merchant class that the theory and practice of a "liberal education" came into being, as a breakaway towards the broader and freer atmosphere of literature and philosophy for the sons of the new class. In place of a journey to some distant theological centre to finish off their education, there was a sojourn in this or that cultural centre abroad that they might uphold their new position in society with the necessary grace and distinction. Then it was that the new knowledge in astronomy and its mathematics, in optics, in navigation, and in ballistics, all stemming from the social needs of the period, began to insinuate itself into the scheme of instruction. By the early seventeenth century when able men of leisure could devote their time to natural philosophy and to simple experimentation, it was already possible to have men of the quality of a Newton finding a place within

the four walls of a semi-secular university, laying the basis for a mechanical materialist explanation of change, checking the accuracy of their analysis by observation of actual process, and at the same time accepting theologically a mediæval attitude to the study of the prophecies of Daniel. The focus of attention of the universities was shifting as the social needs of the period demanded.

As the merchant capitalists began to apply their accumulated wealth to the production of commodities, so a new phase in higher studies also began to make itself apparent. The experimental period set in; the Cavendish Laboratory was established at Cambridge. Science experimental and theoretical had come to stay. As industrial capitalism gathered momentum the new science began its tenacious struggle for full recognition against the old entrenched ideology of classes that were already doomed historically. What had been a struggle between a classical as opposed to a liberal education gave way to a struggle between classical-cum-liberal education as opposed to a scientific education.

The struggle was prolonged, and this for the very good reason that a classical and liberal education had now in the new situation a definite social function to perform. The period of colonial expansion had set it. If the sons of the moneyed classes were not to become the leaders of science, and for this social standing alone could not suffice, they could at least retain their position as a governing class. Hence arose the ideological basis for the contention that a classical and even a liberal but certainly not a scientific education provided the essential groundwork for the training of the numerous administrators and public servants required for the political, judicial, military, and police administration of the colonial empire. The universities in association with the Public Schools provided the formal justification for this ideological outlook, and in practice served as the training ground and recruiting centre for such positions. In doing so they were in fact surrendering their earlier claim that their function was to be centres of learning "for learning's sake, of culture for culture's sake," and becoming vocational institutions in fact suited to the administrative needs of the period of colonial empire. The salving of their consciences was easily found in the contention that they were thereby bringing culture to the "natives." They were shouldering the white man's burden.

There was yet another reason why the crisis that would finally become acute within the university should not yet reach its peak. This lay in the nature of British capitalism, which in the early nineteenth century found the markets of the world wide open to it without any serious competition. Industry took no stock of the future but reaped while the harvest grew wild. Not until German and later American industry began to make serious inroads into what had hitherto been a virtual British market monopoly, by deliberately harnessing scientific

investigation to industrial production, did pressure begin to be exerted on British industrialists to look to science as its saviour even if the return in profits was not to come for a number of years. Not until the second decade of the present century did this movement show any real signs of life in this country, and the process was begun at last of bringing the scientific profession into being by setting the doors to the universities ajar to a very moderate selection of the sons of artisans and members of the middle classes. The scholarship system had become finally established.

Science is essentially a secular pursuit. Concerned as it is with material nature, with the practice and theory of the physical world, linked directly and indirectly with work and production it is the natural outlook of a developed proletariat. If science had to secure an established foothold within the precincts of the university it could do so only by the doors of the universities opening wide to the working class. Whence otherwise could its recruits be found? To dole out popular science at Working Men's Colleges might help to produce a technically amused working class capable of carrying through, with some understanding, the complex procedure of modern technology but these institutions alone could never serve as a substitute for the Technical Colleges and institutions of advanced learning that were necessary if the fundamental research of a scientific and technological nature essential to the rapid expansion of capitalism was to proceed. As the universities still looked askance at the intruder, Technical Colleges and Polytechnics grew in strength and importance. It was the lessons of the 1914–18 World War that taught the powers-that-be the lesson that had to be learnt. Those who lived through the intense propaganda in the 1920's for the creation of Industrial Research Associations carried through by the newly created Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, when industrial firms were literally bribed from Government funds to set up these research laboratories will realise how hard it was for the tradition to die that science was too academic, and had little to give that could be profitable to the capitalist. Rule of thumb had after all served well in the past.

To-day all this is a dead letter. It is to Science that they look for salvation and to the potentialities of the general population and not of a restricted class that they must turn for recruiting the human material necessary for peopling their laboratories and their design offices and for acting as their executive officers. The crisis in capitalism, the struggle for its rehabilitation is reflected in a drastic shift in the balance of studies within the universities and in the social composition of the student class.

From this emerges the urgent need for a complete transformation in a system of teaching and of study that grew up in a period when the classical tradition was well entrenched and that has remained intact to this day. As new discoveries pile up one on top of the other, the growing

content of necessary knowledge itself presents a series of problems of the first importance in pedagogic method. If the years of study and training have not to be lengthened at periodic intervals, for under capitalism this would restrict the flow of recruits, in what way can the courses of study be so adjusted as to make it possible for a student, commencing where the schools leave off, to reach the outer fringes of his subject by the time he completes his university career? This is not an abstract question but one of immediate urgency that faces every university teacher. Arising out of this is the deeper question. In what way can the student be prevented from becoming a blinkered specialist, a mere catalogue of information? Will increasing specialisation in fact finally negate itself so that the greater the specialist the greater the ignoramus? Must a student of science remain as ignorant of history or as unreceptive to literature and the arts as a student of literature will remain ignorant of science? In what way can the barriers that are erected during specialism be at the same time overthrown?

These are, of course, problems that arise with special intensity in capitalist society where knowledge is sharply separated into subjects, where history has been taught as if science played no part in it, and where science is taught as if it had no social history. A dialectical treatment of educational method that analysed and simultaneously synthesised the countless varieties of social effort that together constitute a unity would clearly resolve these difficulties. This aspect of the problem is therefore in a sense insuperable in capitalist society where the internal contradictions set up socially by science and helping to speed up the transformation of capitalism to socialism cannot be included as an integral part of scientific study. To a Marxist therefore who understands this, the deeper the specialist study, the greater his width of understanding of its social significance; every particular is seen to contain within it the characteristics of the general, every experiment a summation of knowledge, activity and creative social labour. In the pedagogic sense therefore, within the compass of academic teaching, the crisis in the universities reflects itself in the fact that university teachers do not understand Marxism themselves, and if they do, dare not expound it. Just as science in the widest sense is the essence of the new democratic education, so Marxism is that aspect of science that can be used to advantage only by and for the working class. Capitalist society cannot and dare not use it. Hence it cannot have any academic standing within its educational institutions.

For the same reason the problem of selecting those elements of specialised study that will enable a student to reach the outer fringes of his subject by the time he leaves the university is again insuperable without a periodic and thorough dialectical overhaul of the sum total of knowledge of each field, a determination of its levels of advance side by side with high specialism in selected directions. This demands a

rewriting of most of the established textbooks along Marxist lines.

It is when one recognises the manysidedness of the university crisis, its internal and external repercussions, as part of the general crisis in capitalism that one sees also how ineffective are the present-day attempts to cope with these problems. One cannot resolve them by approaching them as Sir Walter Moberly would have us do, by hankering back to the spirit of classical Christianity mellowed by the criticism of Marxists. One cannot have pre-conceived absolutes and at the same time pretend to an open mind. From his experience he can put his finger on many of the critical difficulties but he cannot see the roots from whence they spring. Nor are the greater number of these difficulties, indeed the most fundamental ones, within the power of a university to resolve. If to-day the development of science and the interpenetration of its methodology into all aspects of human study are to proceed hand in hand with the democratisation of the universities, as anyone with an historical sense can recognise to be inevitable since they are in fact twin aspects of the same question, then the provision of more colleges, more laboratories, more scholarships, and adequate maintenance allowances is not a matter that can be solved by any college. Especially is this so if an economic policy is pursued by the Government that forces them to restrict the building of educational institutions and the provision of necessary laboratory apparatus. Whatever be the freedom of action universities may still cling to, in the last resort university policy is cabinned and confined within Government policy. If the latter cannot resolve its social crisis, the universities, which reflect this crisis internally, cannot be expected to resolve theirs.

I. V. Michurin: Selected Works. Foreign Languages Publishing House. Moscow, 1949. 496 pp. Collet's. 15*s*.

THE appearance of an English translation of the most important of Michurin's writings is timely in view of the widespread interest which has been aroused by recent developments in biology in the Soviet Union. A study of this work is essential for an understanding of the theoretical and practical trends in Soviet biology to-day. The reader must not however expect to find a series of neatly planned "critical" experiments leading to an equally neat series of theoretical conclusions. Throughout his working life, which extended over a period of sixty years, Michurin was concerned with intensely practical problems, with the production of new and improved varieties of fruit plants suitable for cultivation in central and northern Russia. In the course of his immense labours he carried out thousands of experiments and made tens of thousands of careful observations with this aim in view. From all this practical labour and experimentation he drew important theoretical conclusions which became fundamental to the development of his work. Michurin's theoretical ideas emerge quite clearly from his writings even though these are usually cast in the form of highly practical instructions or descriptions of his methods. He never lost sight of the importance of building up a correct theory with which to work, and like Darwin, he based his theories on the closest observation of nature, especially as revealed in practical agriculture.

The practical success of Michurin's methods is undoubted, and it is interesting to learn that the United States Department of Agriculture were so impressed that in the years 1911–13 they tried to induce Michurin to emigrate to America, or at least to sell all his varieties on favourable terms. These offers he turned down! Lenin recognised the importance of Michurin's work and with the establishment of the Soviet Government, which Michurin unhesitatingly welcomed, funds were made available to support his work. Laboratories were set up, and in 1931 the nurseries became the Michurin Central Genetics Laboratory, with Michurin as director and with a large staff.

