

# **anvil**

***And Student Partisan***

## **stalinism**

*retrospect and prospect*

**intelligence in captivity**

*by irving howe*

**stalinism: a reading list**

***hannah arendt vs. east berlin***

***russian leaders and the hero cult***

***from romanov to malenkov***

***science and totalitarianism***

***"russia, what next?"***



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## Stalinism: Retrospect and Prospect

-- an editorial introduction

IN PRESENTING AN entire issue devoted to an analysis of Stalinism and Soviet society, we are aware that an historical epoch has reached its peak and has begun to decline. Historical change in the twentieth century is swift, and young as we are we have already witnessed the fall of old and the rise of new social systems. That which is cannot be for long in a world of expanding technology, of colonial revolt and class struggle.

Although not everything can happen in history, the channels of change are many and not readily foreseeable. Direction of change is nonetheless not a mysterious matter available to conjurers only but is susceptible to clear analysis when authoritative data is available. To gather such data and to attempt such an analysis is the duty of those who seek to present their vision of a democratic society to their contemporaries.

We have recently witnessed, in the East Berlin riots and the obvious signs of unrest in the other Soviet satellites, a tearing at the very guts of the massive sociopolitical force in our world: that of the totalitarian Stalinist empire. With the signs of shakiness at the top (brought about by the death of Stalin himself) and the deep rumblings of internal rebellion, we sense that the tempo of change in the very structure of our world has accelerated, and that qualitatively new configurations are being introduced. We have chosen this, the time of dynamic in the Stalinist world, and thus by necessity in the entire world, as a time for re-assessment of the old Stalinist forms, and prognosis in regard to the new.

### An All-Russian Issue

An all-African or an all Indian issue, although serving to gather much vital information in one place would not be analogous to this issue devoted to the Soviet empire. This collective endeavor is not a mere publishing technique. It is a reaction to events of the past half-year whose significance we wish to highlight. It carries the implication, confirmed by experience, that one's attitude towards Stalinism is central to his whole political and social outlook. Our status as an anti-Stalinist periodical only partially explains this comprehensive effort. Deutscher's question, *Russia, What Next?* is of immense concern to all men. It is of special concern to us only in the sense that we have consciously appropriated major pol-

itical problems as our domain. It is also true that self-evaluation is a concomitant of this process. Being anti-Stalinists has meant fighting a particular enemy and gauging political prospects largely in terms of his strength. The loosening of the Stalinist stranglehold on workers' movements may mean a new lease on life for all democratic movements and may augur the halt of that general retreat of the independent left of which we, too, have been victims.

### Stalinism a Vibrant Force

In an analysis of Stalinism we cannot help but approach the political and social core of our time; Stalinism is both the result and the manifestation of the twentieth century socio-economic pattern. Its very attractiveness is tied up with the decline of capitalism on a worldwide scale, the destruction of colonial empires and the Asian cry for national independence. It is above all the *attractiveness* of Stalinism which we cannot ignore. Without this, there would be no force, no issue. And it is the realization that the lure, for huge segments of the world, lies in the fact that it answers the demand for a new way out from an oppressive status quo, which explains the existence of Stalinist China, and huge Communist movements in France and Italy.

From where, in its very monstrosity, does it derive a vibrant force? Here, we have to look at Stalinism as a duality: not as a merely totalitarian state, but as one which is also anti-capitalist, which holds as *piece de resistance* the myth of being based upon the will of the mass of the people. Here lies the strength, and the reason that millions have been drawn to a reactionary force, in the belief that it is a radical movement.

From an analysis of the system which we abhor, there also evolves the political idea for its destruction. In recognizing that its growth correlates almost directly with the cry for social change, that Communist Parties win mass support only in the absence of anti-Stalinist, democratic alternatives, we are convinced that a successful anti-Stalinist program lies only in support to these effective alternatives. (Indeed, if it were possible to imbue the American State Department with a sense of history, then it would become obvious to them, too, that United States' defense of the status quo, through military alliance and economic means, produces no challenge to

the dynamic lure of Stalinism, but shows the world instead merely an old system feeding upon its innards.)

### Political Climate of Our Time

A great deal has been written during the past decade concerning the flight of the free intellectuals from politics. The "failure of nerve," in its essence, represented a reaction from the rationalist belief in progress which characterized the thirties, a period of struggle when the ideas a man had seemed to make a difference. At that time the social system in this country appeared to be undergoing transformation, a fact which was hailed as a portent of a better world. Then optimism, and often radicalism, marked large sections of the American intelligentsia. We need not flinch from recognizing, in contrast, that in the climate of the early fifties, *Anvil* has been something of an anachronism, a hot house plant demanding special cultivation. Will rather than historical necessity made *Anvil* possible in the years of the Korean War.

The political atmosphere during which most of us have grown into adulthood has encompassed working-class defeat, the rise of fascism, the evolution of a new class society in the Soviet Union, and the growth of a permanent war economy in the United States. Democratic socialists and all believers in democracy have been deeply affected by the apparent impasse of a world divided into two monstrous power blocs. The atrocities of gas chambers and atomic incineration had seriously impaired the seemingly antiquated view that man can shape a world fit for human habitation. The political division of power enforced the general air of hopelessness. Radical initiative seemed a thing of the past.

In a world where great events have arisen — as though from nowhere, where enormous power has accumulated — as though by divine decree, where our ability to influence events has been destroyed — as though part of natural law, it is not strange that we have come to know the word "alienation." In hearing of the turning within of

many former radicals we were too wise to sneer; the zeitgeist favored the theme of "soul-sickness" as against an earlier theme of "sickness of society." Earlier theories and programs seemed facile; a tragic view of life tempered much of our thinking. Yet we have persisted in carrying over to the present some of the radical confidence of the thirties. And suddenly, though not from nowhere, this confidence seems justified. It is as if a new hope was born, when, on that morning of June 16, eighty building workers on a job in the Stalinallee in East Berlin, struck and marched in protest to the government buildings on the Leipsigestrasse. With the waving of the East German placards reading, "Free Elections," all the other slogans of democratic workers' movements, of defeat of Stalinism from within and through political rather than military means, slogans which had almost become more slogans, suddenly trumpeted themselves into the shocked ears of a restless, anxious world and became living words.

### In Assessing Stalinism

In this issue of *Anvil*, we attempt to partly assess the record of thirty years of Stalinism; we do not, as we would like to, write an extended obituary. We need reliable knowledge to guide us in our analysis and we need most of all to avoid seeing what we would like to see, but what may be but illusory symptoms.

Although politics have become increasingly complex, we do not believe that only specialists can grasp essential facts and develop valuable insights. The bibliography included in this issue is an open invitation to all to sharpen their understanding of Stalinism by their own efforts. In the thirties, we are told, students were less dependent on university courses for their political education. We call such intellectual independence healthy and in this and every issue of *Anvil* open our pages to all those for whom fearless thinking is a most precious part of our democratic heritage.

THE EDITORS



# Hannah Arendt vs. East Berlin

-- another glance at totalitarian dynamics

**IN STUDYING** modern society one must be constantly watchful for conditions arising to which old concepts are inapplicable. There is danger always of applying outmoded theories.

But in this very mental set of watchfulness there is also danger. The analyst may be tempted to develop new concepts and substitute them for old ones when such a course is unnecessary and even erroneous. He may act too soon on his *set* of alertness.

The events which began in East Berlin on the 16th of June may be viewed as a test of one such too hastily applied set of new alternative concepts — in this case concepts relative to the question of the nature of totalitarianism.

In a much admired book devoted to the subject, Hannah Arendt (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Harcourt Brace 1951) asserts that the nature of twentieth century totalitarianism has outmoded the concepts which have been classically used, by Marxists and others, in the analysis of social and political structure. Among the concepts which must go, in so far as Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism is concerned, are those of *class*, *ruling class*, *faction*, *rational political goals*, and even *party*.

## Her Theory of Totalitarianism

Let us consider the model of totalitarian development and mature existence as conceptualized by Hannah Arendt:

Party is replaced by movement, a less formal, less structured, and less utilitarian thing, having a mystical element also. Totalitarianism grows from this movement. It is an alliance between an elite and the mob. The elite are the dispossessed intellectuals who devoutly wish the destruction of a capitalism they despise. The mob represents the lumpen elements, those who stand outside the structured class order of bourgeois society. The crisis of capitalism leads to the breakdown of this structured class order and the mob is much augmented as whole strata lose the means of maintaining their positions. More than a mob now, we may refer to it after this augmentation as the mass. This term, mass, will serve to denote greater size and a key role as a new structural element of society. The success of a totalitarian movement is possible wherever such a mass, for one reason or another, takes the road of political action. The mass is not held together by a consciousness of common interest, nor does it possess that articulateness which is expressed in the determined,

limited and obtainable goals of a class or party. Some or all of the very bases of social and political *interest* have been broken up. Most importantly, the individual no longer occupies an economic position with which he identifies. He may also be no longer integrated in a family — one of a given status vis a vis others; he may be torn from his community context or the community's effectual life may have ended. Arendt is applying here what has been called the theory of "mass society." To restate it in a capsule form: Totalitarian movements are mass organizations of atomized isolated individuals.

The idea of "mass society" is of reactionary origins, which is, of course, no argument against its validity. It is just as reasonable that it is of reactionary origin as it is that the idea of class structure is of revolutionary origin. Considering both theories as ideologies, principles justifying social attitudes, it may be seen that the mass society idea serves as well to justify the feudalist in his sentimental attitude toward feudalism as the class structure idea serves to justify the revolutionist in his calling the majority to arms against the exploiting minority class.

The belief that class structure has meaning in a scientific sense, aside from its function in justifying the inflammatory activities of the revolutionist, is now widespread. The same such acceptance of the "mass society" concept, heretofore considered as the ideology of such reactionaries as Burkhardt, Ortega e Gasset, etc. may be expected to come. Certainly there has been a breakup of the extended family, of the small production unit, and of the manageable and knowable small community. This and the pulling together of men into large factories and large cities and giving them tremendously fast means of communication and transportation has at once extended the scope of man's communication with man and weakened its texture. Concomitant developments in recreation fit in perfectly with the pattern. Almost without question this has worked toward the "ideal" end of a mass of atomized and isolated individuals. When the fabric of a modern economic system is torn to pieces, and allowed to decompose — individuals losing their psychic as well as material integration in it — this atomized and isolated mass may become mob-like and a thing of great social significance.

According to Arendt it is this that is the basis of totalitarianism. Further, these characteristics of the origins of totalitarianism are carried over and become characteristic of the mode of operation of the matured system.

The isolation of the individual even becomes more or less planned into the system, as a source of energy for any undertakings the totalitarian state may wish to embark upon; it may become a means for controlling the people — through keeping them isolated from any sources of and impetus to the development of group or class interest which might be contrary to the interest of the controllers and exploiters. But Arendt says even of the controllers themselves: "The evidence of Hitler's as well as Stalin's dictatorship points clearly to the fact that the isolation of atomized individuals provides not only the mass basis for totalitarian rule, but is carried through to the very top of the whole structure."

### East German Events As Test

The East German events of June 16 and after may answer some questions which challenge the analysis of the operation of totalitarianism which Arendt gives us. We may ask: Is it true that the mass which rose up was structureless? Without felt common interest? Lacking in articulate, rational, limited and obtainable goals? Were the relationship of job and community insufficient to facilitate solidarity and common action based on structurally grounded similarity of interest?

To answer these questions let us investigate the facts. No one has questioned that workers *and no one else* began the revolt. This was reported by all observers without fail, insofar as I know. Here already is an element of structure. But was this conscious and was it based on interest flowing from the structural position, worker?

Although it was not generally noted by observers, it was *only* the workers whose position had been weakened just before June 16. It did strike many observers that, paradoxically, the revolt came five days after the announcement of a desovietization program. But this easing up had involved only middle class elements, without affecting the workers at all. On the contrary, the workers' lot had been recently worsened by the raising of production norms. And this, a strictly class issue, was the first rallying cry of the revolt — for an end to the exploitative norms. Here we have a class issue relevant only to the job situation and quite rational, limited and achievable. Very hearteningly, it *was* achieved, within hours.

The matter of norms was forgotten and the new slogans which arose to legitimate the continuing and sharpening struggle were ones calling for free elections and the unification of Germany — strikingly rational goals. By this time steelworkers and carpenters were joined and outnumbered by other workers, by students, white collar elements and housewives. But workers started it, were best organized and best disciplined. It would be difficult to imagine any other group organizing and carrying out anything of the order of the march in formation which the construction workers made all across Berlin. This represented a high form of solidarity.

Further, with particular relevance to the rationality of this struggle, we should note the attitude of the East Berliners toward troops. They were not regarded as en-

emies. Especially with reference to the native People's Police, many reporters noted whisperings to the effect that they are on our side or they do not want to hurt us.