The material in this volume is conveniently arranged according to theme, and within each thematic section the arrangement is chronological so that it is possible to follow the development of Michurin's ideas as practical experience steadily enriched them. The first, autobiographical, section is particularly valuable in this respect as it summarises the way in which Michurin advanced from the idealistic theory of acclimatisation of Grell, which proved a complete failure in practice, through the stage of mass selection, also unsuccessful, to his own dis-

tinctive methods of hybridisation and training of the hybrid seedlings, which were to prove so fruitful. The section on principles and methods provides a clear and absorbing account of Michurin's practice, together with the basis of his theoretical attitude to biology. Another section gives descriptions of a large number of Michurin fruit varieties and the processes by which they were produced. In both this and the preceding section there are numerous records of acute biological observations which, as will be mentioned later, have been extended and developed by Soviet biologists. Finally there are a number of miscellaneous articles by Michurin, some of great interest, including the very moving "Dream of My Life," written when he was eighty, in which he explains how socialism, and socialism alone, permitted the full flowering of the noble purpose to which he had devoted his life.

Michurin's writings are all characterised by their clarity and charm, and convey the unmistakable impression of a great and original personality. This impression is confirmed and deepened by the record of his life and work. As a youth he was fired with the idea of remedying the lamentable state of Russian horticulture, particularly in the central regions, and he deliberately set himself "two bold tasks: to augment the assortment of fruits and berries in the central regions by adding high-yield varieties of superior quality, and to extend the area of southern crop cultivation far to the north." The whole of his life was devoted to this selfless work, which was carried out under conditions of appalling difficulty for over forty years under Tsarism. Only his patriotism, self-discipline, and enormous industry enabled him to create more than 350 new varieties of fruit plants and to gather together one of the richest plant collections in the world. His attitude is revealingly expressed in his own simple words in a request to the Sixteenth Party Congress (in 1930) to pay attention to fruit growing: "We must break with the past and cease living for our own sake only—something that has unfortunately become too deeply rooted in each of us. We must all work for the good of all and the consequent general improvement in the standard of living will afford better conditions to every one of us. Throughout my life I firmly adhered to this idea and strove to the utmost to overcome all difficulties. I attempted to improve all that came my way: I have worked in various branches of mechanics and electrical engineering, perfected various instruments, studied agriculture. . . . But best of all I loved the work of improving cultivated fruit-plant varieties."

Owing to the impoverishment of his family—petty landowners whose mortgaged inheritance had to be sold—he had to renounce his intention of going to the university, and take a job on the local railway. For twelve years he worked on the railway, first as goods clerk and then as inspector of clocks and signals. In order to supplement his meagre pay he set up a watch-repairing business in his spare time, devoting his extra earnings to buying horticultural books and journals, catalogues, and plants for

the small nursery which he was establishing. By this incredible industry he was finally able to make the nursery self-supporting and to give up his job on the railway. But his life continued to be one of poverty and privation, made harder by the attacks of religious obscurantists and the utter indifference and even hostility of the Tsarist ministry of agriculture. Only the coming of socialism relieved him of material worries and made possible a tremendous extension of his work and its application in the service of society. Michurin supported the Soviet Government from the first, and it shows the quality of his mind that he not only saw the vast possibilities of advance inherent in collective agriculture but that he linked the further development of his own work closely with the collective farms. This close relation between scientific investigation and practical agriculture has continued to be the source of strength of Soviet agronomy.

The most fundamental contribution to biological theory which Michurin makes is undoubtedly his treatment of adaptation. He recognised on the basis of his own practical results that the complex process of adaptation cannot be understood if it is separated from the process of development. As Prezent points out in an introductory essay to *Michurin's Collected Works* (Russian edition), this was the idealistic mistake of Lamark, which Grell repeated, namely, to consider adaptation as a process apart from development, outside the mutual influence of organism and environment. With Lamark the organism is transformed in order to develop afterwards, whereas with Michurin the organism only changes in the process of development. Michurin based himself on Darwin's conception of the organism which, developing and functioning only within the limits of the average conditions laid down by the historical past, conditions never absolutely repeated, is always being transformed, accumulating useful variations through a series of generations, by natural or artificial selection. The problem of adaptation was thus approached by Michurin in the sense of dialectical materialism as the unity of the organism and its environment. This dialectical approach was instinctive, although much later in life he consciously studied and accepted dialectics.

In order to adapt plants to new conditions, to change their hereditary constitution, the new environment must be allowed to act in the earliest stages of development, the embryonal and post-embryonal stages. Organisms are more plastic, that is, have greater adaptive possibilities, in the earliest stages. Hence Michurin's insistence that raising plants from seed is the best method of getting varieties adapted to their conditions of life. In particular he used hybrid seeds for training since such plants exhibit greater adaptability in consequence of their de-stabilised heredity. Many quotations could be given which summarise the methods he employed but a single one must suffice: ". . . The only correct method for solving the problem [of creating new varieties] is to raise

new local varieties for every district from seeds. Furthermore, in order to improve their quality, it is necessary to hybridise the old hardy local varieties with the best foreign ones. In the cases where there are no local varieties . . . the hardy parent should be selected from among the wildings that grow in countries with the most appropriate climatic conditions. When pairing the parent plants the most distant and least closely related varieties should be preferred because . . . hybrids are obtained that most easily and completely become adapted to the external conditions of a new locality."

Thus the basic principle of Michurin's operations was the changing of heredity by means of environmental changes acting on the early developmental stages of the organism. It is this conscious use of the adaptive capacity of plants in order to change them in a desired direction which is the new and distinguishing characteristic of his methods. Michurin makes it very clear that he was not a selectionist: he never denied the importance of mass selection in appropriate circumstances but considered that selection is not a sieve but a positive method of using the variability of organisms in order to transform them. Selection must be linked with the "shaken" heredity caused by hybridisation and with subsequent training of the seedlings. Thus Michurin worked with only some tens of seedlings at a time and he complains with reference to Burbank (whom he nevertheless greatly admired) that some writers had placed his own work "in an extremely false light by placing it on a par with the work of the late Burbank, an advocate of planting many thousands." Michurin's methods which he applied almost exclusively to fruit plants have been widely and successfully used in the Soviet Union in plant breeding. The work of Lysenko and his collaborators in transforming winter- into spring- and spring- into winter-cereals represents an extension of Michurin's methods and a striking confirmation of the correctness of his theoretical standpoint. Furthermore, the conception of heredity and of the organism-environment relation which Lysenko puts forward is quite obviously a clarification and deepening of conceptions which are already contained in Michurin. In this connection it is interesting to note the penetrating observations which Michurin made on the specific environmental requirements of plants. Such observations foreshadow a line of investigation to which Soviet biologists have paid considerable attention and which has culminated in Lysenko's phasal theory of development.

Just as the environment plays an active role in the transformation of plants by man, so Michurin considers that it plays a similar active role in natural evolution. Organisms are changed under the influence of environment, but only in the course of development, by the assimilation of new conditions through metabolism. The creation of new plants and animals in agriculture does not differ in principle from their creation in nature, except that the process is controlled and directed by man.

There are a number of references to Mendelism in Michurin's works from which it is obvious that he was not attracted by it. The reasons for this form one of the most interesting aspects of Michurin's thought. In the first place he found that the Mendelian laws of inheritance were of no assistance in the practical work of breeding. Even as a rule-of-thumb method of prediction they proved useless when dealing with fruit-plant hybrids, although it is interesting to note that Michurin recognises that the Mendelian laws may quite well apply for other plants in certain circumstances. But his criticism of Mendelism goes much deeper than this. In his view Mendelism is a purely formal analysis which neglects the specific biological nature of heredity.

Thus Mendelism appears to neglect or minimise the environment whilst Michurin found that environment had a marked effect on the type of inheritance, which depended on the age of the parents crossed, the treatment to which the seeds were subjected, the environmental conditions in which the young plants were reared, and so on. By varying the environmental conditions the character of the hybrid could be caused to deviate towards one or other of its parents. An even more serious weakness of Mendelism, in Michurin's opinion, is its failure to pay any attention to the history of the genotype. Michurin insists that great attention must be paid to the selection of pairs for crossing on a "historical" basis, since most influence is exerted by the older parent or the one with a longer history in particular conditions and therefore with the more stable heredity.

The correct selection of pairs for hybridisation is a problem which Mendelism cannot correctly solve. In questions of inheritance Michurin takes into account the degree of historically accumulated adaptability of the parents to definite conditions of development, the degree of hereditary influence of each parent in given conditions, and the enormous role of the environment in forming the nature of the young organism. In other words, he attempts to give a materialist biological analysis of the parental genotypes, not a formal Mendelian analysis, and to give a biological estimate of the conditions of training of the progeny. Thus Michurin's distant hybridisation is neither a piece of mystification nor a simple Mendelian combination: it is a profound biological process leading to de-stabilised heredity and an enrichment of the adaptive possibilities of the plant.

In this way Michurin began the materialist criticism of Mendelism which was developed and completed by Lysenko and other workers. He also contributed to this movement in another way by his numerous observations on stock-scion relations and the use of grafting not merely for propagation but as a means of influencing and improving immature fruit plants (by what he called the method of mentors). This method was used for example in the production of the Kandil-Kitaika apple, which is now a standard variety in the Soviet Union. Michurin brings forward

many examples of the way in which a plant can be altered by grafting provided it is in a sufficiently early phase of development. Such examples of vegetative hybridisation and its practical applications led to great interest in this subject. As a result Soviet biologists have carried out a considerable amount of work on the production and behaviour of vegetative hybrids. This work forms part of the growing body of evidence which has led to the abandonment of the Mendelian theory of heredity. In order to secure hybridisation Michurin employed a number of remarkable methods, the use of mixed pollen, vegetative approximation, repeated fertilisation, the use of an intermediary, etc., which lead to highly interesting and significant results. These methods have also been the starting-point for further investigations from which new views concerning the process of fertilisation have arisen, which cannot be discussed here.