Additional proof of the uniform negativeness of the answers to the above questions would not seem necessary. In closing on this point I quote a writer for the *London Economist* who, in speaking of the mobs of the Near East, says that they are "... in no way equivalent to the relatively thoughtful crowd that can be mustered out of political knowledge and reasoning like the crowd that lately caused the shift of policy in East Berlin." (in the *New York Times Magazine* of August 30, 1953)

So much for the mass. Since it does not fit the specifications of Arendt's model it is unlikely that the elite should. Unfortunately, and perhaps inevitably with elites, data is not so readily available. However, the struggle which resulted in the deposition of Beria would seem to have stemmed from a struggle among elite groups, rather than to have been a purely individual quarrel. Still falling, like dominoes seemingly, are men all over the Soviet world who were almost undoubtedly his associates, backers in the struggle for power and probably program. At least there seems to be no alternative explanation for the fall of these men so quickly after the fall of Beria himself.

We may argue by analogy from the satellite countries to Russia itself. Arendt might object that all of the above as well as the analogy with Russia is invalid because of the complicating factor of national oppression which exists in the German case. But she herself insists on the non-national character of totalitarianism. The societies of the satellite countries certainly have all of the "equipment" of totalitarianism in the same way that Russia does — the state party, the secret police, the mass organizations (for channelling and controlling social energy), etc. Any difference is probably only a matter of degree and calculated to explain why revolt occurs first here rather than there. The main lines should be the same.

To carry on the analogy, Russia has a definite structure of classes based on economic position and various community and other groups. All of these are sources for the development of solidarity of various sorts, and of more or less conscious group interests. We may expect that the working class of Stalinland has much to learn in a number of areas — tactics, leadership, organization, program, etc. The organizations of mass control have no doubt been effective in suppressing the expression of working class interest but it does not follow that they have destroyed the class. Such deficiencies as the working class has may be overcome with great speed in such experiences as that in East Germany. The structural basis for the quick maturation of a political working class is still there.

That there is a structurally outlined working class in East Germany is obvious. Beyond that, we saw from the June days that the workers were capable of definitely formulated goals and action, this despite the institutions of suppression. We have no reason to suspect that the same situation does not exist in the other satellites, or that

the workers in Russia are of any drastically different nature. Indeed, there is considerable evidence from refugees that in Russia itself there has been a development of rational achievable demands on the part of the suppressed. Perhaps the most comprehensive published source of this kind of evidence is in the book by George Fischer based upon interviews with escapees from behind the iron curtain. In addition, signs of the existence of conscious class interest, and even of the capability for achieving interest-dictated goals through organization, exist in the satellites. In Czechoslovakia, some time ago, the government was forced to reintroduce secret elections into the trade unions after such elections had been abolished. To be sure, the candidates are the same as before, nevertheless the state was forced to yield to the democratic demands of the workers, and this is significant.

Stories from the satellites of class action based on absenteeism, lowered productivity, and in some cases strikes, are many. All of these actions take place in the factory. In the state apparatus, for example in the party and trade unions, the members may stay away as a form of protest. There are many stories to this effect. One fairly complex and subtle pattern is a sort of classic through having been repeated in several countries. The government orders a stricter discipline or increases in production. Later the top clique finds out that the order was never carried out, and not even transmitted to the lower ranks of the party. Pressure from the workers, tacitly understood somewhere in the lower and middle ranks of the bureaucracy has actually limited, at least for a time, the extent of suppression.

### Not Yet 1984

To include on this main point, the theory of mass society, or mass social disorganization, *cannot properly be* substituted for more classic analysis as *the means of understanding the dynamics of totalitarianism*. Class structure, faction and clique (if not party) struggle, clearly expressed, rational and achievable political ends, and social bases for communal human action are by no means completely ended under totalitarianism — crippled though they may be. The totalitarianism of the first half of the twentieth century is not yet 1984.

This is not to throw out the theory of mass society for every use. Truly almost every serious analyst has found a breakup of the fundamental social relations of certain strata (middle class ones in particular) as critical in supplying the social energy for Fascism. This rending of social bonds produces what Erich Fromm, ironically but in a sense correctly, refers to as "freedom." Also, it is possible to point to a number of other areas in which the extent of massification, the degree of this sort of alienation, would be of critical importance. In our America society, for example, many special areas are subject to a fruitful use of concepts which point to the results of the breakdown in the old social bonds based on the extended family, small scale production, and the rural types of group recreation of the nineteenth

century which are so quickly giving way to mass media and other highly organized mass play. Still other special uses of these concepts are indicated in the excellent, long seventh chapter of Phillip Selznick's *The Organizational Weapon*.

So, while there is properly a place for the concepts of mass society in analysis of one phase and another of the modern world, these concepts have not superceded those classically used in assessing the modes of operation and the political potential of a society, or of totalitarian society. Under Stalinism we do have a fabric of social relations which lead to characteristic group interests, and in turn to particular and achievable goals, and again to organizational steps and pressure in the interest of these goals. The expression of these things is hindered, they may exist latently only and may be deformed by the control mechanisms of the ruling power, but exist they do. The mechanisms of control may be based on an understanding of mass society. That is to say, trade union, party cell, cultural organization and the rest may be run in the interest of keeping the people busy yet thoroughly controlled and supervised — keeping them from establishing spontaneous and unfettered ties which might lead to the development of conscious group interest and consciousness of the potentiality of communal action. Even if these organizations are run in this interest, it would seem from East Germany and elsewhere that the potentiality inherent in the undeniable class structure tends to win out.

Not only is there structure in the lower strata of society but events of the order of the fall of Beria and his henchmen indicate that there is also something other than a mass at the top. More plausible than the "mass" hypothesis, although unprovable, is the proposition that there are factions and cliques in the ruling class of the totalitarian state which have very real struggles over power *and also over policy*. Similarly in the middle and lower ranges of the bureaucracy there are variations in felt interest; as is the case with any middle class, here the variation tends to be one based on an ambivalence with respect to the more clear cut interests of the more powerful classes on either side. The middle bureaucrat may "forget" to be tough on the population with which he is concerned, or as a status hungry "striver" he may outdo those above him in the energy with which he works for their interest.

Class analysis with respect to totalitarianism — at least mid-twentieth century totalitarianism — is not yet justifiably superceded. In this respect Hannah Arendt does not enlighten but obscures the reality which we face.

Indeed, it is the *very fact* of the existence and activity of a well-defined working class in East Germany, which lends a strong strand of hope for the fall of the monster totalitarian empire of our time.

PHILIP ZIMMERMAN

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# From Romanov to Malenkov

*-- an historical analysis of the rise of Stalinism*

**THE RUSSIAN REGIME** has survived the death of Stalin and the purge of Beria. There have been no fundamental changes in the social, economic or political institutions of that unhappy land. Features which over-zealous observers interpret as signs of a change are really not new. The "collective leadership" currently in vogue has its almost exact counterpart in the triumvirate of Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev which began the Stalinist ascent to power; the present "soft" policy internally and externally is in many ways a cold-war version of the later NEP period when Stalin was consolidating his rule; and the accusations against and purge of Beria bear the classic stamp. In short, the Malenkov generation of Stalinists is drawing heavily upon the experience of the Stalin generation of Stalinists. All this is indicative of a *system* with recognizable and more or less predictable characteristics.

Elsewhere in this issue the general totalitarian nature of Russia is indicated — rigid class stratification, brutal exploitation, police terror, the oppression of subject nationalities, chauvinism. Awesome as this feature — totalitarianism — is, there are two perhaps even more incredible aspects. These lie in the answers to the following:

1. How did this monstrosity grow out of a movement originally idealistic, democratic and dedicated to the liberation of mankind?

2. How is this totalitarian movement still able to masquerade successfully as the continuator of the earlier idealistic movement in the eyes of millions of the world's workers, colonial peoples, intelligentsia, youth and ordinary small people?

In addressing ourselves to the first question — how Russia got the way it is — we go a long way in answering the second — what its true nature is.

The course of Russian evolution from Romanov to Malenkov is eventful and complex, but it is not supra-historical. It can be understood by reference to the events of the past half-century, in Russia and in the world.

## An Historical Analysis

The use of tools such as historical events known to all is, of course, prosaic. It is not as spectacular as the analyst's couch of, say, Koestler; not as simple as the moral divining rod of the western movie fan, Eisenhower; nor as infallible as the demoniacal theory on Russia shared by the Vatican and *The New Leader*. It is not even as illimitably and delightfully variegated as the Ouija

board employed, apparently, by the overwhelming majority of American journalists. A sober historical analysis is, however, capable of being tested and checked, verified or rejected. This, the reader is invited to do.

Tsarism — a barbaric word for a barbaric social order — does not mean a great deal to today's student. So terribly much has happened since. Yet Tsarism is only gone a generation from the Russian scene, and it has left that nation with a crushing yoke of backwardness. The revolutions of 1917 strained to lift this burden, but the weight — plus others — crushed the revolution instead. Thus many features of Tsarism are recognizable in Stalinism today.

## Life Under Tsarism

The Romanovs were — together with the Austrian Hapsburgs and the Turkish Sultan — the blindly adamant relics of absolute monarchy in Europe. Until the revolution in 1905 first tottered the throne, the Tsar simply issued the laws — it was as easy as that. After 1905, the autocracy put on a fig leaf in the form of the Duma — a mockery of a parliament, stillborn without power, prestige or importance. But Tsardom never granted civil liberties, freedom of expression, or democracy beyond a shadow, let alone the responsible ministry of a democratic constitutional monarchy.

The Russian *capitalist* class itself had no more say in the councils of government than the French third estate had had under Louis XIV. The peasant had one leg still in serfdom and the other bent to the knee before the smallest official. The clergy of the state church were more an arm of the secret police than members of a religious institution. The nobility — parasites without power or responsibility — were either demoralized or reactionary or both.

The real support of the government was a vast and greedy state bureaucracy. The Tsar could issue the laws by himself but he obviously could not enforce them. This was the role of the arrogant state officialdom, and, of course, it had a measure of independence circumscribed only by the necessity to stay within the confines of the system that gave it power. *Its attitudes, its methods, and in many cases, its personnel have reappeared in the Stalinist bureaucracy.*

Notable among the techniques of the bureaucracy was antisemitism. The programs instigated by the Tsarist police, as well as the infamous Protocols of the Elders of



Zion forged by the same gentlemen, are among the best remembered features of the old order.

Rule through these same secret police was another feature of Tsardom. Stalinism has only refined the techniques of the Tsarist *Ochbrana* — spies, *agents provocateur*, censorship, administrative arrest and sentencing, exile, and wholesale executions.

The ideology of the government was rank chauvinism — the more arrant because of the paucity of justification. *Tsar*, after all, meant *Caesar*, and Moscow was considered the third and contemporary Rome — that is, the center of the world! These were not figures of speech, but were meant literally. The reasoning was that Constantinople inherited the scepter of Rome and that Moscow in turn became the center of civilization when Constantinople fell to the Turks. A government which believed this had no trouble in oppressing the many subject nationalities that made up the Tsarist empire of that time and the Stalinist one of today. It is no accident that Stalinism has resurrected and glorified many of the dark heroes and traditions of Tsardom.

A strong element in this chauvinism was even anti-capitalism — either stemming from feudal arrogance or from the nationalistic romanticism of the Slavophiles.

Did all this mean that Russia was doomed, congenitally, to backwardness and brutishness? Not at all. It did indicate however, that the forces of progress in that country had an herculean task. They needed help and it never came.

It was World War I which gave the Russian left socialists — the Bolsheviks — the chance to try to modernize their backward nation. But before the monarchy and its heir, the provisional government, were finally driven from the stage by the tortured Russian people, the already meager legacy which the Bolsheviks were to inherit had been decimated and squandered in the war.

## **WWI Imperialism**

World War I — from the effects of which mankind has not yet recovered — rang down the bloody curtain of the progressive era of European capitalism. The extension of democracy under Gladstone; the economic progress of Germany under Bismarck; the last flush of true bourgeois radicalism in France under Emile Combes — all this was giving way at the turn of the century to the rattling of sabres. The prosperity and progress of western Europe had been based in large part on the relentless exploitation of the teeming colonial millions. Therefore, imperialistic war was the dark other-side-of-the-coin for 19th century progress. And World War I was imperialistic in almost classical purity. Tsarist Russia — whose presence among the Allies belied their afterthought that they were fighting for democracy — was no exception. Nicholas Romanov sank into the maelstrom while still grasping for the Dardanelles.

The Powers went into the war almost frivolously, expecting another parade ground summer campaign like the Franco-Prussian War. Instead, the butchery was prolonged for more than four frightful years. Russia — ill

prepared to begin with — suffered more than any other major participant. Before peace came, she had suffered more casualties than all the other nations combined. More of her soil was fought over than that of any other combatant. Her railroads, industrial plant, port facilities, farm animals, stocks of consumer goods, and her human resources were ground to shambles.

Finally in anguish and in anger, the Russian people, in 1917, swept aside the Tsar. The surprised politicians of the bourgeois parties, who filled the vacuum with a provisional government, continued the policies of the Tsar — especially the war. Within a few months they had lost virtually all their popular support and were overthrown. This was the work of the Bolsheviks — and of the workers and peasants and soldiers of Russia.

\* \* \* \* \*

Before the war, the vast and powerful (Second) Socialist International had been keenly aware of the danger of imperialist war breaking out. Again and again at the great international socialist congresses, they had threatened the governments and dynasties of Europe with revolution if they dared to go to war. Despite these bristling statements of revolutionary intransigence, however, the international collapsed at the first shot. The paternalism of Bismarck and the Tory radicalism of men like Joseph Chamberlain and Cecil Rhodes had effectively placated many leaders of the working class.

But the Bolsheviks stood by the ideals of the International. In the dark days of 1914 and 1915 and 1916, they worked to rebuild the shattered International. And in 1917 they seized power and took Russia out of the war. "Seize power" is perhaps too strong a term. Actually the provisional government was so discredited and the soviets were so popular that the whole matter took only a few hours and was not violent enough to interfere with the nightly performance of the Petrograd State Opera!

## **Bolsheviks as Internationalists**

Properly understood, the Bolshevik action was not Russian — it was European. To be sure it took place in Russia and profoundly affected Russia. But the Bolsheviks were internationalists and thus regarded their action primarily as the first blow against the war and entire capitalist system which bred it. From their first day of power, literally, their actions were oriented first of all towards peace and a socialist Europe. The day after the seizure of power the Soviet government proposed an immediate armistice and the conclusion of a peace treaty without annexations or indemnities. When the Tsarist general who was still in command at the front refused to negotiate an armistice with the Central Powers, the soldiers were instructed to themselves negotiate with the men in the trenches opposite until a new commander could be rushed to headquarters. The outrageous secret treaties signed by the Tsar with the allies were published. All this was only the beginning of a trip-hammer propaganda campaign for peace. American

President Wilson's Fourteen Points, for example, were called forth by the Bolshevik peace propaganda and it will be recalled that they provided the basis on which Germany finally surrendered.

To be sure, the Bolsheviks took domestic measures of a sweeping nature, also. First of all, the land went to the peasants. Titles were abolished, the eight hour day made legal, the church disestablished, divorce laws liberalized, the subject nationalities granted autonomy or the right to secession, as they chose. These, and a host of similar measures were passed at once. They were not only bedrock socialist measures which would have been taken in any case, but also, so to speak, "advertising" for the idea of socialist revolution in the rest of Europe.

At the same time, the foreign policy measures (though, again, bedrock socialist measures which would have been taken in any case) were vital to domestic success. Americans, insulated until recently from world affairs, have only begun to realize the unbreakable interdependence of foreign and domestic policy — one can't cut taxes while rearming half the world, for example, as the Republicans have discovered.

For Russian socialists, the interdependence of foreign and domestic affairs was of special — nay, quintessential — importance. Baldly the Soviet regime would stand or fall according to "foreign affairs", and this even if Russia were never invaded. And the Bolsheviks knew it full well.

To understand the above requires a brief but vital excursion into socialist theory. Socialism hoped to abolish classes by abolishing — scarcity, and therefore the need for classes. Obviously, such an undertaking would require an outpouring of goods and services on a scale never before seen by man. This naturally presupposed a highly productive economy. Europe as a whole offered that kind of an industrial base. Russia did not. Therefore, Russian socialism had to expand or die. Confined to backward and devastated Russia, a society aiming at socialism would soon fall into the old internecine struggle over such inadequate goods as were produced.

### **Brest-Litovsk Treaty**

Lenin stressed this a few months after the launching of the Soviet regime. The cruel treaty of Brest-Litovsk had been concluded with Germany a few days before the Seventh Congress of the Bolsheviks met. In urging approval of the unpopular treaty, Lenin pointed out that if there were a German revolution, then the treaty would not matter; if there were not, then all was probably lost anyway. This example could be multiplied endlessly.

As it turned out, peace came to the rest of Europe before it did to Russia. The ink was hardly dry on the dearly bought peace with Germany in the spring of 1918 when Russia was attacked by her erstwhile allies — Britain, France, Italy, the United States and Japan. This attack is usually politely referred to in the attacking countries as an "intervention." The motives were varied, and all of them were bad. The Tsarist government owed France huge sums of money and the French hoped to

install a Russian government which would honor this debt. The allied high command wished to create a puppet government which would drive the Russian army back into the slaughter. There was concern that huge stocks of war material delivered to Russian ports but never distributed due to paralyzed transport, might fall into the hands of the Germans. The British were solicitous about the Caucasian oil fields, which they largely owned. The Japanese hoped to remain permanently in the part of Siberia which they occupied.

Primarily, however, all of the allies wanted to crush the Soviet regime. While they did not succeed in annihilating it physically, their pressure did help materially to transmute the early Soviet regime into the Frankensteinian monster of today.

As a rule, the allies preferred to let the so-called White armies of anti-soviet Russians do the actual fighting — armies trained, supplied, armed, financed, provisioned and transported by the allies, and officered by generals whom the Soviet had too generously released a few months earlier. The allied troops themselves showed little stomach for the work. The French fleet in the Black Sea supporting the White armies actually mutinied.

### **Civil War**

It was this civil war, supported by foreign invasion, which brought on the real bloodshed in Russia. Only after the Whites had turned to assassination and the use of terror did the Bolsheviks turn to terror.

This civil war raged in one part of Russia or another (or in all parts!) for four years. The White armies treated any former member of the Tsar's army as a deserter, any peasant caught on the land of a former noble as a looter, any Jew as a Bolshevik. As a recent college text on Russian history says of the Whites, "the paths of their armies were lined with gallows and open graves. Most of the White forces were fiercely anti-Semitic, and their progress through regions inhabited by Jews was marked by pogroms more bloody than those in 1881."<sup>1</sup>

You do not fight a movement like this with leaflets. Indeed, the civil war period resulted in a great degree of militarization in the Communist Party, the Soviet government, and the economy. Inescapable though this was, it was not calculated to make for a society of equalitarianism, democracy, and plenty.

Great numbers of the most idealistic and self-sacrificing of the Bolsheviks fell in battle and others lived but were "used up". And the economy — it was figuratively and often literally a smoking ruin. Kiev, for example, had changed hands nineteen times! Far from a society where so much was produced that no man would have a motive to exploit another, Russia was on the verge of universal banditry. In his speech of August 8th of this year, Malenkov boasted that Russian industrial output has increased twenty-nine fold since 1924. He may or may not be exaggerating, but the figure does not have much relevance at any rate since industrial output in

1. Sidney Harcave, *Russia, A History*, Lippincott, 1925, p. 482.

1924 was a shade more than nil. Small wonder that the government was forced to retreat to a New Economic Policy which was in great measure a primitive, agrarian, market economy.

Obviously, the fate of a better society in Europe no longer rested with the Russians. This is not to deny their great accomplishments. The soviets — councils made up of the representatives of worker, soldier and peasant — provided a truly workable example of working class government. The Bolsheviks shortened the war; they finished with Tsardom once and for all. But all this was insufficient. Marx said of the Communards of Paris in 1870 that they had had the audacity to “storm heaven.” The Russian masses, led by the Bolsheviks, not only had “stormed heaven” but had breached the ramparts and established a beachhead! But the beachhead was never supported. The workers of Western Europe did not come to their rescue.

But they did, almost. In Germany, sailor, soldier and worker revolted in the fall of 1918, taking Germany out of the war and driving the Kaiser from the throne. Soviets were formed, but the leadership of the majority of the German workers remained with the type of socialists who had supported the war. One of them, Friedrich Ebert, became chancellor with the announcement, “I hate revolutions like mortal sin.” He did, too. He proceeded to prove it by crushing the German revolution in blood.

An understanding of the psychology of men like Ebert is vital to the understanding of our own times in general and of the fate of the Russian revolution in particular. But it is the subject for an essay in itself: Suffice to say that the morning coat of the government minister and the ego-salving exhilaration of the parliamentary rostrum had helped convince men like Ebert that only they (gradually, and “reasonably”, and with parliamentary niceties and finesses) could lead the working class to socialism. If the masses tried to interfere and do the job for themselves, they must simply be whipped back into line for daring to interfere with the appointed work of annointed men.

## Post-War Revolutions

There were other attempts at socialist revolution in post-war Europe, but (with the wisdom of retrospect) it can be said that after the German revolution had been crushed, it made little difference.

What of the ruling Communist Party of the Soviet Union after these defeats?

Objectively, it had been dealt many crippling blows. From the miserable legacy of Tsardom it had inherited colossal backwardness and a relatively tiny and inexperienced working class. To this the war had added — or subtracted — economic disorganization. Then, the civil war, with its further drain on the economy and the loss of many of the finest communist personnel. From the civil war flowed the dangerous militarization of the party, and an entirely understandable, but nevertheless dangerous, blunting of the democratic spirit of the Soviet

regime, particularly towards other working class and peasant parties.

Due to the cultural backwardness of the nation, it had been found necessary to use many of the old Tsarist officers, bureaucrats, technicians and specialists. These and other opportunists of all sorts, by a thousand routes, wormed their way into the party which was also the best guarantee, in the desolate land, of a job and a pair of shoes. Finally, the New Economic Policy, with its return to the motives and *rationale* of capitalism, unloosed the old dog-eat-dog outlook.

## Scarcity Means Class Society

Underlying all this was one stark, inescapable, brutal fact. *There was not enough to go around. There was scarcity.* And from that follows an iron conclusion! Men will struggle for what goods there are; some will win out, and these will erect a system and a state and an ideology to keep things that way. From that comes a ruling class and a ruled class. From that comes a class society. And that is the end of socialism.

Subjectively, within the party, the form that all of this took was the slogan of “socialism in a single country.” This hitherto unheard of and theoretically absurd notion appealed to a tired (and infiltrated) workers’ party in several ways. First, it rationalized away the crushing defeats abroad. They were lamentable, and all that, but they were not necessarily fatal to Russia, after all (according to the new theory.) Secondly, and more important, the new theory “froze” the status quo in Russia. That is to say, people who are on top of the heap would stay there. No more sorties against foreign capitalist governments (which might turn on the Soviet Union and crush it, if the sorties continued to fail.) The abandonment of world revolution meant the abandonment, actually, of all the old ideals and plans in favor of working out the future in a new and untried and strange way. The result — certainly unforeseen and undesired by even the worst Stalinists of that day — is before us now.

Actually, class rule began to crystallize in Russia from this time (about 1923.) It was inchoate, it was hesitant, it was confused and timid, but it was class rule. Its seat of power was the government and party *bureaucracy*. The use of the term *bureaucracy* here, rather than *officialdom*, is deliberate. It implies that the former officialdom, now permeated with the military habit of command and appointment, now infiltrated with hostile elements, now shot through with former idealists who were tired and losing faith, was no longer democratically controlled by the party rank and file, or by the soviets, but was over and above them. It was a reflection of the inescapable fact that over a long period of time it is simply impossible to divide up scarcity democratically.

As every class society must do, this new bureaucracy turned first to subduing the workers. This meant in actuality subduing the best of the true remaining bolsheviks, who were the political representatives of the workers. They were already organized as an opposition to the emerging regime — opposed to “socialism in a single

country," opposed to the lack of democracy in the party, opposed to the continuation of the capitalistically oriented New Economic Policy. Given the relationship of forces within the country, and the help of an emerging right wing which was violently *in favor* of the N. E. P., the left opposition was voted down and then expelled. It was done in the *name* of the revolution and the funeral of any hopes for socialism in Russia.

But Russia did not go back to capitalism, as the left opposition had expected it would do after their defeat. If it had, an analysis of Russia today would be much simpler.

The bureaucracy turned, instead, from its fallen foes on the left and struck down the erstwhile allies on the right. The neo-capitalist figures of the N.E.P. period — the Kulak or rich peasant; the Nepman, or small entrepreneur and trader — these were wiped out in a frenzy of forced collectivization in the rural areas.

The society which resulted still had some resemblance to a socialist society — enough to fool a lot of people then and still fool a lot now. The main resemblance was that, as in socialism, the government owned the means of production.

### The Absence of Democracy

The missing ingredient, however, was and is *democracy*. The people no longer controlled the state which controlled the means of production — as they once did through the now-throttled soviets. Rather, the bureaucracy controlled the state and *thus* the means of production. This writer, following others, chooses to term such an arrangement *bureaucratic collectivism*. A simpler term has been coined from the name of the individual who happened to become the spokesman and leader of the rising bureaucracy. The man is, of course, the apostate Bolshevik, Stalin, and the term, Stalinism.