It is impossible in a short review to do more than comment on a few aspects of Michurin's work. Perhaps enough has been said to indicate the relation between Michurin and later developments in Soviet biology and to show how the germ is to be found in Michurin. It is thus with justification that the new trends in biology have been given his name. A glance through the report of the famous 1948 session of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences shows the extent to which Michurinist techniques and theory now guide the practical work of Soviet agronomists. The study of this fascinating book will prove very helpful, and indeed indispensable, to all who wish to understand the nature of Soviet biological theory to-day and how it has developed. The book contains a wealth of practical advice for those who wish to practice Michurinist methods and it is to be hoped that those who can will try them out for themselves.

Alan G. Morton.

The Anglo-Soviet Journal, Vol. X, No. 4, Winter, 1949. Quarterly Journal of the S.C.R., 14 Kensington Square, London, W.8. 2*s.* 6*d.*

THIS special number of the *Anglo-Soviet Journal* is devoted to the visit in November, 1949, of the Soviet Cultural delegation which came to Britain to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the Society for Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union. It is an exceedingly important issue of that journal since it contains not only a most interesting account of the Delegation's visit to London and tour through the country but also verbatim reports of the addresses delivered by the delegates. Of these one may perhaps single out for special mention Professor Glushchenko on "The Fundamental Principles of Michurin Genetics" and Dmitri Kabalevsky's address on "Soviet Music."

The description of the tour makes it clear that the Russian visitors did much by their presence, their frankness, their humour and generosity of spirit to dispel the illusions prevalent about the life and work of Soviet intellectuals. Glushchenko made a considerable impression on the meetings of scientists, often assembled in a critical mood, to whom he spoke on Soviet biology. Kabalevsky won all hearts and reduced to pure fantasy the notion of Soviet composers as cowed and brow-beaten "artists in uniform."

Not the least valuable side of the Delegation's visit was the host of occasions for informal meetings with people especially interested in their own subjects. A series of admirable photographs afford vivid evidence of this.

The *Anglo-Soviet Journal* prints, in addition to the two papers mentioned, the lecture by Academician Volgin, the leader of the Delegation, on "Dialectical Materialism and Historical Science," a second historical paper by Dr. H. Matkovsky on "Historical Science in the U.S.S.R." and two papers on "Soviet Literature" and "Ukranian Soviet Literature" by Alexei Surkov and Pavlo Tychina.

To revert to Glushchenko, the special interest of his paper lies in the clear and formal enumeration of the eight most important principles of Lysenko and their subsequent exposition point by point. This is a most valuable and indispensable summary of which we were much in need.

Kabalevsky, in his paper on "Soviet Music," gives the clearest statement on the little understood term "formalism" that I have come across, and very clearly and usefully contrasts it with realism in music.

The Press, as the report points out, devoted little space to this important event. "On discovering that the Delegation were not surrounded by an iron curtain, the majority of the Press appeared to lose interest." This is an additional reason for ensuring the widest distribution of this issue of the *Anglo-Soviet Journal*, but all readers of *Modern Quarterly* will want to read this important collection of addresses and to have them in permanent form.

JOHN LEWIS.

Discussion

THE WEBBS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

IN his review of Beatrice Webb's *Our Partnership*, Douglas Garman refers to the "succession of scholarly works which, beginning with the *History of Trade Unionism*, had already in the less than twenty years recorded in *Our Partnership* established their international reputation," and he goes on to criticise the Webbs for "stopping at the surface of facts" and failing "to penetrate to the secret of their origin" and thus to contribute to an understanding of the science of history. I have no wish to differ from Garman's conclusions, but I do think it rather unsatisfactory that he arrives at them without even mentioning, far less analysing and discussing, the subject matter of nearly all the "succession of scholarly works" that followed the books on trade unionism. This does seem to be a good example of the tendency, which is only too common to-day, to ignore the valuable contribution which a study of local government can make to an understanding of the theory of the state.

During the thirty years between the completion of their work on trade unionism and industrial relations in 1898, and the beginning of their work on the Soviet Union in 1931, practically the whole of the published output of the Webb partnership was devoted to the study of local government in England and Wales. In the course of this period they published ten major works and five lesser works on this subject, including the history of local government in the eighteenth century (4 vols.), the history of the English poor law (3 vols.) and shorter studies of the prisons, highways, public health, education, liquor licensing, etc. Indeed, they undertook their investigations on such an elaborate scale that they never achieved the main task they had originally set themselves—namely, the writing of the history of local government in the nineteenth century—an unfortunate consequence of their empiricist belief, to which Garman draws attention, in the value of accumulating an immense quantity of facts about social institutions rather than searching for the laws that govern their development.

The stimulus that drove the Webbs to this vast investigation was, of course, the basic Fabian illusion that a steady expansion in the activities of local authorities could play a large part in a gradual and painless transformation of capitalism into a collective society. As Beatrice Webb explains in *My Partnership* (p. 150): "If local administration was destined to rival and even to surpass in importance the national Civil Service, it was important to discover by what means the various parishes and counties and municipalities were, in fact, governed . . . and by what extensions and improvements these social institutions could be best fitted" for their additional tasks. It is essential to distin-

guish, however, between (1) the reactionary theory of municipal socialism which was used by the Fabians to deceive the working-class movement from the 1880's onward in regard to the class character of the capitalist state, and (2) the recognition that, *within the framework of a capitalist state*, it is much more democratic to have the social services administered by elected local authorities rather than by a centralised bureaucracy. This opposition to the centralising tendencies inherent in monopoly capitalism is traditional in the labour movement. It was clearly expressed in the original programme of the Labour Party on its re-organisation in 1918, *Labour and the New Social Order* (drafted by Sidney Webb himself) which called for the fullest possible extension of democratically elected local bodies and the removal of the evils of centralism and bureaucracy.

During the past five years, however, all the dreams of the Webbs' of a bright and expanding future for local government in Britain have been shattered by the very Labour Party they did so much to build up. The process, which began gradually in the nineteen-thirties, of depriving local authorities of important functions has, since 1945, been ruthlessly speeded up by the transfer of hospitals, gas, electricity, transport and other services to a varied assortment of regional boards whose members are appointed by the central government. The proud independence of the great municipalities in the nineteenth century has passed away, and local authorities are being rapidly reduced to the subordinate position of mere agents for carrying out the instructions of the central government departments. The urgent need to reorganise the antiquated structure of local government and the obsolete rating system has been deliberately neglected. While still proclaiming its belief in the virtues of local government, social democracy has *in practice* immensely strengthened the power of the capitalist state apparatus by this policy of centralisation. It is all the more important, therefore, that the profound belief of the Webbs in the value of local government and a decentralised state, and their great contribution to an understanding of its history, should not be forgotten at the present time.

ROGER SIMON.

THE VALUE OF MARXISM TO THE MODERN NATURAL SCIENTIST

BY attempting to discuss the direct impact of Marxism on the theory of science and scientific experiment (or "fundamental" science, as Hasted calls it) and in the process of doing this, removing both Marxism and science from their class background, Hasted's examination of science differs in little more than its phraseology from contemporary bourgeois

descriptions of science. Hasted presents certain tasks which face the scientist; choice of research; personal incentive; design of experiment, etc., and then attempts to show how Marxism assists the scientist to achieve these tasks. It is of course important to demonstrate to bourgeois scientists how Marxism assists the development of science but this cannot be done from the basis of their own notions of what is important in science.

Any examination of science must be based on the understanding that both the theory and practice of science are determined by the economic and political structure of society and that in class society there is no such thing as "extra-class" science. In his article Hasted leaves out the most important teaching of Marxism, the fact that "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (*The Communist Manifesto*).

If we examine contemporary science from this point of view, we see clearly that scientists in capitalist countries are working under monopoly capitalism and what they do is determined by the needs of monopoly capitalism. Capitalism makes use of science for two main purposes; firstly to extend and intensify the exploitation of the working class, and secondly, in the preparation for imperialist war, which is a necessary consequence of capitalist economy. It is from this social function of capitalist science that the disorganisation of science, its frustration and distortion, arise. Similarly arising directly from the class structure of capitalist society and the class organisation of science, comes the theoretical bankruptcy of bourgeois science.

Hasted correctly points out in his article that the characteristic philosophy of contemporary bourgeois science is empiricism, but he later suggests that bourgeois scientists are drawn towards dialectical materialism because of the dialectical nature of the phenomena they study. Empiricism is the refuge to which the scientist is driven as a consequence of the inability of mechanical materialism to give adequate theoretical generalisation to the growing amount of knowledge that science provides. Far from drawing the bourgeois scientist towards dialectical materialism, empiricism leads him directly away from it, to idealism.

In general, the "choice of research" which Hasted discusses, is a choice for the bourgeois scientist between assisting monopoly capitalism to further its reactionary ends or working on some scholastic, academic problem which serves no useful purpose. In fundamental contrast to this is socialist science; science which serves the people, which serves peace and progress. From the standpoint of a class analysis of science it is obvious that with the destruction of capitalism the fundamental obstacles to the development of science are removed and once these obstacles are removed science develops in an entirely new way, both in its organisation and in its theory.