It remained only for this new ruling class to finally dispose of its already vanquished foes. This was the function of the famous *purge* trials of the thirties. The spurious nature of these trials, in which almost all of Lenin's old associates were sentenced to death on fantastic charges, is now no longer doubted. What is not always understood is the character of the trials. It was not "the revolution devouring its own children," as has been said. It was the *counter*-revolution destroying anyone who had opposed it, or was opposing it, or might oppose it in the future. And it was more severe than, say, Chiang-Kai-shek's repression of the Chinese revolution or Thier's liquidation of the Paris communards; the counter-revolution of Stalin was of a new type. It did *not* represent the old propertied classes returning to their customary rule, but, rather, a *new* ruling class shakily taking its first steps. For exactly that reason, the purge of Stalin was more bloody, more vindictive and more hysterical than any known to modern times. *He was more frightened.*

The Stalinist counter-revolution was different in another sense, too. It claimed to be acting in the name of

the ideas and men it was liquidating. It declared that it was defending, not destroying, the heritage of October. This was confusing and was meant to be confusing. It is also a key to the strength of Stalinism. That strength flows in large part from two facets of bureaucratic collectivism.

### Stalinist Strength

1. Stalinism masquerades as true socialism, as the real thing, thus trying to appropriate to itself the tremendous prestige which the early Bolshevik regime had throughout the world.

2. Without needing to masquerade, bureaucratic collectivism *really is* anti-capitalist. It is also anti-labor, as the workers of East Germany understand very well and have made plain to all who will see. But it is the anti-capitalism, of course, which gives Stalinism strength. No matter that it is also anti-labor. No matter that it opposes capitalism only because it would replace it with its *own* peculiar exploitative and oppressive and imperialistic system. To the extent that this becomes known, of course, Stalinism loses. But it is *capitalism* which keeps the Italian factory worker unemployed, the French dockworker underpaid, the Indo-Chinese peasant under the French heel, the Guatemalan plantation hand in near-serfdom, the Iranian oil worker idle, and the American packing-house worker in the slums back of the yards. Until the contradictions of capitalism (which is dying on the vine in *every* country mentioned above except the United States)\* are solved in a progressive way, until that time, what Sidney Lens has called the counterfeit revolution, will continue to draw strength from capitalism's ever more precipitous decline.

On the other hand, every step towards real social democracy cuts Stalinism off from its source of strength as a political movement. The real social gains made and the continuing role played by the British Labor Party, for example, have all but annihilated the British Communist Party — something that American billions have not been able to do in France and Italy.

Thus, a real path to the emasculation of Stalinist appeal presents itself. What will be done about it remains the question.

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# Intelligence in Captivity

-- a discussion of Czeslaw Milosz' *The Captive Mind*

**MEN OF SENSIBILITY**, who take upon themselves the burden and the honor of cultural tradition; who begin with, or come to, an awareness of all the misery that churns beneath the surface of manners and of habit; who cannot rest because peasants in China, or Chile, lie starving; who assume their share of human responsibility, which means in our time to understand that in almost every part of the world but the United States humanity yearns for some vast cleansing change, regardless of whether this yearning is expressed in the clichés of politics, the rituals of religion or the fantasies of day-dreams —

How can such men, how can artists and writers and intellectuals, become Stalinists?

In America few intellectuals remain Stalinists, and those who do are mainly of the *lumpen* sort, half bum and half bureaucrat. But in Europe Stalinism has been able to win, and keep, major intellectual figures, men who cannot be dismissed or condescended to. That this is so, is a symptom of that fragmentation of feeling which characterizes our time; men capable of writing exquisite lyrics can be political barbarians and political thinkers of revolutionary depth can be cultural philistines. To say this, however, is merely to extend the description, not yet to account for the fact.

*Why?*

## The Pressure of Memory

Czeslaw Milosz is a Polish poet who worked briefly as a minor official in the Stalinist government imposed upon Poland by the Russian army. In 1951 he broke away, fled to Paris, and became an anti-Stalinist, though of a dissident kind. In *The Captive Mind* (Knopf; \$3.50) he has written a valuable account of the social psychology of the Stalinist intellectuals, valuable, in part, because it comes from "the inside." And valuable even more because, in a field of journalism where the rubbish mounts straight up to God's feet, Milosz writes from personal experience and from deep feeling: he starts not from one or another ideological formula but from a sense of pain and the pressure of memory. His aim is neither public approval nor a fast dollar but an ordering of his own experience. And he writes extremely well, with a compressed fervor and eloquence. That his central idea seems a vast oversimplification, does not prevent one from saying that his book merits serious attention and respect.

God, said Nietzsche, is dead — a remark that was to prove one of the turning points in human thought, like Marx's declaration that a spectre is haunting Europe or whichever of Freud's sentences you prefer. Nietzsche did not mean that everyone in Europe had ceased to believe in God; quite the contrary. He meant that from his day onward the belief in God, especially for the educated and semi-educated public, could not but be *problematical*, and problematical to a degree that it had not been for centuries before; it was no longer an inheritance received with mother's milk, no longer a basic *assumed* fact of existence. And once it had become problematical, the whole structure of life that had been built upon it — the structure of ideas and values and modes of behavior — began to crumble.

## Modern Need for Values

Milosz does not explicitly refer to Nietzsche, but his analysis of Stalinism and its appeal to the intellectual would not be possible without Nietzsche's great insight. Like Koestler in *The Yogi and the Commissar*, Milosz is acutely conscious of the yearning for some belief, for some sustaining "values", that is everywhere to be observed in modern life; and in Stalinism he sees the first full world-system, the first absolutely total guide and guardian since Christianity. Dialectical materialism in its Stalinist version, the "Method" as he calls it, provides new ways of thought and feeling; it replaces Christian dogma with a dogma equally far-reaching and pretentious, and in its emphasis on fluidity and change it is both subtler than the Christian mode of thought and more amenable to manipulation by the state and the party. Stalinism, that is to say, satisfies the metaphysical hunger of the modern intellectuals by providing them a Method that banishes once and for all . . . metaphysical contemplation. The Method assumes for itself the distance and inviolability of God, and the fact that one knows — yet what does it mean to know if one cannot speak? — that the Method does not really "exist" as some independent logic or process incarnating the motions of history but is merely a set of categories manipulated by slave masters; the fact that one knows this cannot change one's need to acquiesce or one's awe before the power behind the Method. In other words, the Method becomes a kind of hypostatized "double" of the State, the Method being inviolable exactly as the State is beyond challenge.

This theory, which I have summarized baldly, is a bit too tempting to quite do. That there are no common binding values today in the sense that there were in fully Christian eras, is true — yet not true without much qualification. Any examination of the Christian past shows that the homogeneity which writers like to find in it is at least partly the result of their desires: the greater their distance from the past, the more do they see it as homogeneous. Nor is the present quite so devoid of binding values as some people like to suppose; the very complaint about their absence indicates that, however inadequately, they are still present. It is very easy to minimize the staying power of the humanist tradition, of the Enlightenment and the political movements that sprang from it; very easy to brush aside the moral complex that these great movements built up; and very dangerous, too.

But a more fundamental point is this: between the large looming fact of the presumed moral vacuum of our time (I don't question its existence, only the simplicity of most of its descriptions) and the immediate fact of Stalinist triumph there is too great a distance: the alleged cause is too general for the effect, failing to explain why Stalinism triumphs in one place and not another, or why it thrives in one Catholic country and not another (both being presumably subject to the same decay of faith), or why it is powerful in religious Rome and in skeptical Paris, or why it fails in England but succeeds in China. Like all efforts to explain discrete social phenomena by roomy metaphysical categories, it collapses from sheer airiness.

### How Much Lure in Stalinist Ideology?

Milosz, nonetheless, has come upon an important question: what is the role of ideology in winning converts to Stalinism? It depends, first of all, on whether we are speaking about a country in which Stalinism has taken power or one in which it has not. In winning French workers, Stalinism *does* rely heavily on an ideological appeal: it exploits its false claim to be the inheritor of the Russian Revolution (a claim that almost all of its enemies, with fatal obtuseness, are eager to certify); it appropriates the still vibrant strands of socialist belief among the French workers; it appeals to the anti-state, syndicalist tradition of the latin countries (*Je m'en fiche!*); it speaks as the only party that wishes "to change everything". But at the same time, together with these ideological appeals, it relies heavily on the reserves of sheer power that lie behind it, that is, on Russian might. That ideology matters, again, in the appeal to the French intellectuals is beyond doubt — yet here again we must qualify. For if you trace the fortunes of Stalinism among the French intellectuals during the past decade, you can see that there is a considerable correlation between the degree of Stalinist power and the intensity of the intellectuals' adherence to it. The workers, having more immediately at stake or at least something more immediately tangible than the intellectuals, are somewhat slower to abandon their allegiance during one

of the weak phases of Stalinism; where the intellectuals issue dramatic public statements, the workers sink into a hesitant passivity. But the idea suggested by Milosz (and eagerly adopted by Peter Viereck in his *N.Y. Times* review of the book, as a way of clobbering intellectuals) — the idea that intellectuals as a group are more susceptible to Stalinism than are the workers — is demonstrably untrue; it *may* have been true for a moment after the Stalinists took over in Poland and the intellectuals, being more agile than the workers, began to adapt themselves, but it has not been true in Europe as a whole or in America. On the contrary: the workers of Italy and France have, alas, been more stubborn in their loyalty to Stalinism than have the intellectuals.

### Intellectuals and Ideology

That ideology plays a major role in winning converts to Stalinism in those countries where it has not yet taken power, is indisputable; that it plays a similar role in those countries where it has taken power, seems to me both wrong and a dangerous concession to Stalinism. Milosz, like a good many former Stalinists exaggerates the attractive power of Stalinist ideology *taken simply as an intellectual system* apart from its power context; he is still under the sway, as Koestler is, though with far more dignity and thoughtfulness, of that which he has rejected. Is it really conceivable, as he supposes, that any considerable number of Polish intellectuals "sincerely" believe what they write and must write? The specific evidence he himself offers in his case histories of intellectuals won over to Stalinism (by far the best part of the book) tends to contradict his assumption. Of course, there can be no certain refutation, since there can be no certain proof; but we have some reason for supposing that he greatly exaggerates when he writes: "The Method exerts a magnetic influence on contemporary man because it alone emphasizes, as has never been done before, the fluidity and interdependence of phenomena . . . The Method is mysterious; no one understands it completely — but that merely enhances its magic powers."

### A Discussion of Methodology

Along similar lines, Milosz describes a meeting at which intellectuals were subjected to a Stalinist barrage: "The pressure of the state machine is nothing compared to the pressure of a convincing argument . . . I had the impression that I was participating in a demonstration of mass hypnosis . . . Do I believe that the dialectic of the speakers was unanswerable? Yes, as long as there was no fundamental discussion of methodology."

With all due respect, I submit that Milosz's answer is nonsense. Is it necessary to discuss metaphysics, or the Stalinist version of dialectics, or its "view of man" in order to show that it represents a horrible tyranny? If one had to engage in a "fundamental discussion of methodology" in order to refute a totalitarian movement or in order to defend democratic or socialist values — then, indeed, the human situation would be hopeless. Aside from the fact, to which I shall return in a moment, that



the Stalinists do not have any "fundamental methodology" (nor does any totalitarian movement), it is perfectly possible — indeed, indispensable — to refute and attack Stalinism in terms of what it means, of what it does, of what it is in life: visible, immediate, appalling. The reason neither Milosz nor anyone else at that conference of intellectuals couldn't refute the Stalinist speaker was very simple: there was no freedom; any dissident who attacked the system the speaker represented would have found himself in peril for his life. It wasn't the superior intellectual power or achievement of the Stalinist hack that made for silent acquiescence; it was simply the fact that he had policemen behind him, either literally or figuratively.

### Essence of the Totalitarian Mind

Both Stalinism and Nazism are new in this respect, among others: that in any strict sense they cannot be said to have an ideology or a coherent and consistent body of ideas. They *use* ideas and ideologies; they are not committed to them. In trying to win away a person from Stalinism it may be necessary, as a didactic device, to argue with him about Stalinist "ideas"; but it is absurd to debate with Stalinism, or any other totalitarian system, in the way that one may debate with individuals or groups one disagrees with but respects nonetheless. And what, indeed, is the "fundamental discussion of methodology" that Milosz or anyone else is to have with the Stalinists? The essence of the totalitarian mind is that it cares nothing for the dignity of either ideas or people: and if someone could have gotten up at the conference of intellectuals in Poland to say *that*, it would have been far more effective, or at least far more true, than anything Milosz could have said about "methodology."

The great strength of *The Captive Mind* is in Milosz's concrete and often extremely touching description of how various intellectuals adapt to and squirm under Stalinist rule. The speculations he offers on a socio-psychological plane, as distinct from those on a formal intellectual plane, as to why intellectuals turn to Stalinism are very acute. He understands the yearning, which is both a sign of a desire for health and a possible basis for self-betrayal, of those intellectuals who feel desperately cut off from the masses of people and wish to "belong", at whatever cost. This yearning leads them to overlook — or if not to overlook, then to cast away their knowledge of — all the crimes of the movement to which they attach themselves: the intellectual hypnotizes himself with the idea of *necessity*, verbalizing thereby the vague emotions of despair and lassitude that lead the less articulate sections of the population to "accept" the regime with hostile passivity. No society in modern times has seemed so difficult to resist as the totalitarian one (if the riots in east Germany suggest that resistance is still possible in the earlier stages of the totalitarian state, do they not, alas, suggest also that rebellion from within, and without aid from the outside, has only the faintest possibility of success?) Every sec-

tion of the population, every segment of political life feels the inexorable pressure to surrender: what else, people wonder, can be done?

### Two Rationalizations

Together with this argument from necessity, there is the argument from success. For all their verbal devotion to Ideals and Values, intellectuals are as susceptible as anyone else to creature comfort; they will succumb — not all, but many — to the temptations of big dividends, publicity, speeches, honors, apartments, women. *There is no other way — and besides, they are betting on the right horse.* The two rationalizations dovetail very neatly. And as conscience prods and needles, one learns the various strategies of disguising one's thoughts in a variety of subtle ways, mainly by finding some outlet in esthetics, personal ethics, private religion, nationalism or scepticism for all those accumulated resentments and emotions which the New Faith does not allow to be expressed.

### Thinkers Who Gave In

The best of *The Captive Mind* consists of four brilliantly subtle and graphic portraits of intellectuals who, in various ways, made their peace with Stalinism: Alpha, driven by a need for some super-human purity, who later wrote a book about the Stalinist "revolution" which "was entirely dominated by a feeling of anger *against the losers*"; Beta, who had written horribly nihilistic and violent books about his experience in the concentration camps, making himself out to be callously indifferent though in fact he had been heroic, and who suffered as a disappointed lover of the world who had come to hatred; Gamma, the Slave of History, who looked upon history as a devil with whom one signs a pact ("He considered himself a servant of the devil that ruled History but he did not love his master"); and Delta, the Troubadour, the alcoholic genius who wrote magnificent nonsense poems and others that were far from nonsense. ("Braced on my Waterman | I go off to the abyss | of eternal doubt"), and who became a kind of clown in the pay of Stalinism, singing its praises in such elaborately preposterous ways that no one could tell where venality left off and satire began.

### Description of Stalinism

Each of these descriptions is fascinating precisely because it is grounded in individual peculiarities, because it evades large and empty generalizations and instead limits itself to individual persons. Sociologically, they do not, of course, add up to a theory of Stalinism *vis a vis* the intellectuals; but the descriptions are more interesting and valuable than a theory. Psychologically, the four cases have at least one thing in common: each of the men who surrendered to Stalinism felt an intolerable sense of self-dissatisfaction, a virtually complete lack of self-love (which is not the same thing as vanity at all; of vanity they had enough!) Each of them felt a need both to "complete" their egos by sustaining relationship

with something outside of themselves, something "larger" than themselves, and at the same time — perhaps the two are, in these instances, much the same — a need to obliterate their egos, to cease to exist as individual persons. This is an ambivalence of desire that Stalinism, with its unique blend of pseudo-revolutionary and reactionary appeals, is peculiarly suited to satisfy.

I want, finally, to say a word about Milosz's political slant, which is never formally worked up but is quite clearly indicated. Perhaps the strongest part of his book is that, unlike so many American intellectuals who write articles on why Europeans don't love us, he has a genuine sense of the crisis of our time; the Eastern intellectuals who look, he says, to the West for intellectual succor would, if forced to formulate their ideas, "undoubtedly reply that they want a system with a socialist economy, but one in which man need not struggle desperately in the snake-like embrace of the Method." Milosz's book has not an ounce of that complacency, that mildly chauvinistic sense of American "superiority", which blemishes so much of current intellectual writing in this country. Milosz is superb in describing why the opposition of the reactionaries to Stalinism must seem ineffectual and irrelevant to thinking Poles: "Emigre politicians help greatly to facilitate the work of the [Stalinist] government . . . Their listeners are not displeased to hear them abuse a government they, too, dislike; still they cannot treat their formulations seriously. The discrepancy between these politicians' favorite words and the real situation is too clear . . . the people's instinctive judgment is tinged with something like embarrassment, with shame that those who oppose dictatorship are not mentally up to its stature. Because man instinctively senses weakness, the people become ever more reluctant to side with the reactionaries. Thus, the feeling of fatalism grows stronger."

## What Alternative Does the West Present?

And Milosz also deserves listening to on the relation of the West to Stalinism: "Usually, what is strong in the West is purely negative. Its criticism of the New Faith is often accurate, but despite this, it points no way out, and introduces nothing to replace the Method. One can, it is true, say that it introduces a living man unashamed of his thoughts and capable of moving without the stilts by citations from the authorities. To the Eastern intellectual, this is insufficient. One does not defeat a Messiah with common-sense argument."

This seems to me well-put: it neatly places a finger on the weakness of the capitalist West yet acknowledges the crucial way in which that West is superior to the world of Stalinist barbarism. Both those who would surrender all critical attitudes toward the West in their desire to destroy Stalinism, and those who from a disgust with the modern world would pretend to see no differences between the two sides significant enough to have major consequences in politics, should read Milosz's statement carefully. It offers no specific answer to the question of what socialist politics should be today; but far more important, it offers a clue to what socialist attitudes should be — and at this moment, the second seems to me far more important than the first. In any case, Milosz is a rare example of a man thinking independently, critically and humanely: his book is one of the few written on Stalinism that deserves to be read with care and admiration.

IRVING HOWE

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## "In the Spring a Young Man's Fancy..."

"The Moscow radio recently had a broadcast dealing with the amorous relations between a kolkhoz worker and a young girl tractor driver. The scene takes place in a field, on a night of the full moon:

"The young girl stops the motor for a moment and says: 'How wonderful it is to work on such a night, and to do everything to economize on gasoline.'

"He: 'This night has given me the idea of working more and more to surpass the plan.'

"They fall into each other's arms and he murmurs tenderly: 'From the very first moment I saw you, I was enraptured by your capacity to work.'"

From the Swiss periodical, *Freies Volk*, quoting verbatim from a Russian broadcast.



# Russian Leaders and the Hero Cult

IN THE MONTHS following Stalin's death, the new leaders of the Soviet state launched a mild and embryonic revolt against some of the major policies of the dead dictator. Perhaps the most astonishing of the many "reversals" undertaken by the new regime — even if it was the one least observed by our experts — was the official repudiation of the cult of heroes. *Izvestia* explained in an editorial last June:

The Communist Party has always based all its activity on the Marxist-Leninist thesis of the decisive role of the masses of the people in the development of society. . . . Therefore the Communist Party firmly opposes the cult of the individual figure, and its theory and practice are steeped in the deepest faith in the inexhaustible creative powers of the working class and all working people. . . .

The special significance of this rejection of the "cult of the individual figure" lay in the fact that it was a repudiation not merely of one of Stalin's favorite policies, but *one of the basic axioms of Stalinist ideology itself*. If taken at its face value, a more emphatic repudiation could hardly be imagined.

Whether the post-Stalin regime is really serious about its renunciation of the hero-cult, and whether it could ever be successful in effecting such a drastic repudiation of the ideology upon which it is based — these are matters of grave doubt. But that the pronouncement at least *implies* a sharp break with the previous ideology of Stalinism will become clear from an historical examination of the roots of that ideology itself.

## The New Russian Ideology

To understand the importance of the cult of heroes in the general ideology of the Soviet Union it is, first of all, necessary to realize that its origins lay precisely in the rise of Stalinism as a distinguishable political force in Russia in the middle 1920's. Furthermore, it is helpful to realize to what extent this new ideology represented a break with the ideology of those forces which made the Russian Revolution. In this context it will become clear just how indigenous the cult of heroes is to Stalinism, how inseparable it is from it, and how improbable it is that there will today be a return to the ideology of Marxism from which it allegedly sprang.

The traditional Bolshevik conception of history was the Marxist view, essentially deterministic in spirit, emphasizing the importance of underlying social and economic factors in historical development. The Marxist movement in Russia had, in fact, emerged as the result of a spirited struggle with the Populists who had been traditionally attached to the cult of individual heroes.

According to this Marxist view, expounded by Plekhanov in 1898 for the purpose of clarifying the question for Russian Marxists, the course of history is largely determined by those immense social forces which, while consisting partly of individuals, cannot be directed solely by their individual conscious wills. Although repudiating the mechanical view which visualized men as mere instruments of external forces, Plekhanov fought vigorously against all manifestations of the "great man" conception.

Leaders arise, and take commanding positions, according to Plekhanov, in so far as they can express the needs and aspirations of a particular social grouping. The leaders themselves take on the characteristics of the social organism which they find supporting them. Thus Plekhanov, and the Marxists in general, tended to minimize the distinction between the leaders and the people, and viewed the two as bound up in the same historical movement.

## Marxist Concept of History

Plekhanov's work, fully in the Marxist tradition, became one of the cornerstones of the early Russian Marxist movement. Even though, as Bertram Wolfe has so validly pointed out, the Leninist faction of the Russian Marxists often inclined toward emphasizing revolutionary will (the personal and collective will of the revolutionists), the essentially deterministic foundation laid by Plekhanov remained an integral part of Bolshevik thought throughout the first decades of this century.

Lenin did not take up the question directly in any of his writings, but his adherence to the "materialist" view of history included its basically contextual bias, that is, the view that men and events are explained by their context rather than the other way around. Indeed, one finds this written most explicitly in Lenin's own analysis of the causes for the 1917 Revolution itself:

It is not through any will of ours, but owing to historical circumstances, to the heritage of the tsarist regime and the feebleness of the Russian bourgeoisie that this detachment finds itself in advance of other detachments of the international proletariat — not because we wanted it but because circumstances demanded it.

And at another point in his writings he said that the Russian Revolution occurred "not because of the development and training (the Russian proletariat) had received, but because of the unique conditions existing in Russia."

Thus Lenin attempted to place the "will" of the Bolsheviks within the context of general historical developments. He viewed that "will" itself as a product of the

"unique conditions existing in Russia," rather than of the special "development or training it had received." Rather than their wielding history, history had wielded the Bolsheviks.

And much as Lenin emphasized the importance of correct leadership, party discipline, "proletarian consciousness," and knowledge of theory, his point of view almost always showed a certain historical modesty. Speaking of the days immediately following the Revolution itself, he wrote:

One has only to recall how helpless, spontaneous and fortuitous were our first decrees and decisions on the subject of workers' control of industry. It seemed to us an easy thing. But in practice. . . we failed entirely to answer the question of how to build. . .

One detects here a certain historical perspective, a breadth of vision which is refreshing to those familiar with the self-righteous boasting of Stalinist orators who claim that there is always a direct correspondence between the will of the Party and the ensuing realities. At another point Lenin said, plaintively: (1922)

The machine isn't going where we guide it, but where some illegal, or lawless, or God-knows-whence-derived speculators or private-capitalistic businessmen . . . are guiding it. *A machine doesn't always travel just exactly the way, and it often travels just exactly not the way, that the man who sits at the wheel imagines.* (My italics)

Again, we see Lenin's recognition that conscious will does not determine social development, the determinants being, rather, spontaneous social forces, grinding away steadily day by day.

### The Uncelebrated Birthday

This point of view persisted well into the 1920's. The revolution was considered the culmination of historical trends — its leaders, agents of the social forces which made it. The emphasis, consequently, was upon the historical trends and social forces. The 1922 issue of *Pravda*, which celebrated the fifth anniversary of the Bolshevik rule, is conspicuous by its infrequent references to the Bolshevik leaders. These leaders continued to act with a modesty becoming those who did not believe in, or teach, the "great man" theory of history.

It is said that upon entering a Politbureau meeting in 1920, on the occasion of his 50th birthday, he answered, "Don't be silly, let's get down to work." His birthday was celebrated that evening at a small party, but the country as a whole hardly noticed the occasion. These men were leaders, even dictators, but the leader-principle itself had not been established.

One dwells upon this subject not merely to retrieve Lenin's reputation from contemporary slander, but only to emphasize the degree to which Lenin's successor broke with the tradition of the early years of Bolshevism. The advent of Stalinism signified the emergence of the cult

of heroes, and an entirely new conception of historical development.

### Start of the Hero Cult

The first clear expression of the new ideology was Stalin's famous funeral oration over the dead Lenin's body. The vows Stalin offered implied, by their semi-religious character, the divinity of Lenin. The resultant exploitation of Lenin's prestige as a canonized figure set the pattern for a thousand hero-worships in the future. By turning Lenin into a God it was possible to transform the Communist Party itself into a priesthood, claiming for itself a unique composition, above that of ordinary mortals. "We Communists," Stalin said in the funeral oration, "are people of a special mold. We are made of special stuff."