There are in science to-day two irreconcilable opposing trends; capitalist science and socialist science, whose divergence becomes more and more apparent as socialism increases in strength and the general crisis of capitalism gets deeper and deeper. The differences between socialist and bourgeois science are not merely differences of approach to the same set of problems, which is what Hasted's article implies. Under socialism entirely new problems arise for scientists, problems which do not exist under capitalism. The verbatim report of the Lysenko controversy gives ample illustration of this fact. From the socialist demand for higher living standards for the people came the demand for the radical re-organisation and development of agriculture and biology, and entirely new problems were thus presented to Soviet agronomists and biologists, problems which never have and never will be presented to scientists working in capitalist society. From these demands there developed in the Soviet Union an entirely new, revolutionary approach to, and study of, the most fundamental characteristics of living organisms. It is only from socialist practice that the most fundamental and most important problems of science can arise and it is only in socialist society, with its new science that these problems can be adequately solved. Thus the triumphs of Soviet science are not merely triumphs of the re-organisation of science, its adequate finance and the application of Marxist philosophy to particular laboratory problems, but are triumphs of a new civilisation, with new problems to solve and with a new people to solve them.

Stalin's teaching on the Communist Party and the socialist state not only apply to economics and politics but also to science. For example Stalin's teaching on cadres applies with equal force to scientific cadres. Soviet scientific leaders come from the masses, from the most practically experienced workers. Thus leaders in biology no longer come from academic university professors but from agronomists, from people with a practical experience and understanding of agricultural problems. These biological cadres are treasured and developed, educated and encouraged in a similar way to political leaders and such scientists lead a whole army of scientists, the Soviet people, all of whom participate in the development of Soviet science, and from whom the "professional" scientists are constantly learning. Stalin's little known speech delivered at a reception in the Kremlin to Higher Educational Workers in 1938 (*Stalin on Lenin*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1939) is of considerable importance in this latter connection:

> "But sometimes it is not well-known men of science who lay the new roads for science and technology, but men entirely unknown in the scientific world, plain, practical men, innovators in their field. Here, sitting at this table, are Comrades Stakhanov and Papanin. They are unknown in the scientific world, they have no scientific degrees, but are just practical men in their field. But who does not know that in their practical work in industry Stakhanov and the Stakhanovites have upset the existing standards, which were established by well-known scientists and technologists, have shown that they were antiquated, and have introduced new standards which conform to the requirements of real science and technology. Who does not know that in their practical work on the drifting ice-floe Papanin and the Papaninites upset the old conception of the Arctic, in passing, as it were, without any special effort, showed that it was antiquated, and established a new conception which conforms to the demands of real science? Who can deny that Stakhanov and Papanin are innovators in science, men of our advanced science?"

Soviet science not only serves the people, but is served by the people and a very large number of the scientific advances made in the Soviet Union are made not by "professional" scientists, but by worker inventors.

We can see that the differences between socialist and capitalist science are much more than mere differences in method and these differences can only be understood on the basis of a class analysis of science. If we analyse science in this way we can see how we correctly answer the questions which Hasted puts in his article. Thus Marxists do not attempt to provide "high personal incentive" in some abstract way. Do we wish scientists working in imperialist atom-bomb plants and bacteriological warfare laboratories to get a "higher personal incentive" for developing their subject? This would mean encouraging a higher incentive to serve imperialism. The incentive we must give to scientists is a class incentive, an incentive to make science serve the interests not of imperialism but of the people, of socialism. Statements such as Hasted makes at the end of his article, "When the number of such students of Marxism can be increased qualitatively, the impact on science should be considerable," are quite unrealistic. Marxism cannot change capitalist science to any appreciable degree until the whole economic, political and ideological basis for this science, capitalism, is finally destroyed. Until this task is accomplished, a task in which the scientist can play an active and special part, the bourgeois scientist will continue to have, in general, as his only "choices of research," preparations for war, or academic investigation of little social value. He will never end this unhappy plight until he does away with the conditions which cause it.

I. Campbell.
A. McPherson.
A. Suddaby.
P. Trent.

THE MYTH OF WESTERN CIVILISATION

I SHOULD like to amplify some points in Geoffrey Clark's admirable article, "The Myth of Western Civilisation." Clark shows how "Western civilisation" to-day means the interests of the bourgeoisie in a group of powers united by common interests in exploiting the colonies and by subservience to the U.S.A. The object of the myth to-day is clearly to protect this narrow ruling class in its privileged position.

But the *idea* is older than the present needs of the imperialist bourgeoisie. It goes back to the Middle Ages, when (to quote Engels) "the great international centre of feudalism was the Roman Catholic Church. It united the whole of feudalised Western Europe, in spite of all internal wars, into one grand political system, opposed as much to the schismatic Greeks as to the Mohammedan countries."[1] Clark brings evidence to suggest that there was little reality in the idea of a united catholic Christendom even in the Middle Ages. Since the reformation and the rise of national states it has never existed except as a dream of reactionaries: and of course its boundaries never coincided with those of capitalist Western Europe to-day.

But the point I wish to emphasise is that the bourgeoisie of Western Europe in its struggle for power had to fight to free itself from the tyranny of the Roman Catholic Church, the watchdog of the feudal social order. "Before profane feudalism could be successfully attacked in each country and in detail, this, its sacred central organisation, had to be destroyed."[2]

Consider the struggle which bourgeois science—so essential to the rise of capitalism—had to wage to free itself from priestly control. Bruno was burnt, Galileo recanted: Descartes left his native catholic France to settle in protestant Holland. Wherever it had the power, the Roman Church maintained a monopoly of education at all levels, a rigid censorship of books (the Index) and ruthlessly suppressed free thought (the Inquisition). Science developed in the protestant (and bourgeois) countries, England and Holland.

In England, if we take thinkers at two opposite poles of bourgeois thought in the seventeenth century, Milton and Hobbes, we find they have one point in common—hatred of catholicism. Milton, the propagandist of free expression, would have forbidden such expression to papists; Hobbes, the authoritarian, devotes one whole section of the *Leviathan* to a devastating attack on the Catholic Church as a political institution. Modern materialism (Bacon, Hobbes, Locke) developed in struggle against the scholasticism of the Catholic Church. In eighteenth-century France, the transitional ideology of protestantism yielded place

[1] Engels, Introduction to *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*, pp. xix-xx.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. xx.

to rationalism, criticism of all religion: the Encyclopædists attacked and exposed the Church, Voltaire called on his countrymen to "*ecraser l'infâme.*" Classical German philosophy, the philosophy of the bourgeoisie, sprang from protestant soil fertilised by the French Revolution (Goethe, Hegel).

All the best thought of the bourgeoisie in its heyday was profoundly anti-catholic: only now that it is dying does the bourgeoisie of Western Europe clutch at the long-dead corpse of "western Christendom." Under feudalism, artists and thinkers inspired by the ideology of catholicism produced great creative work—Thomas Aquinas, Dante, the cathedrals. But since the rise of the bourgeoisie this has ceased to be the case: what artist or thinker of the first rank during the past 300 years drew his inspiration from catholicism? (Baudelaire, I suppose, was a believer; but not altogether a credit to his religion.) In so far as the myth of Western civilisation attempts the ideological reunion of "Western Christendom," it is a denial by the modern bourgeoisie of all that was creative in its past. (I pass over the rejection of national sovereignty by these people, though much too might be said on that subject by those "who speak the tongue that Shakespeare spake.")

Marxism has subsumed the progressive trend in bourgeois thought, purged of protestant and deist survivals, and free from all the contradictions arising from the fact that the bourgeoisie was an exploiting class even in its progressive youth. Marxists can honour the truly great figures of the bourgeois civilisation in Western Europe—Luther, Calvin, Galileo, Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, Locke, Newton, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, Goethe, Hegel—because they acclaim the bourgeoisie's struggle against the ideology of feudal Europe.

Meanwhile, the English bourgeoisie, first and foremost to throw over the authority of Rome, have been gradually feeling their way back to the secure rock of authoritarianism. During the nineteenth century catholicism once again became respectable, and there grew up the parallel Anglo-Catholic movement inside the Church of England. In the 'nineties, that is, at the beginning of the epoch of imperialism, the bourgeoisie suffered a general crisis in ideology, a loss of confidence. As one result of that crisis, intellectuals and aristocrats "went to Rome" in large numbers, the son of an English Primate among them. Many have been the schemes for reunion of the English and Roman Churches since the first collapsed in 1874.

To-day the crisis is graver, and the official oracles of bourgeois thought, the Press, and the B.B.C., are more friendly to Rome than ever. It is no accident that Professor Toynbee deplores the Reformation and the French Revolution as the great disasters of "Western Civilisation." *The Times* (October 31st), says that "the Mother Church of western Christendom, with its ever timely insistence on the principle of divine authority and on the accessibility of objective truth, has still much to give to

modern society," and goes on to plead for a "re-examination of the relations between Rome and the other Christian bodies." The reason is frankly admitted to be "the struggle against Marxian paganism."

> "Behind the Iron Curtain it [the Catholic Church] provides the only organised representation of the Western tradition in thought and morals. . . . In Western Europe it has inspired political movements which, fighting under the banner of Christian democracy, have resisted Communism more effectively than the older political parties have done." (November 29th.)

This, of course, is the real point. If the "unity of Christendom," or even the "struggle against Marxian paganism," *as such*, were at issue, one may fairly ask why, in the course of a long *Times* correspondence, no one even suggested a rapprochement with the Eastern Churches as well. They, presumably, would know something about "Marxian paganism" in practice. But as the first writer put it, "the power exercised from Rome is likely increasingly to occupy the attention of men on both sides of the Iron Curtain, not all of whom would pretend that their chief concern is with religion or the things of the spirit." It could hardly be made plainer.

When Henry IV renounced protestantism to secure the crown of France, he declared that "Paris was worth a mass." In what Father J. H. Crehan, S.J., calls "the American epoch in the history of the Catholic Church," the bourgeoisie of Western Europe is as cynical as Henry IV. If it was equally frank in its cynicism it would say "the colonies are worth a mass." Henry IV, however, came to a sticky end.