And with this extraordinary boast, the new ideology of Stalinism was officially born. No longer were the "special conditions" of Russia considered the determinants of Russian history — but rather that body of men of "special mold." The Revolution, it would soon be discovered, occurred, not because of the "objective conditions" of Czarist Russia, but because these men of "special stuff", special wisdom, had decreed that it take place.

The theory of "special stuff" also accounted for the ever-increasing power of the new General Secretary of the Party of "special men," Joseph Stalin, who, according to the new working ideology, was made of even more specialized stuff than anyone else. In the hierarchy of human material which the new ideologists were constructing, Stalin stood at the top.

The first occasion upon which the Stalin cult itself took firm and recognizable roots was that of Stalin's fiftieth birthday in 1929. The triumphant Stalinist faction of the Bolshevik Party, having defeated both its "right" and "left" wings, used the occasion to congratulate themselves upon their good fortune. In a small brochure published after the event, the birthday celebration was recounted in this manner:

Numberless telegrams are coming in from all over the Union and foreign countries congratulating Stalin on his fiftieth birthday. There is hardly a single workers' meeting of any considerable size, which would not mark this event. . . The Communist Party of Germany. . . calls for a Stalin levy. With all sorts of precautions, little slips of paper are smuggled from the prisons of Poland, Hungary, Italy, which contain expressions of greeting. . .

### Against Democratic Tradition

But the democratic traditions of the Revolution were not entirely forgotten. The author of the article, evidently sensing the pagan character of this enormous festival devoted to one man, wrote:

Is this perhaps a hero-worship that forced its way into the ranks of the Communist Parties, which have hitherto always stressed the priority of the masses over the individuals, however great and prominent the latter may be? Is this perhaps a revision of the Marxian conception of the role of personality in history, a retrogression to the conception of the English historian Carlyle, for whom the history of great events was merely a history of the "great men"?

Is it? Of course it is. But the writer, having skated dangerously close to thin ice in even asking the question, veered away and made his reply in safe territory:

No — this is only a great manifestation of confidence on the part of the international proletariat and the proletariat of the USSR in the great Leninist Party. . .

In later years, when the Stalin-cult had become unmistakably a "retrogression to the conception of the English historian Carlyle," such questions would not even be asked. The entire conception of modern Soviet history had become intertwined with the personality of Joseph Stalin.

The theory of "great men" was inextricably bound up with the ideology of Stalinism, which, far from being merely an extension of Marxism-Leninism was, in this respect, as in many others, a direct repudiation of it. Stalinism was the ideology of the new bureaucratic class emerging from the ruins of the old Bolshevik Party, a class which was no longer dependent upon the voluntary support of either the workers or peasants of Russia, a class which therefore needed a justification for the power it had usurped. Its justification was the theory of the "special stuff", a theory which gave it the right to transform the character of Russian society for its benefit without consulting those masses made of inferior "stuff" who labored under such terrible conditions for their new masters.

The new ideology of inequality between the rulers and the ruled did not come forth full-blown, but developed slowly as the Stalinist machine tightened its grip over the entire country. When, in the 1930's its power was secure, the new ideology was transplanted to every field of cultural endeavor:

### The New Masters of Russia

The most notable of these fields was history. In 1931, Pokrovsky, the official historian of the Bolshevik Party, in whom Lenin had placed great trust, was sharply criticized for overemphasizing the "economic" elements in history at the expense of the "political." The new masters of Soviet Russia wanted the great political personalities given more credit for the advance of civilization. In 1934 this new concept was incorporated in a Communist Party decree ordering historians to deal more frequently with the "leading personalities" in history, and to discontinue the "abstract, sociological themes" which had hitherto been the forte of all Marxist historians.

Thus the theory of "special stuff" was integrated into the historical science. The rule of Peter the Great was no longer merely the fruition of certain long-range socio-economic relations, but an heroic effort, and Peter himself was soon to become a man of such great stature that the leap forward made by Russia in this period was to be credited almost exclusively to his "special" genius. Within a few years the doctrine of "special stuff" was extended to cover all the "great men" of Russian history, such as Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Alexander Nevsky, the General Suvorov. Ultimately the entire Russian people were incorporated into the "special stuff"

concept; they were to be considered on a higher plane than the peoples of the world who had only to wait for "liberation" from the heroic Russian people.

The cults spread like wildfire, embracing Stakhanovites, scientists, military men; there was gradually established a vast order of special categories by which the people of the world might be sorted out into different ranks.

The nature of this order varied over the years, as political requirements changed. But the general tendency was toward greater and greater rigidity, and as social divisions in the Soviet Union became more distinct so did the various ranks which separated the different grades of human material which the Stalinist ideological machines had digested. As the new ruling class arrogated more power to itself it intensified the distinction, in its ideological tracts, between the masses who were liberated and the heroes of history who did the liberating.

The doctrine of "special stuff" is not entirely new to human society. In one form or another, this doctrine has been used in every society to justify the privileged power of the ruling classes. What makes its appearance in the Soviet Union particularly interesting, however, is that, despite the interlarding of the terminology of modern democracy, it is an especially rigid arrogant form of this age-old doctrine.

### The Philosopher of "Special Stuff"

One might examine, for example, the recent work, "The Role of Consciousness in Socialist Society," by the Soviet philosopher, Konstantinovskiy, "Comrade Stalin," writes Konstantinovskiy, "pointed out that social development is spontaneous only up to a certain point, until new productive forces, the material bases of the new society, have matured within the womb of the old." On the surface, this theory seems to contain a certain Marxist character. But what Konstantinovskiy is really suggesting is a sophisticated version of the "special stuff" ideology. The spontaneous forces are those which are, according to him, "unconscious," that is, propelled by the underlying social and economic forces which create the "material bases for the new society . . . within the womb of the old." Then, apparently, the spontaneous forces themselves are insufficient; they do not themselves create the means by which the "new society" is ushered in. This task is left, in Konstantinovskiy's analysis, to the "heroes", Lenin and Stalin, who, disregarding the underlying lethargy of history, introduce socialism from *without*, from somewhere outside of the spontaneous laws themselves. "The gradual, spontaneous developments of society must be superceded", he says, "by the conscious, revolutionary action of the progressive, revolutionary classes."

What is most significant in Konstantinovskiy's work is the juxtaposition of the "spontaneous" processes of history and the "conscious" operation of the revolutionaries. This doctrine, however, does not, he makes it quite clear, apply to any revolutionaries but those few who led the Soviet revolution, in particular Lenin and Stalin. For only Lenin and Stalin, according to Konstantinovskiy,

had a sufficiently "profound knowledge of economic and social laws" to make it possible to alter the course of history by "utilizing" these laws.

In his now famous "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR", introduced to the world last fall, Stalin put his own stamp of approval on this special conception of human history. Although he went to great pains to show that men could not change the iron laws of social development, he said at the same time that *some* men could "utilize them to the benefit of mankind." Again this peculiar juxtaposition of the "laws" on the one hand, and the "special stuff" on the other, those, that is, who were wise and brave enough to "exploit" the laws for human betterment.

### **"Exploiting" Historical Laws**

It is clear from Stalin's writings that these favored few who knew how to "exploit" the laws are themselves not subject to them. They are, in short, outside the law; for no other interpretation can be given to Stalin's constant reiteration of the relationship between men and laws. Konstantinovsky was quite precise in this respect:

Of course, in socialist society too, historical necessity operates in its development; there are objective laws which society cannot ignore or abolish. But these objective laws of social development are controlled by men; society consciously utilizes them in its activities. This is one of the characteristic features of the new social laws that distinguish socialist society from capitalist society.

Thus, though the "laws" are not "abolished," they no longer dictate human behavior, nor, in fact, social development, since men are now empowered to "utilize" these laws as they wish.

It is, of course, impossible to take these ideological maneuverings too seriously, for they cannot possibly mean what they suggest on the surface. Laws are not laws if men can twist them any way that they want to. Stalin (and Konstantinovsky) speak of the "laws", in fact, in that mechanical way which characterized so much of 18th century materialist thought, that is, in a manner so rigid that they preclude the analysis of human events, being modeled on the most rudimentary of machines. Naturally, with such a conception, men must be placed in opposition to the "laws", as "utilizers" of them rather than as subjects of them.

### **"Spontaneous" and "Conscious" Forces**

For example, Konstantinovsky's own explanation of Soviet history is merely a dull recording of the impact of the conscious will and devotion of Lenin and Stalin. ". . . Lenin and Stalin . . . relying on their profound understanding of the creative forces . . . of the people . . . outlined the great plan . . . consummated the cultural revolution . . . guided by Stalin . . . headed by Comrade Stalin . . . under Comrade Stalin's leadership . . ." He emphasizes throughout the "reliance" upon the theories of Marxism-Leninism; but clearly the leader only "utilizes" this history; it does not govern his behavior in the slightest. Above all, Marxism-Leninism cannot explain behavior.

"History," Lenin wrote, "knows transformations of all sorts. To rely upon conviction, devotion and other excellent spiritual qualities — that is not to be taken seriously in politics." But it is precisely these qualities — and none other — that Konstantinovsky implores us to believe enabled Stalin, "utilizing" the "laws" of history, to achieve what he did.

The Stalinist theory of the relationship between the "spontaneous" forces of history and the role of the "conscious" leadership in the time of crisis is little more than the translation into a particularly hackneyed collection of Marxist phrases of the "great man" conception of history. It is the theoretical culmination of the whole development of the cult of heroes upon which so large a portion of contemporary Soviet culture rests. Without abandoning the superficial paraphernalia of Marxism, the Stalinists had succeeded in emasculating its essential character.

It was exactly because the Stalinist theoreticians continued to employ this veneer of Marxist verbiage that so many of our contemporary students did not recognize the depth of the break with the traditions from which the Soviet culture is supposed to spring. Stalin's incredibly crude and self-contradictory discussion of the relation between the "laws" of history and the "human utilization" of them was accepted by many as a serious elaboration of Marxist theory, when, in fact, it was nothing of the kind.

### **Post-Stalinist Theory**

In the proper historical context, then, it is not difficult to understand the inseparable connection between Stalinism and the hero-cult. The ideology of Stalinism — particularly that part which justifies and explains inequalities between men — rests securely upon the notion of heroes, the individual hero, the party as a hero, and a particular national state as a hero.

Since the ideology of heroes developed with Stalinism it will be dissolved only when the Stalinist social system is itself destroyed. The new regime — which finds itself temporarily unable to create a successor to Stalin — seeks desperately to elaborate a new formulation to embrace the new power relationships.

The new theory, phrased most elaborately by the same Konstantinovsky in a lecture delivered late last June, is even more of a hodge-podge than is the old one. While, on the one hand, it lampoons the cult of the individual, it does not, really, resurrect the traditional Marxist conception either.

The lecture was entitled, "The People — Makers of History," and its thesis was quite simple: History is the story of the people, the masses, who "not only create the material wealth, but also the great treasures of art." He contrasts this "Marxist-Leninist" theory with "reactionary, idealistic sociology, which denies . . . the decisive role of the masses of the people . . . (and) reduces the history of society to the acts of outstanding personalities — kings, captains, rulers, etc."

This demagogic attempt to flatter the people by crediting them with all human achievement is not new to

Stalinism, of course, but in time past it was never stated as a theoretical postulate. There is nothing particularly "Marxist" about such a theory, because, although the Marxists did try to create a history which was more than "kings, captains and rulers," they never stated that it was the "masses," in a vacuum, who made history either.

The traditional Marxist position placed both the "masses" and the "leaders" within the same historical framework, within the same class struggle or revolutionary overturn. One cannot exist without the other, and while in some instances the "masses" struggle against the "kings, captains and rulers," in others they do so only by creating their own "kings, captains and rulers."

In so far as Konstantinovskiy continues to make the sharp distinction between the "people" and the "leaders" he is well within the traditional realm of Stalinist ideology. Instead of the cult of the leaders, he postulates a cult of the masses. In either case the leaders and the masses are separate and distinguishable entities. And it is only by maintaining this rigid separation that Konstantinovskiy can allow for the re-emergence of the concept of the decisive role of the leaders.

### Communist Party as Hero

And, as one might expect, the leaders *do* emerge, not, this time, as individuals, but as a collective body — the Communist Party. "The Party", he writes, "is the great mobilizing, organizing and transforming force of society. Without the Communist Party and its Marxist theory, the workers' movement would be doomed to drift, to wander in the dark and to suffer incalculable losses."

No mention of Stalin, or Lenin; nothing at all of the leadership. But the Party remains the motive force of history. "The Communist Party," he writes, "was able to rouse and organize the broadest masses of the workers and peasants for the struggle against capitalism." And later, the same juxtaposition of "masses" and "party":

Only by the creative labor of tens of millions of persons, led by the Communist Party, was it possible to transform a tremendous, economically backward country into a first class socialist industrial power.

It was possible. . . only thanks to the fact that the initiative of the Communist Party and of the state regime, from above, was supported from below by the vast masses of the peasantry.

The phrase "the conscious activity of millions, directed by the Communist Party", is used several times to explain "the tremendous hastening of the course of history."

Thus it is quite plain that, though the cult-of-heroes has been modified in the post-Stalin era, its essential ideological framework remains. Konstantinovskiy in the post-Stalin era, has new praise for the masses, and a little less praise for Lenin and Stalin. But the masses remain, as before, an essentially inert object, ready to be alerted to action only by men made of that "special stuff" to which Stalin referred in his famous address twenty nine years ago.

ROBERT C. HERZOG

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### Always Did Feel Degenerate in Them

A Bulgarian Party member was caught with his pyjamas on and thereby gave away his secret bourgeois leanings. In Communist Bulgaria, it would seem, pyjama-wearing is the first symptom of reversion to pre-"democratic" individualism. The incriminating incident was discussed at a Party meeting:

"During the fall sowing campaign, another Comrade and I went to visit Comrade Petkovski at his home. We knocked on the door. The door opened and revealed Comrade Petkovski in pyjamas, like an old-fashioned *petit-bourgeois*. We were dumbfounded. We knew Comrade Petkovski well. In the past he had always seemed reliable, and all at once we caught him wearing his pyjamas.

"Probably this is his wife's influence, Comrades. It must be checked. Comrade Petkovski has forgotten himself. He is setting himself apart from the broad masses. After all, didn't we fight for equality? First we find him wearing pyjamas. Who knows where that can lead? Tomorrow he will want his children to take piano lessons. It is all the same kind of thing."

From "*Sturshel*" (Sofia)

### Kinsey, Stay 'Way from Our Soviet Motherland

"Love has passed through three historical stages. In feudalism, the relation between the sexes is the master-slave relation, with the woman always listening to the man and sticking to him like a piece of property. In capitalist love, affection is bought and sold. The woman sells her beauty, youth and flesh for luxury and comfort offered by the man. Finally, comes the new Democratic Love. Man and woman have no mercenary relations and therefore the highest form of love is reached . . . This love is sombre, intellectual and definitely revolutionary . . . Under the trees on moonlit nights, small groups of schoolmates argue serious problems. You will never see a boy and a girl pair off to look at the moon or whisper to each other in typical bourgeois manner. If enemy agents try to engage us in amatory affairs, they are quickly rebuffed . . . When we look up at the sky, we can only think how happy the moon must be to shine on Stalin . . ."

From a letter about the Stalinist attitude toward love, published in the *Ceylon Daily News*.

# Science Under Totalitarianism

-- an analysis of the state of the sciences in Russia

**A DISCUSSION** of science in Russia today is topical not solely because of the sharp political tensions existing between the United States and Russia, but also because it is held in many quarters that science must — almost by definition — wither and die when exposed to the rigors of the totalitarian state. The question at hand, therefore, is really one of the nature of the impact of the modern totalitarian state upon science, a human institution which is almost completely contemporaneous with that economic and political organization of human society known as capitalism. If an answer to this question can be found, today's Russia is the best place to seek it for it has possessed a rigid totalitarian political system for almost thirty years and is certainly neither undeveloped nor scientifically backward.

Science, as an institution, has a long and noble history in Russia, especially the queen of the sciences, mathematics. The St. Petersburg Academy of Science was planned by Leibnitz (one of the originators of the calculus) and founded by Catherine, wife of Peter the Great. It was here that two members of the Bernoulli family and the great Swiss, Euler, came in the 18th century. Here, too, worked the famous Russian mathematician, Nicolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky, who was a co-discoverer of the non-Euclidian geometry. Finally, the physiologist and experimental psychologist, Ivan Petrovich Pavlov, is probably the best known product of the Russian scientific discipline. (It is of interest too, that the first great woman mathematician, Sophie Kovalevsky, was a Russian). The scientific achievements of these men and women, and their many colleagues, are as great as any which their Western counterparts have set forth.

## Manipulation of Science

If one is to investigate the current state of Russian science, one must do so with an open mind, for the total picture is neither all black nor all white — not even all gray — but rather spotty. Indeed, it contains a strange dichotomy; that is, the political attitudes of the bureaucracy toward the biological and social sciences is different from its attitudes toward the physical sciences. It is obvious that the former fields are more easily manipulable for purposes of political propaganda than are the latter.

In general, even the most superficial examination indicates that Russian science is growing and vigorous, but it also carries within it a cancerous growth. There are many obvious examples of the vigor of Russian science.

Their jet aircraft over Korea, for instance, indicate not only a modern aircraft industry but large bodies of highly-skilled scientific and technical investigators. (It is as patently absurd to hold that their successes in this field are due solely to ideas captured from the Germans as to hold that ours are due to thefts or gifts from the English.)

The cancerous growth upon this vigor is perhaps best symbolized by the name of Trofim Lysenko. Probably almost every literate person in the world has heard about Lysenko, but very few indeed understand the true meaning to science of this man and his notions, and fewer still know that the study of genetics has received a certain amount of political attention in Russia since the thirties. Now, with Lysenkoism an accomplished fact, one wonders to what extent this political inundation has encroached upon other fields of scientific inquiry. (No attempt will be made here to discuss any of the applied sciences, for in Russia as well as in the United States they suffer from different driving forces and goals than do the other sciences. Also, these fields are much more susceptible to the camouflage of military secrecy.) In general, the physical sciences have not been infected to the same degree as have the social and biological sciences; however, astronomy and organic chemistry have both become involved.

## Math on Plus Side

As was mentioned before, mathematics has a long and honorable history in Russia and, perhaps because of this or because of the lack of any obvious applications, it is still as strong and vigorous as its counterparts anywhere in the world today. The Russian mathematicians are active in practically all fields of mathematical research. Furthermore, there has been no evidence at all that there is a "party line" in this field as there is in genetics. It is quite important to point out that whereas the Russian scientists in other fields have been guilty of misuse of statistical methods, or indeed complete refusal to use them at all (C. H. Waddington states that Lysenko believes that it is *illegitimate to apply mathematics to living things*), in the *theory of statistics* "... there is absolutely no evidence of any motive other than the search for truth for the sake of truth" (J. R. Kline, Symposium on Soviet Science held by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Dec. 1951). Not only is Russian mathematical work brilliant, but, unlike their counterparts here or in Western Europe, Russian math-

ematicians currently publish large numbers of excellent texts on the most advanced subjects. J. R. Kline states that many of these works "... are at such a high level that in this country they would not find a commercial publisher..." (An indication that the State gives very large grants for work in this field.) The Russians have also translated a large number of advanced texts from this country and West Europe; however, they seem compelled to add chapters and footnotes indicating related Russian achievements.

With this, one begins to see a tinge of Russian nationalism which is carried further in their journals. In the journals, references to European or American works is sometimes omitted in the research articles. And in the last seven years these publications have appeared only in Russian, instead of in English, French and German as was formerly the case. (This is hardly to be looked upon with disdain by Americans or Europeans, for all American, English, French and German journals of any consequence publish only in their native tongues. It is regrettable, however, since it raises another barrier between scientists.)

In the field of astronomy the picture is not too clear. In 1938 the astronomical section of the Soviet Academy of Science denounced relativity (the general theory) as "counter-revolutionary" and demanded a return to "Marxian Materialism." Just what this blast meant or at whom it was aimed is not plain. Perhaps the astronomers were being advised to abandon Einstein's "finite but unbounded" universe and return to an infinite one governed by Newton's classical laws of motion. Apparently the question dropped from sight for a while, for little appears of this controversy until 1949 when L. Vvov of the Academy of Science described relativity as a "cancerous tumor that gnaws through modern astronomical theory and is the main ideological enemy of materialist astronomy"! Here is a sign of the true cancer which is gnawing within the body of Russian science, for the classical methods of the scientist seem to find themselves with a new bed-fellow — the political dogma. It is not sufficient that a theory must withstand the trials of laboratory experiments; it must have some correct ideological orientation. And here is the crux of the situation. The General Theory of Relativity may well sink into oblivion as many other seemingly good theories have, but its validity can be ascertained only by appeal to experiment and observation, not by appeal to arbitrary political or philosophical dogma.

### American Observes Russian Astronomy

But there is more to this picture. Russia takes official part in the International Astronomical Union along with thirty-two other countries: indeed, it is the only international scientific union in which Russia holds membership. The recent meeting of this Union (this last spring in Rome) gave Western astronomers an excellent chance to observe and talk with their Russian counterparts. At this meeting the American astronomer Otto Struve was elected president of the organization. It was during this election and the determination of the next meeting place of the Union that the most bitter relations

obtained between the Russians and the Westerners. Probably the best summation of Russian astronomy is made by Struve (*Science*, 117, 315 [1953]):

My own careful appraisal, based upon my knowledge of the Russian language and upon thousands of hours spent in studying their publications, leads me to conclude that:

- a) They have more research workers in astronomy than we have;
- b) Their training is, on the whole, better than ours;
- c) They possess, on the average, less initiative than do our scientists;
- d) Their natural abilities are about the same as ours, but they tend to do better in theoretical studies than in observational and experimental work;
- e) The present output of research in the Soviet Union is enormous in amount, but its quality is inferior to ours;
- f) They do not possess astronomical telescopes of the power of our 200-inch, 100-inch and even our 82-inch and 69-inch telescopes, but they are making rapid strides in the construction of new and, in some respects, novel auxiliary equipment; and
- g) The acceleration in all fields of astronomical endeavor — training, research, publication, and public instruction — is livelier than in the Western world.

### Physics and the A-Bomb

Since physics has such direct application to the production of the atomic bomb, it is no wonder that very little is known about Russian physics. There are, of course, substantial experimental facts which indicate that the Russians have been able to explode an atomic bomb.\* It is also known that they are spending a great deal of effort and money on cosmic ray research. On the other hand there are no published reports dealing with their high-voltage particle accelerating machine though it is difficult to see how they could have an atom-bomb technology without several operating cyclotrons. It goes without saying that their nuclear reactors (piles) have not been discussed in the literature at all. Several excellent Russian physicists, notably P. Kapitza, returned to Russia after the war from long stays in the West and have not been heard from since. There can be little doubt that the physics staffs have been augmented by captured Germans and that the main orientation and effort is toward "closing the gap" in nuclear weapons. Since physics has always been of greater importance to the applied sciences than has astronomy, one can assume that the state of physics in Russia is at least as good as that indicated (in Struve's statement) for astronomy.

The last major physical science to be dealt with is chemistry, and since recent developments in this field have received little consideration elsewhere, it would seem an advantage to spend a bit more space than otherwise called for in detailing them here. On June 14, 1951 the

\*This was written before the Russian explosion of a hydrogen bomb.



Chemical Science Section of the Academy of Sciences called a conference on the Theory of Chemical Structure in Organic Chemistry. (A translation of the resolution adopted by this conference is to be found in *Nature*, Jan. 19, 1952.) In general this conference followed very closely the pattern of the Conference on Genetics held by the Academy of Agricultural Sciences in July 1948, which enthroned Lysenko. In analogy to Michurin, the leaders of the Chemical Science Section resurrected an obscure chemist, Butlerov, from Russia's scientific past and set him up as the father of "the whole modern organic chemistry." Further, it attacked the most able and best known of Russia's organic chemists, demanding, and obtaining, confessions of "serious methodological and ideological errors". And finally, it laid down a "line" for future guidance of the organic chemists.

### Chemistry and "The Dialectic"

"The chemists, and also physicists, of our country have not given sufficient attention to the struggle for the establishment of the dialectical-materialism world-view in chemical science and allied branches of physics, in theoretical chemistry and, in particular, in organic chemistry, and, as a result, some Soviet chemists have been ensnared by the unsound, idealistic "theory" of resonance."

By way of explanation, the theory of resonance was developed by an American physical-chemist, Linus Pauling (it is ironical to recall that Pauling at about this time was refused a passport by the Department of State apparently because of his alleged one-time association with the Communist Party). Having thus established the sins of the scientists, it proceeds:

"The Conference has clearly demonstrated the soundness of the theory of the structure of organic compounds due to the great Russian scientist, A. M. Butlerov; this theory lies at the basis of the whole of modern organic chemistry. The Conference pointed out the urgent necessity of further developing Butlerov's materialistic theory of organic compounds and of studying more deeply his work and those of prominent representatives of the famous Butlerov school of organic chemists." (This latter school is almost completely unknown among chemists in this country.)

The report then goes on to mention the achievements of the chemical industry under the five year plans and the contributions of several Russian chemists to this industry.