C. Hill.

MENTAL TESTING

MY article in *The Modern Quarterly* contained mistakes and was, in certain respects confusing. Joan Simon, however, fails to clear up this confusion in so far as she has so over-simplified the "problem of intelligence" as to make it sound as if Marxists had no problem to answer. But, however bourgeois psychologists may misinterpret the known facts about intellectual functions, they are a manifestation of material activity and therefore require examination and explanation. This is all the more true when we realise exactly who it is we are fighting in the field of psychology. To dismiss, as Joan Simon does, all bourgeois psychologists, neurologists and neuro-physiologists as "one reactionary

mass" does not get us very far, nor does it provide us with any real answer to the problems under discussion.

This over-simplified approach appears to arise (at least in part) from an uncritical appreciation of the difficulties which face Marxists in the field of psychology, an attitude which is revealed by her statement:

> "Since 1936 Soviet psychology has come of age, and the significance of the contributions of Rubinstein and Ananiev is that they outline a new departure in psychology comparable with that of the Lysenko school in biology, though as yet psychology has still to consolidate its advances."

As yet there has not taken place in other branches of Soviet science a development so fundamental and so revolutionary as that which has taken place in the sphere of Soviet biology. It is inaccurate and misleading to suggest that the state of Soviet psychology is so highly developed as that in biology and the trenchant criticism by Chernakov of Rubinstein's recent book, *The Foundations of General Psychology*,[1] reveals the difficulties with which Soviet psychologists are struggling. Chernakov writes of this book:

> "In making a declaration about the decisive surmounting of idealistic theories of bourgeois psychology, C. L. Rubinstein examines these theories objectively and in a number of cases goes no further than a base compromise with them and, by so doing, inevitably brings confusion into Soviet psychology."

That enormous clarification in psychology is developing on the basis of Soviet practice is undoubtedly true, but "decisive surmounting of the idealistic theories of bourgeois psychology" is, owing to the complexity of the subject, a task which takes time.

Joan Simon's over-simplified approach to psychology is shown by the fact that she adopts a standpoint which it is difficult to distinguish from that of the mechanical materialists. In criticising "bourgeois categories" she removes all qualities of mental behaviour. She writes:

> ". . . Psychologists are still haunted by the traditional categories which the mechanists inherited from scholasticism—*perception*, imagery, intelligence."

And she goes on to condemn such "categories." She makes this statement despite the fact that she quotes (presumably with approval) from Rubinstein:

[1] Chernakov, *Against Idealism and Metaphysics in Psychology*. Published by S.C.R.

"Soviet psychology to-day carries on its investigations of psychic processes, such as *perception*,[1] memory, thinking. . . ."

In criticising "bourgeois categories" it is important to avoid the error which Caudwell describes so well in his essay, "Consciousness," in *Further Studies in a Dying Culture*, when he says:

"Now if we abstract from mind all 'material' qualities we travel the reverse road to bourgeois physics and we end up with something that contains no qualities at all. . . . Thus whilst in physics the bourgeois recipe for matter, 'not-mind,' was producing matter so stripped of all material qualities as to evaporate into mind . . . in psychology the bourgeois recipe for mind, 'not-matter,' was producing a mind so stripped of all mental qualities that it solidified into matter, and became behaviourism."

That this is the approach of Joan Simon is suggested by her statement:

". . . Even behaviourism has been unable to preserve its purity and the various non-physiological behaviourist trends are strongly idealist."

Behaviourism never had any "purity" other than a mechanical materialist, i.e. subjective idealist "purity." Further, and perhaps more fundamental, indications of Joan Simon's subjective idealist approach to psychology are given by her definition of science which differs very little from that of the positivists, the close relations of the subjective idealists. She defines science in the following way:

"Science first attempts to know facts on the plane of facts, and thereafter to reduce them systematically to phenomena; its exactitude is defined by the extent to which its knowledge covers the facts, the measure in which its content is adequate to the forms in which the object it investigates is conceived."

Apart from the obscurity of the phrase, "and thereafter *reduce* them systematically to phenomena," this definition of science, like that of the positivists differentiates two distinct stages in knowledge, facts and generalisations about these facts, stages which do not exist as distinct entities. Moreover, this definition suggests that the test of the exactitude of science is "the extent to which its knowledge covers the facts" or its "adequacy." The bourgeois geneticists produce a "science" which "covers the facts," which is "adequate" in their opinion; they explain away all sorts of awkward facts including those produced by the

[1] My italics.

Michurinists, but this doesn't make them any the more scientific.

As has already been stated, the major error of the mechanist attitude is that it throws out all qualities, all "categories." Naturally, as Marxists, we emphatically reject all *bourgeois* categories, but this does not mean that we deny, on principle, any sort of qualities of mental behaviour such as perception (a term employed in the classics of Marxism), although we understand by such terms something very different from the bourgeois interpretation of them. The category "intelligence" requires more careful examination than it has been given. The terms "intelligence" and "intelligent" obviously have some meaning otherwise Joan Simon would not write:

"The only *intelligent* course, therefore, is to abolish selection and testing together . . ."

and Marx and Engels would not employ them as they did. That the bourgeois psychologists are absolutely wrong in their understanding of this "category" and employ mental testing for reactionary purposes does not necessarily mean (although this may well be the case) that there is no such quality of human behaviour at all. One of the principal failings of my article was in not raising this problem which led me, equally incorrectly, to attempt to equate intelligence with generalisation.

In conformity with her general line of approach, Joan Simon seems to suggest that the mere discussion of hereditary and environmental factors, not only as they concern the problem of intelligence but in any problem in psychology, is a revelation of idealism. However, the question as to the part played by innate and environmental factors (even though the bourgeois psychologists discuss this question in an "endless and futile" way) is *not* one to which Marxists give a neutral reply, nor is it one which we simply ignore. Marxists unequivocally state that human personality is determined by social environment. If we do not take this stand then Marx's statement that social being determines men's consciousness is simply ignored. The suggestion that I took sides in my article in the "endless and futile argument on the relative importance of heredity and environment" (J. S.) is correct in the sense that I pointed out that Marxists maintain that social being determines mental behaviour but it is quite incorrect to suggest that I attempted to assess the relative importance of environmental and hereditary factors in the same way as the bourgeois psychologists.

Joan Simon's article, and particularly those by Brian Simon in the *Communist Review* and the *Educational Bulletin*, are very valuable in that they examine the class function of intelligence testing, a very serious omission in my article and in those by Shapiro and Mary Flanders. Every Marxist must agree with Brian Simon's lucid presentation of the fact that, in general, intelligence tests are based on false

bourgeois theories and operate in bourgeois society for the class selection of individuals whom, it is calculated, best satisfy the requirements of bourgeois society. My remarks about intelligence testing in schools were completely incorrect and indeed the principal failing of my whole article lies in its failure to make a class analysis of intelligence testing in practice.[1] We must also welcome Brian Simon's suggestion of a conference of those Communists who are concerned with mental testing because a much more careful, collective examination of the problem is necessary and urgent. There are real difficulties which we cannot just ignore and it is an important task for us to obtain a much greater amount of Soviet material on psychology in order to overcome these difficulties.

ANGUS MCPHERSON.

[1] I sent my article some time ago to Rubinstein for criticism. If it becomes available, this should be very valuable.

Communications

ACADEMICIAN N. Y. MARR, 1864–1934: A NOTE ON THE FOUNDER OF SOVIET LINGUISTICS

THE fifteenth anniversary of the death of Academician Nikolai Yakovlevich Marr is being marked this year in the U.S.S.R. Born in 1864 of a Scots father and Georgian (Guri) mother and educated until 1884 in Transcaucasia, with Georgian as his first language, N. Y. Marr later became the founder not only of the Japhetic theory of language, but also of the historical materialist, dialectical new teaching on language which lies at the base of all Soviet philology and linguistics to-day.

He read Oriental languages in four groups at St. Petersburg University: Indo-European (Persian), Iverian (Georgian), Semitic (Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic) and Altaic (Turkish). In 1888, he made his first attempts to correlate Georgian lexically and structurally with Semitic in one of his first theoretical works. Engaged in archæological and ethnographic work in the summer vacations, his researches in ancient Georgian MSS. and conclusions therefrom, were embodied in a number of papers published for the University.

After several rebuffs in his attempt to make Georgian MSS. the subject for his doctorate (these rebuffs were both personal and political, as nationalist separatist tendencies were in full flood against Russian Tsarism at the time), he turned to the study of Armenian philology and, after obtaining his doctorate, began in 1891 to lecture in Armenian literature and philology. University and institute lecturing and seminars he found particularly interesting, and neither pressure of work in other spheres nor ill-health could induce him to abandon his punctuality and patience in explanation or his regular lecture course, until the year before his death. In 1910, a year after his election to the Imperial Academy of Sciences, he turned his more thorough attention to the Japhetic elements in Armenian.

If it is permissible to divide a man's development into sharply-defined periods for the sake of convenience, one can say that N. Y. Marr's exceptional knowledge of the Caucasian languages, both spoken and written, at this time led (between 1908–23) to his development of the Japhetic (Caucasian) theory in contra-distinction to the long-established Indo-European school of philology and linguistics, the foundations of which latter were ethnic and stemmed from a belief in the existence of an "archetypal" language originally spoken by some mythical "archetypal" people.

Marr later aptly characterised this theory as an inverted pyramid, whereas the Japhetic theory developed as a pyramid based firmly on four main language elements, which, by constant crossing evolved into improved and ever-improving languages, which in their turn will eventually result in a language common to mankind at a higher stage of

development. The latter part of this theory of Marr's was not worked out until later. Here it is useful to note the reaction of the Indo-European schools of philology and linguistics at the time.

N. Y. Marr was trained as an archæologist and ethnographer in the field: "None of my creative linguistic ideas is the outcome of work in the study. They were all conceived and developed in the course of my contacts with man and nature, in streets and market-places, on horse-back and in trains—everywhere but in the study," and his own great gifts led him towards the wider interpretation of the history of languages, their syntax, grammatical structure, etc., which was later developed as his own understanding of dialectical materialism grew (1923–5 to his death).

His Japhetic theory put forward the Caucasus as the seat not only of all the varied Caucasian languages but also of many major and minor Mediterranean languages (e.g. Basque and its connections with the Caucasus). He made a special study of the spoken languages of many of the Caucasian peoples (enabled to have a written language after 1917 owing to his work and that of his co-workers), which he regarded as older than the oldest then discovered local cuneiform languages.

Although this is the briefest and most incomplete outline of his theory, it can be seen that it clashed from the first with the Indo-European traditions of the origins and development of language. As this tradition lay at the base of the bourgeois interpretation, it is not surprising that since his published works in this field, among others, *The Japhetic Caucasus and the Third Ethnic Element in the Creation of Mediterranean Culture* reached Western Europe (1919), his work has been either ignored in a conspiracy of silence and non-translation or misinterpreted in a variety of ways, so that, as late as 1948 one expert can write as though the Japhetic theory marked the last instead of the first stage of the work of his last twenty-five years of life.

In Marr's opinion, "Indo-European linguistics adopted the philosophy of a society based on religion and substituted linguistic for the religious divisions of mankind, isolated the circle of Indo-European languages and devoted itself to the exclusive and separate study of the Indo-European peoples. . . . It transferred to the Indo-European (Aryan) race the view of confessional theology regarding the chosen people whose varieties inhabit mainly only the European world."

While the materialist will see at once the fundamental mistake at this time of Marr's "society based on religion" he will also be quick to grasp how his denouncing of the racial bourgeois ideological study of language led to the conspiracy of frozen silence about his work, culminating in petrified horror, as Marr began to understand historical materialism (middle 1920's) and developed his stadial (stage) revolutionary theory of the qualitative changes of language connected with the means of production and social relations as opposed to the static and evolutionary

theories of the Indo-European schools. These schools, as bourgeois society went into decay, passed from the neogrammarians through the "sociological" schools to structuralism and every known and unknown method of formalism in the study of language, studying form (morphology, grammar), without content (semantics, syntax) and studying the particular subject for its own sake.

In the last years of his life N. Y. Marr came to understand the close ties between labour, language and thought, between language and material culture. He retained the form of his four-elemental language theory but altered its content, showing how changes in the social structure altered the form and content of language in a revolutionary manner over time. He died before his great mind could apply itself to the working out of many of the new theories springing from his fundamental contribution, but not before the Japhetic Institute, founded at his instigation in 1921, had been renamed the Institute of Language and Thought.

His co-workers and pupils are to-day faced with many tasks linked with the intensified ideological onslaught of reaction. In this light must be seen the recent linguistics and philology discussions and criticisms in the Soviet general and specialised Press, which it is hoped to cover more fully in the future.

ELEANOR FOX.

READING MATERIAL AND SOURCES (in Russian)

New Teaching on Language in the Present Stage of Development. Academician I. I. Meshchaninov, Leningrad State University, 1947, 90 pp.

N. Y. Marr—His Life and Work. V. A. Mikhankova, U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, 1948, 450 pp.

ARTICLES

1. *Izvestia Akademii Nauk U.S.S.R. Otdelenie Literaturi i Yazika* (*Academy of Sciences Dept. of Literature and Language*), Vol VII, No. 6, 1948. Report by Academician I. I. Meshchaninov: "The Situation in the Science of Linguistics." (Report made at an open meeting of the Scientific Council of the Marr Institute of Language and Thought and the Leningrad Department of U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences Institute of the Russian Language, October 22nd, 1948.)
2. *Ibid.* Vol. VIII, No. 1, p. 85, 1949. Vol. VIII, No. 2, p. 168, 1949. Vol. VIII, No. 4, p. 289, 1949. Vol. VIII, No. 5, pp. 467, 479–95, 1949.
3. *Kultura i Zhizn* (*Culture and Life*), Nos. 11, 18, 19, 1949.
4. *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (*Literary Gazette*), Nos. 28, 72, 84, 92, 1949.

The March, 1950, *number of the* Anglo-Soviet Journal (*Vol. XI, No.* 1) *will contain a translation of a lecture read in April,* 1949, *by Professor G. P. Serdyuchenko: "The Part Played by N. Y. Marr in the Development of Materialist Teaching on Language."*

BALZAC AND STENDHAL

(*An extended review of two articles in* La Pensée)

LA PENSÉE (No. 26) of September–October, 1949, has two interesting articles on literary subjects: "The Living Balzac," by Jean Varloot, and "The Significance of Stendhal," by René Andrieu. The former is the reprint of a lecture given in Paris in July, 1949, in celebration of a "Balzac year"—for 1949 was the 150th anniversary of his birth, and 1950 the centenary of his death. Varloot points out that Balzac celebrations, such as those of 1899, have usually been monopolised by the bourgeoisie, whereas only the progressives, the working class and their allies, recognise Balzac's true worth—revealing what his work contains that is new, and what condemns the old and outworn.

To get an idea of the essence of the article, it is best to quote Varloot somewhat extensively. He writes:

"Balzac of course professed conservative, even reactionary, views. . . . He spoke the political language of his class and accepted its tenets of religion and monarchy, rejecting 'election as a means of organising society.' He has thereby proved useful to bourgeois intellectuals. . . . But at the bottom of his heart, in his human dignity, in his unwavering faith in man and by the exuberance of his genius, he persistently denied his political opinions in his literary practice. His personal drama was that he felt within himself the contradictions of his class, a class then still in the ascendant but already bearing the seeds of its decay. . . . In *Le Code des gens honnêtes* and the *Traité de la vie élégante* there is an illuminating passage which begins 'Life may be considered as a perpetual battle between rich and poor' and concludes with words describing the life of the workers as 'exploitation of man by man.'

"Victor Hugo said of Balzac: 'Whether he wills or no, he is of the strong race of revolutionary writers; he goes straight to the point, grappling with modern society like a wrestler.' . . . And George Sand wrote of the *Comédie Humaine*, 'it is society that stands condemned. As to his opinions, those that he affected are destroyed and swept away in each line by the power of his own inspiration.'

"The genius of Balzac lies in his understanding and judgment of his class. As Engels said, after describing the *Comédie Humaine* as 'the most marvellously realistic story of French society: he was forced to go against his overt class sympathies and political prejudices, he saw the inevitability of the fall of his dear aristocrats and described them as not deserving a better fate, he saw the true men of the future where they could at that time only be found—all this I consider as one of the greatest triumphs of realism and one of old Balzac's great specialities.' (Letter to Miss Harkness, April 1888.)

". . . Balzac paints life in its evolution, its movement. 'Where there

is no motion,' he writes, 'nor possibility of conflict, life is absent.' This definition excludes naturalistic photography. To quote Fadeyev, 'Balzac is great because he achieves in his work the synthesis of realism and romanticism. . . . He gave a social and economic analysis of his contemporary society of extraordinary power and breadth.'

"Fadeyev's criticism of Balzac proves that only Marxist analysis allows us properly to understand the works of the past. How far-removed from the mole-like erudition of our universities and our literary reviews! They talk about the mysticism of Balzac; they psycho-analyse him; they put the all-important question: was Vautrin homosexual? Have these so-called cultured people ever considered the *Comédie Humaine* as a chance of enriching their minds, and not as a subject for a thesis?

"If they opened their eyes and feasted on Balzac's realism they would see what a unique place he holds in the development of our literature. . . . To quote Fadeyev again: 'The existence of a progressive romantic foundation gave an extraordinary power to the realism of Balzac. . . . When, subsequently, realism and romanticism in French literature became separated, they both lost by it. . . . The light of the French Revolution guided Balzac; but what the revolution gave birth to—capitalism—began to bear its bitter fruit. Romanticism tore itself away from abject reality, and realism lost its ideals and began to run wild.' Fadeyev goes on to show that . . . only socialist realism such as that of the Soviet writers is true to the tradition of Balzac's realism.

"Realism is one of our ways of knowing and controlling the world. Realist æsthetics are the only possible ones to-day. It is by them that we can accept the heritage of our literary past and particularly that of Balzac. We succeed him in the sense that we assimilate his lessons, while we go beyond him in the measure that our realism is no longer the fruit of unconsciousness, but of our political consciousness.

". . . To be a 'Balzacien' to-day is . . . to try to describe as far as possible the rise of the forces of transformation, their daily fight against the forces of reaction, and to fight oneself in the great battle for the future. . . . Balzac was unable, as we have seen, to adjust his political ideas to the future that he felt coming; for this no Marxist aware of the relativity of history will blame him. The essential thing, as Zola said, is 'that he wrote the most revolutionary works—works wherein democracy grows and asserts itself, on the ruins of a rotten society.' "

Balzac and Stendhal handled the same stuff, the society of their time, but Stendhal was, unlike Balzac, consciously revolutionary in his thought, a true heir of the eighteenth century.

To quote René Andrieu's article: "From the eighteenth century which saw his birth, Stendhal keeps not only the inestimable gift of vivacity, but the taste for analysis and clarity, the love of science, aversion to the

irrational, hostility to metaphysics. . . . He refers in his journals and letters to Condillac, Helvetius, Tracy and Cabanis. From them he gets his purely materialist attitude. . . . He applauds Tracy's declaration that 'philosophy is a part of zoology.' . . . He judges Descartes severely: 'He abandoned a sublime method and from his second step reasoned like a monk.' . . . To Stendhal the irrational is a refuge for the weak and a weapon for the powerful; religion is as dangerous as metaphysics, for it is a form of politics for making the masses accept the principle of a social order based on oppression: 'The idea of God is most useful for tyrants,' he said; and thought that 'to doubt Rome is the bravest action of modern times.' "

Andrieu goes on: "The idea of human energy is one of paramount importance to Stendhal. His philosophy is essentially one of *energy* or *change*. . . . 'Energy, quality *sine qua non genius*,' he writes, while he named a history of painting *The History of Energy in Italy*. . . . He wrote in *Henri Brulard*: 'In my view, energy is only to be found in the class which is struggling with real needs.' This fundamental idea is strikingly illustrated in all his works of fiction. Among his heroes the quality of energy takes different forms according to the milieu. The plebeian Julien Sorel shows it in the struggle for his life; with Fabrice the aristocrat, or Lucien Leuwen the bourgeois, this quality is forced away from action into passion.

". . . Attention has often been drawn to the likeness between the different heroes, and much of the author's personality is to be found in each of them. But each behaves according to his class, as though Stendhal had said, 'If I had been a poor peasant under the Restoration'—and created Julien. He might, as a banker's son under Louis-Philippe, have been Lucien; or Fabrice had he been an aristocrat."

Stendhal had no patience with the attitude of *mal de siècle* or *ennui* of his time. Julien does not experience *ennui* because he has to "embrace rugged reality," as Rimbaud put it later; while Lucien and Fabrice escape from that monster by love. When they do feel the *mal de siècle* it is different from that of Chateaubriand's René, so fashionable at the time. Theirs comes from an acute consciousness of the contradictions of society and an analysis of its conditions.

Morality or hypocrisy is another of Stendhal's *bêtes noires*. "I love mathematics," he wrote, "for they don't contain hypocrisy or vagueness, my two pet aversions."

And in *Le Rouge et le Noir* it is not the individual, Julien, but the hypocrisy of society which is on trial. Andrieu points out that Stendhal shows in this novel how, in a society ruled by the tryanny of an oppressing class, he who is born in a "lower class" has only the choice between hypocrisy and revolt.

Everything that is useful to the privileged class is "moral." Hypocrisy

is the very condition of the functioning of society, and one great merit of the *Le Rouge et le Noir* is that it throws so much light on the mechanism of the immense hypocrisy of bourgeois society.

Andrieu writes: ". . . Having exposed this mechanism, having swept away prejudices and illusions, what attitude does the Stendhal hero adopt? Very different from the romantic hero *à la René* . . . he is also different from the Balzac hero, in spite of the fact that both authors presented the problem in the same way and worked on the same social tissue: bourgeois society consolidating its position at the expense of the nobility, while the immense protest of the masses is taking shape. . . . Balzac's Rastignac and Rubempré judge, without any illusions, the social jungle where 'the death sentence is the only thing that can't be bought,' but they accept the rules of the game and the legality of the bourgeois order of things." The attitude of the Stendhal heroes is one of high moral tone; even with Julien, vowed to political machiavellism to conquer the conditions he needs in order to develop as a "free man," self-esteem forbids him to choose hypocrisy; and Lucien and Fabrice equally despise the social order in which they had to live.

"This society," writes Andrieu, "frame and subject of Stendhal's work, appears to us like concrete reality in these novels which their author intended as mirrors. . . . Stendhal's horror of the 'vague' resulted in a precise analysis of his epoch: Lucien Leuwen's chronicle of the July Monarchy is perhaps the most violent criticism of capitalist society ever made by a novelist. On one side we see the proletariat beginning to form itself into an organised force, on the other the privileged classes divided by their interests, but united in their fear of the working class; the Bank, the ministers, the prefects, the police ('whose one care is to see that there is not too much contact between soldiers and citizens'); religion which is 'the firmest support of despotic government'; the army, which sends a regiment against the workers (showing that the French Minister of the Interior to-day needs no imagination, as police methods have not changed since the days of Louis-Philippe)."

Andrieu concludes that "Stendhal, who was recognised by Balzac and Goethe but in the main unappreciated during his lifetime, is still misjudged to-day (perhaps with a purpose) by some, like Léon Blum, who dub him 'fatalist' and pessimistic.

"No doubt he knew the temptation of æstheticism and of escape through beauty, art, dreams. But a tendency to dream never hindered the clear vision of conditions of his time, nor smothered analytic clarity, nor led to mystification. Instead of giving way to *mal de siècle*, Stendhal determines its causes and shows a remedy in action. In the midst of metaphysical mists and romantic confusion he remains the faithful heir of the eighteenth century, proclaiming that life, science and beauty have no end but human happiness. This philosophy takes its whole value if viewed in its setting—a moment when the bourgeoisie was returning to

the opium of metaphysics and religion in order to protect itself against the new social forces rising up against it.... To-day when mystifications are flowing all the more freely because the bourgeoisie is more seriously threatened . . . the reading of Stendhal will be salutary to those who wish to see clear."

The encouragement to re-read Stendhal and Balzac is one of the great merits of these two articles, if they achieved nothing else; but it may be said that for many readers the re-reading will be in the new and stimulating light of Marxist criticism.

FRIDA STEWART.

Review of Foreign Publications

U.S.S.R.

Izvestia Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R. (*Seria Istorii i Philosophii*), Vol. 6, Nos. 1–3.

The *Journal of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.* (*History and Philosophy Series*), is the chief publication of the Soviet Academy of Science devoted to problems of history and the history of philosophy. It is bi-monthly, and the last number to have reached this country is No. 3 for May–June. (Its print is 6,300, which is much smaller than the chief journal of the Institute of History, *Voprosy Istorii*, and is edited by Volgin, Grekov, Deborin, Vasetsky and others.)

Most of the articles are primarily devoted to various problems of Russian history, and of considerable interest are the following: Leonov, "Lenin and Stalin on the concretisation of the dialectical method" (No. 1) and Alpatov, "Fustel de Coulanges and Russian Liberal Historiography" (No. 2).

The first article shows how Lenin and Stalin applied the dialectical method: "Truth is concrete, abstract truth does not exist." "Materialist dialectics by its nature is concrete." By a wealth of illustrations Leonov shows how Lenin and Stalin looked in every situation for the "concrete." The author brings out very clearly how Stalin pays attention in method to the correlation of parts and the whole in relation to one another, and the relation of the whole to the parts. All aspects taken together however are not yet the total phenomenon. The total is more complicated than the simple sum of the parts, it differs qualitatively by its own laws from the separate parts in their total addition. This article is fundamental for a correct understanding of dialectical materialism.

The second article is a brilliant criticism of the eminent French historian of the nineteenth century, Fustel de Coulanges. First it shows his reactionary views of history, his view that there "were never any breaks" in history, that the medieval world was, according to de Coulanges, a direct continuation of the Roman world, and why de Coulanges denied the common origin of land. The writer shows how his views were moulded by his hostility to the working class, particularly after the Paris Commune, and his Latin emphasis on the medieval world which derives from his feeling for revenge against Germany after the defeat of France in the war of 1870.

Alpatov analyses brilliantly how the liberal Russian historians of 1870–80 were to some extent critical of de Coulanges for his reactionary views, and pointed out the way he falsified medieval history both with regard to its origin, and as regards his denial of the common origin of land. This was when the liberal bourgeoisie was still progressive in a narrow sense.

But after the emergence of a Marxist Party in Russia during 1890–1900 and the growth of a militant working class, the liberal Russian historians turned fully reactionary in their support of Tsarist autocracy against revolution, and became in turn admirers of de Coulanges. Even some of his earliest critics in their combat against Marxism turned to de Coulanges for support.

Alpatov analyses the influence of de Coulanges on Dopsch and Petnishevsni as the leading exponents of a reactionary historiography which was attempting to deny the class struggle in the medieval community and their emphasis on the "peaceful" development of society.

There are other interesting features which deal mainly with specialised problems of Russian history.

The above two articles merit a full translation in English for they will be of considerable assistance to Marxist historians specialising in the Middle Ages and those interested in methodology.

C. A.

GERMANY

The August numbers of *Aufbau* and *Neue Welt* (a fortnightly journal published by the *Tägliche Rundschau* Press in Berlin) are mainly devoted to articles about Goethe in honour of the bicentenary of his birth. In both the level of scholarship is high. *Aufbau* is prefaced by a significant statement by Thomas Mann about the need "to resolve the highly dangerous and potentially catastrophic tension between truth and reality," and

this is followed by essays by Ernst Fischer on Goethe and his time, Georg Lukacs on the composition of *Faust* and Paul Wiegler on Goethe and the question of evolution. The contributions to *Neue Welt* are on the whole longer, the most extensive being that by Wilhelm Girnus on Goethe's æsthetic views. Hans Mayer discusses Goethe's thought from the point of view of his impact on later writers. The valuable reflections in this article make one wish that it had been longer, but even so it contains some admirable brief generalisations about such modern writers as Gerhart Hauptmann and Hermann Hesse, both of whom show the way in which Goethe's thought is handled by poets who are deeply involved in the crisis of bourgeois culture. English readers would, for example, be particularly interested in Mayer's treatment of Hesse's recent Nobel Prize novel, *Das Glasperlenspiel* (the English edition of which has the title *Magister Ludi*). Here, as Mayer points out, we have the attempt to rescue Goethe's humanism by transferring it to a cloistered *élite*, whose activities are pushed to the limits of formalism and intellectualism and so lack the direction which only contact with life can give. Also in *Aufbau* is a discussion by Heinz Kamnitzer on Goethe's position in the age of the French Revolution and Goethe's attitude to it, and by Heinrich Deiters on the educational value of Goethe's humanism.

Thus, these articles cover a very wide range and, taken together, they present a fairly clear picture of the spirit in which Goethe's bicentenary is being celebrated by scholars in the Soviet Zone of Germany. One recalls in this connection that *The Times* reported the celebrations in Weimar a few months ago under the heading "Opportunism in Weimar." The implication was that in the Soviet Zone violence was being done to Goethe's thought by claiming it to have a bearing on contemporary social and ideological struggles, whereas in the Western democracies the celebrations were being carried out in a spirit of scholarly objectivity. The truth is, as S. I. Tjulpanow observes in the opening essay in *Neue Welt*, that in both the attitude is partisan. The study of the contributions to these two journals and a comparison of them with many of the recent Third Programme talks would enable anyone to judge which interpretation comes nearer to the essence of Goethe. Such a comparison, however, would present difficulties, because the B.B.C. talks approached Goethe's work from so many different—and often quite irreconcilable—points of view that anyone who had not previously made up his mind about the question would have found it extremely hard to reach a final judgment about Goethe's work as a whole. It is in this respect that the articles in the two journals under review are particularly helpful, for they set out, not to intepret single aspects of Goethe considered by themselves, but to grasp the inner unity of his thought and development. This is possible because they examine Goethe in the light of his age and show that the contradictions of his thought arise naturally out of those of his time. As Engels stressed, Goethe stood in a double relationship to his time; great in some respects, he was petty in others. No less significant is the fact that these writers concern themselves with Goethe, not in a spirit of mere intellectual curiosity, but in the desire to discover to what extent and in what respects his work has a bearing on the problems of their own day and society. One contrasts with this fruitful approach to scholarship the bewilderment recently expressed by a learned Professor of German in this country (in reviewing some books on Goethe in *The Listener*) at the view that Goethe's work can make a valuable contribution to our understanding of the world in which we live.

R. H. T.

MEXICO

Nuestro Tiempo.

Spanish intellectuals in exile have launched this new quarterly *Our Times*, as an equivalent, for Spaniards and Iberian-Americans, of *The Modern Quarterly, La Pensée, Science and Society, Rinascita*. Its scope is both less and more: less because a large part of it consists of reprints or translations of representative essays found in other periodicals, more because poetry and fiction are incorporated with articles stressing theoretical questions and these, in turn, more closely identified with directives for immediate action. The new venture identifies itself as Communist though emphasising unity with Spanish intellectuals of other groupings in the struggle for peace and against Imperialism and Fascism. Its sponsors are famed in the Spanish world, among them a former luminary of Republican education in Madrid, the æsthetic critic, Renau, the leading Mexican Leftist writer, Mancisdor, the first poet of Latin America, Pablo Neruda. Like nearly all Spanish intellectual periodicals, there is too small a contribution based on Spanish speculation itself. Spain and her daughters are just beginning to add their original voice to the grand Marxian choir. But what there is that is new is startling. In the first place the editors are at the centre of discussion in Europe. They estimate the immense contribution of Georg Lukacs (based on the original German texts), for example, a task in which we are still laggards. Their analyses of Vatican policy, though aligned with those of Garaudy in France, are both theoretically and factually valuable on their own account. Their principal job, though, is reminiscent of the struggle of Lenin against pessimists and liquidators in the disheartening period of reactionary march from triumph to triumph after 1905. They combat capitulators, the disheartened, the cynical, the "realists," guardians of "spiritual values" of "Western culture" whose writings regrettably infect Spanish exile circles. Where the shepherding of Franco by the "Western democracies" seems to enhance his standing or else portend the arrival of some demogogic "democratic" variant, they bring up the full artillery of Marxism to annihilate the new regiment of deserters. The seriousness of their task further sharpens their wits and forbids writing in Academese or with bogus gentility. The principal theoretician (for the nonce) Renau, initiates a brilliant continuous study of Abstractionism and Realism in the Arts with a study of art as a commodity, as a form of merchant capital, using the pictorial arts as his example. No one that I know of has so acutely probed the implications of art as a commodity in its modes of expression, its fetichism (reflection of the fetichism of all commodity relations) and of the subjugation of the artist to commodity relations as in turn compelling a defensive, true, internal liberty, that margin of freedom within which is initiated new perceptions. There are almost as many new facets as there are paragraphs and this in a discussion in which Marxian critics have argued at length for two generations!

Nuestro Tiempo is edited in Mexico City, Edison 11, Depto 502.

W. J. B.

ARGENTINE

Minerva. Buenos Aires.

This philosophical magazine, initiated in 1945 under the auspices of Dr. Mario Bunge, is unique among non-Marxian reviews in that the relation of philosophy to the present needs of humanity is consistently stressed. Radical, militantly anti-fascist, it contains assaults on pre-Nazi thinkers like Scheler and Spengler, those whose conclusions served Nazism, like Sombart, Heidegger (the deity of Sartre) Jaspers, the celebrated psychopathic authority Prinzhorn, and many others whose fame and even authority (what a testimony to present bourgeois aspiration) remain untarnished in "intellectualist" circles today. They have survived the collapse of Nazism almost as integrally as their material overlords, the Ruhr industrial barons.

Minerva is an encouraging example of intellectual integrity and courage in a quasi-fascist country; its summaries of the more hopeful characteristics of Latin-American thinking are especially valuable at a time when the reactionary movement has brought about four recent successful *putsches* in this part of the world.

Only one criticism is fundamental, that so much is translated or patently derived from external sources. Naturally since Spain was long outside the main current of European thought one understands the astonishing prestige of an obscure German like Kraus, the adolescent power of Comte, Spencer and le Dantec. It is to be hoped that *Minerva* marks a turning point; the contents of the issues we have so far been able to see warrants that expectation.

W. J. B.

POLAND

Mysl Wspolczesna (*Contemporary Thought*), published in *Warsaw* and *Lodz*, No. 11, 1949.

This is an important number. The Editor, Dr. Adam Schaff, has a full-length article on cosmopolitanism in which he argues that the struggle with cosmopolitanism is the main ideological task for the camp of progress in the present historical period; he regards it as the conscious ideological expression of the reactionary policies of international imperialism and

above all American imperialism. Cosmopolitanism is the contemporary form of bourgeois nationalism. There is no contradiction between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism is only a particular form of nationalism. On the other hand, internationalism, which characterises the whole Marxist camp, is the ideology of proletarian patriotism. From the Marxist point of view, rationally understood patriotism necessarily leads to prolètarian internationalism.

In the second part of the article, the author formulates the concrete task of Polish science in the struggle against cosmopolitanism. The author states that cosmopolitanism is still a prevalent manifestation in the works of Polish men of science. To cosmopolitanism we oppose the traditions of national culture, but the progressive, national, revolutionary traditions.

From these considerations, the author draws three basic conclusions: The task of progressive men of science is to sift out in the progressive cultural tradition of their own nation their own home premises for the birth of Marxism. The struggle against cosmopolitanism does not consist in the uncritical contemplation of one's own national traditions, but in unravelling the progressive revolurionary traditions which constitute, as it were, the foundations of the development of the proletariat's ideology. This is a new task demanding a thorough re-evaluation of the history of our science and culture, and demanding that they should be looked at in a new light.

The second conclusion requires a sharp opposition of the unwholesome symptom of grovelling before "Western" science. In the period of decomposition of the capitalist world, the world of socialism is the centre of scientific progress.

The third conclusion demands that, while concentrating all the progressive forces of our science on the struggle against cosmopolitanism, we should realise that the struggle against cosmopolitanism is a struggle against the bourgeois science which predominates in the West and that thereby it is a struggle for the predominance of Marxist science. This requires a whole process of resetting the course of our science, of our culture.

George Cogniot has an interesting article on philosophical developments in empirio-criticism since Lenin's famous book, which was published forty years ago.

The author discusses a series of theoretical questions of great social significance, and bases himself on the problems put and the solutions given by Lenin in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. After discussing Mach's views, the author passes to present problems, and criticises the currents following in the wake of empirio-criticism, i.e. neo-positivism, pragmatism and the English philosopher, B. Russell.

In particular, the author discusses the manifestations of reactionary idealism in France in the field of historical sciences, sociology, the science of language, the history of religion and psychology. He devotes a good deal of space to a criticism of Le Senne, whose idealism has attained open scholastic nonsense and mysticism. The author stresses, that in spite of appearances, there is an alliance between Sartre and the Vatican. The contemporary representatives of philosophical idealism, Alain, Maurois, Schumann, Alexandre, Sartre, have completely abandoned the traditional Cartesian traditions. Their doubt is not a scientific method, but a deliberate paralysing of man's will and mind. Their doubt has as its objective to dig an abyss between the idea and the fact, between thought and action, have as their objective to spread pessimism and discouragement, to establish firmly the logic and the morality of slaves.

F. Georgiev also discusses Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* and its historic role, and proceeds to deal with contemporary idealism in physics, criticising the theories of Bohr, Heisenberg and Dirac from the materialist point of view. Moreover, the author shows that some Soviet authors and philosophers have not assimilated critically some of the deductions of Bohr and Heisenberg.

In the second part of his article, the author discusses the theory of reflection as the basis of Lenin's theory of knowledge. Here, the author discusses the problem of absolute and relative truth, the problem of practice as the criterium of knowledge.

Dr. Julian Hochfeld concludes his two articles on the English Revolution of 1640, which he calls "The Great Rebellion." While he is aware of the recent number of *Modern Quarterly* devoted to this question and quotes S. F. Mason's article on "The Influence of the Revolution upon the Development of Modern Science," he does not quote Christopher

Hill's book and is clearly unaware of the significance of the work recently done in this country on the English Revolution. It is nevertheless an interesting article.

The author discusses the development of the revolution, Cromwell's role in the period from the proclamation of the republic to his death in 1658, and finally the restoration of the monarchy and the return of Charles II to the English throne. Besides describing the important events of the revolution, the article contains interesting remarks on the shift of position and the transformation of particular classes and strata in the historical process.

J. L.

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