"The Conference notes that, side by side with these fruitful trends in the theory of chemical structure, there has been a spread of unsound views that are perversions of Butlerov's teaching. In a number of monographs and text-books on inorganic chemistry and the theory of molecular structure, the name of Butlerov, as the creator of structural theory, has been suppressed, and the work of Russian chemists in the development of theoretical organic chemistry has not been assigned its true importance. In recent years there has been a spread in organic chemistry of a concept developed by Anglo-American scientists. . . This 'theory' (Pauling's), . . . is directly opposed to the basic thesis of Butlerov's theory."

### Obtuse 'Scientific' Discussion

It is difficult to see just what physical ideas are under attack here, but it would seem that some of the involved, statistical conclusions of quantum mechanics, upon which

is based the theory of resonance, do not fit in with the "dialectical-materialistic world-view."

The men under attack have a great deal of influence with Western chemists and one of them, Ya. K. Syrkin, had just published, in English, an excellent text on the nature of the chemical bond. For two of them the future is indeed black, for despite their confessions "The Conference considers that the statements of Ya. K. Syrkin and M. V. Volkenshteyn concerning their ignorance of the works of A. M. Butlerov . . . are unsatisfactory."

That this is not a technical dispute between learned members of a scientific society but the injection of a political line is revealed in the following: "The decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party regarding ideological questions has mobilized the attention of the Soviet chemical community to questions of methodology of science and has helped to reveal errors present in chemistry and to mark out the future path of development of chemical science on the basis of the uniquely correct dialectical-materialistic world-view." And to put this matter into effect one of the recommendations is for ". . . The speeding up of the publishing of new textbooks on organic chemistry that correctly portray the present state of chemical science, also of Soviet monographs on questions of theoretical chemistry." And finally there is appended the Russian political trademark which could not but have made the Russian chemists gag: "Under the guidance of the party of Lenin and Stalin, Soviet chemists will honorably carry out the directions of the great leader of the workers, the scientific genius, Iosif Vassarinovitch Stalin."

### Genetics Controversy

The situation in genetics and psychology is much the same. A short summary of the genetics controversy will be given, but the reader is urged to see the book by Julian Huxley, *Heredity East and West*, which gives a very complete and well-documented account of the matter. The scientific details are given there and will not be repeated here. The history of the genetics controversy in Russia begins in 1929. Indeed, for a period after 1922, neo-Mendelian genetics was encouraged in Russia, but apparently as the years of that decade passed, more and more hostility became evident. In 1929, Commissar of Education, Lunacharsky, commissioned a film which gave support to Lamarckism. By 1932 and 1933, certain of the neo-Mendelian geneticists were losing their jobs and even being sent to slave labor camps. In 1935, the first accusations that neo-Mendelism was "idealist" were made and several scientists were liquidated. In 1936, the Medico-genetical Institute, which, according to Huxley, was "unmatched anywhere in the world", was dissolved after vilification in Pravda. In 1937, Russia was to be host to the International Congress of Genetics but called it off by declining to serve as host. In place of this a special all-Russian genetics conference was called to discuss the rival merits of neo-Mendelism and what was to be Lysenkoism. At this meeting, Lysenko spoke as the chief supporter of Michurinism (this new theory has its roots in Lamarck's early work and has historical support in Russia because of Michurin). A second conference was held



in 1939 and again neo-Mendelism was brought under attack. During the war years the matter subsided, but N. I. Vavilov, the most distinguished of all Russian geneticists, lost his post as Director of the Institute of Plant Industry and of the Genetics Institute. In 1941, he was sent to Siberia and died there in 1942 as a result of general hardship. The conference on genetics held in 1948 is well known in its outcome. (It is of interest to note that Lysenko knew during the conference that the Central Committee had already taken the stand officially supporting his theories, and he withheld this information until his last speech. This was done, no doubt, to insure free discussion!)

Space does not permit a complete discussion of the state of the science of psychology in Russia, but this is not of great importance for, as Ivan D. London said in the symposium on Russian science which was held by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, "... psychology is a discipline of little significance in the USSR..." However, certain facts cannot be passed over. In 1936 the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a decree abolishing pedology. During a conference in 1949, psychology was given a complete Pavlovian orientation, and in 1950 leucotomy was officially banned as being "anti-Pavlovian", "anti-psychiatric" and contrary to "the humanist traditions of Soviet medicine."

This, then, is the state of science in Russia today: Though several of the fields show a genuine and continuous vitality, there are, to one degree or another, signs in almost all of them of the stifling process of political interference.

Our major concern, in observing the Soviet version of the scientific method, is not a consideration of whether this theory or that is right. Indeed, just this concern has caused an unwarranted smokescreen throughout the world. If it should, by some chance, turn out that all of these Russian theories were correct and that their Western analogues were incorrect, the state of Russian science would not be changed one whit thereby. In many sciences a new criterion has been decreed by which scientific

hypotheses must be tested. *That this criterion is not from and of the laboratory is the crux of the matter.* In fact this is the only important matter here. Science is not free if it must suffer under some *a priori* dogma, no matter what the origin.

### Effects of Totalitarianism

In conclusion it must be stated that despite the grave political overtones, and in many cases downright political invasion, Russian science has more or less kept pace with science in the West. This, however, must not be used as evidence that science, as an institution, can thrive and grow in the rigors of the totalitarian state. The present facts do not bear out this assertion, for the current developments are mainly results of the scientific residue of the past, results of a reservoir of knowledge built up when political dogma did not prevail in science and a freer exchange of information with the rest of the scientific community was possible. The effects of the enforced application of specific ideologies will become very apparent in such fields as chemistry and physics, where a correct theoretical understanding of processes is mandatory not only for further theoretical advances but also for technical applications in industry. Here the purge and counter-purge — the conference and counter-conference may establish some sort of uneasy equilibrium, but once the scientific techniques have been diluted with philosophical or political dogma the days of a vigorous, expanding science would seem limited.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party is forcing upon the Russian scientist the burden of dogma that Galileo Galilei and his contemporaries struggled so valiantly to throw off three centuries ago. One wonders how many Russian scientists have the courage and spirit which led Galileo to say, after what might now be called a conference, "*E pur si muove*".

JACK STUART

*Jack Stuart* is a Ph. D. candidate in Applied Mathematics. He has had considerable background in the physical sciences.

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## The Dialectic Involves Change, Man

In mid-January the Czechoslovak State Film Company released the movie *Kidnapped*, a dramatization of the story of the Czechoslovak airplane which, taking off from Prague in the spring of 1950 for a routine run to Bratislava, was flown instead to Erding, near Munich, in West Germany.

This film was in production for over two years, as harried scenario writers struggled to keep abreast of current developments. One of the original heroes of the film was the pilot of the airplane, Josef Klesnil, who was forced at gun point to turn over the controls to his

co-pilot, the leader of the escape plot. Klesnil promptly returned with some of the passengers to Czechoslovakia, where he was hailed as a hero and made the central figure of a book entitled *Kidnapped to Erding*. But the book had to be withdrawn, and the emphasis in the film shifted, because Klesnil remained only long enough to collect his wife and make good their own escape. The director of the Czechoslovak Air Lines, another of the film's heroes, was subsequently arrested for "lack of Socialist vigilance," requiring further revisions in the script.

From *Behind the Iron Curtain*

# "Russia, What Next?"

-- a review of the Isaac Deutscher book

**HOW CAN STALINIST** totalitarianism be overthrown?

Is there a possibility of an internal liberalization of the regime?

Will Malenkov continue Stalinism?

These are the critical questions which Isaac Deutscher has attempted to answer in his book, *Russia: What Next?* (Oxford University Press, 1953, \$3.00). Yet an evaluation of his success in handling them is paradoxical. For if we owe Mr. Deutscher a debt of gratitude for his insistence on certain methodological principles, he owes us an apology for the use to which he sometimes puts them.

The methodological contribution is in his recognition of the relation between the political structure of Russia and "the economic, social, cultural, psychological and moral trends" of its history. It results in the direct denial of any devil-theory of Stalinism, for it correctly points out that the dynamic for change in Russia has been not the conspiratorial intent of a dedicated group of revolutionaries, but rather a complicated inter-action of men and historical circumstance.

But negatively, Deutscher fails to follow his own principle to its conclusion. Specifically, he all but omits discussion of the social consequence of the material progress in the Soviet Union, the bureaucracy. And with this left out, his final conclusion is lop-sided.

Deutscher's fundamental problem is political. He is concerned with the overthrow of the present regime. If his program is tentative, his personal predilection is clear: Stalinism will be overthrown by the very process of its own development, and overthrown by those who presided over its development.

## From Leninism

Deutscher's first concern is to isolate the nature of Stalinism. In order to do this and provide a basis for his discussion of the new, Malenkov government, he returns to the very origins of the Russian revolution. And he discovers Stalinism as a basic — even inevitable — direction after the first five years of the revolution.

Deutscher's main thesis is that "the transition from Leninism to Stalinism consisted in the abandonment of a revolutionary internationalist tradition in favor of the sacred egoism of Soviet Russia, and in the suppression of Bolshevism's pristine attachment to proletarian democracy in favor of an autocratic system of government."

This development, according to Deutscher, was a result of historical circumstances internal and external to revolutionary Russia. Lenin was, above all, an internationalist. As Deutscher notes, "The Russian revolution was therefore, in Lenin's view, no self-sufficient, national-Russian phenomenon; and the chances of the future socialist order were not dependent on the inadequate resources of Russia alone."

From 1918 to 1923, Europe was epidemic with revolutionary unrest. It seemed quite possible that Lenin's thesis would be confirmed and that an industrially-advanced Soviet Germany could provide the economic basis for the development of socialism in Russia. But with the end of 1923, both that revolutionary unrest and its apostle, Lenin, were dead. As Deutscher remarks, "Lenin died at the moment when history had overtaken him."

These events abroad had tremendous effects within Russia itself. It was Lenin who had "proposed each of the restrictions on proletarian democracy as an emergency measure, to be canceled after the emergency was over" but now a permanent emergency had set in: the isolation of the Russian revolution from the rest of the world.

This is the context within which Deutscher places the rise of Stalinism. Given the backwardness and isolation of Russia, "only one road was open to it: the one leading toward autocracy." And it was Stalin who led it down that road. Deutscher aptly concludes that if Lenin is the St. Paul of the Revolution, Stalin is its Constantine.

## His Analysis of Stalinism

Up to this point there can be, I think, no argument with the main outline of Deutscher's thesis. Although I would certainly quarrel with his analysis of the nature of Leninism, it is true that the two *primary* sources of the degeneration of the October Revolution were the backwardness of the Czarist Russia which fell and the failure of the European revolutions.

Yet it is in his analysis of the Stalinism which grew out of this situation that Deutscher makes a very questionable use of his own method.

Deutscher sees Stalin as both Byzantine hierarch basing his power on an appeal to primitive, semi-asiatic social forces, and as an unwitting social revolutionary. The means which he used were barbarous — indeed, could not have been otherwise — because the society over which he ruled was barbarous. But the conclusion

of the barbarous means, the destruction of near-feudal Russia and the creation of a modern state, is progressive. More, it forever renders the methods of Stalinism to the past, for the distance between the Russia of 1917 and that of 1953 is that between barbarism and the modern state, and techniques viable for the one are an anachronism in the other.

The dynamic for this change is "technology, planning, urbanization and industrial expansion" which are "the deadliest enemies of the primitive magic of Stalinism."

Yet in considering the change made by Stalinism, Deutscher tends to the statistical, to the discussion of the material progress independent of the social and political structure which it called to life. He does not explain that the tremendous industrialization of Russia was accomplished by a totalitarian bureaucracy.

In the West, it is certainly true that urbanization, literacy and industrialization have supplied the social, cultural and economic bases of a democratic society. But in the West, the process of modernization was accomplished under the aegis of a bourgeoisie which was forced to fight for limited political democracy in order to accomplish its own purposes. In the Soviet Union, however, this same accumulation of capital went forward under the direction of a totalitarian state apparatus which relied precisely on the denial of political freedom.

The difference between the two processes is of crucial importance. To compare the two societies in statistical terms is to omit the central question: historically, what were the political and social consequences of the change in production figures? In the West, it was limited political democracy. In the Soviet Union, a totalitarian bureaucracy.

## The Present

Deutscher finds the internal consequences of the isolated industrialization recapitulated in the history of Stalinist foreign policy. He reiterates his novel analysis of Stalin's policy of "containing" the revolution, even into the post World War II period — and it is a discussion that has a certain merit.

There is certainly evidence that Stalin attempted to stifle the revolutionary forces in China, both in the twenties and after World War II, when he advocated a bloc with the Kuomintang. Tito has testified to the Russian dictator's unwillingness to support a revolutionary Yugoslavian movement. And the Comintern, as Deutscher correctly points out, has a long and consistent history of sacrificing indigenous revolutions (in Spain for instance) to the needs of the Soviet Union. It is this trend which Deutscher sees in Stalin's thesis, advanced at the 19th Congress, on the inevitability of conflict within the capitalist world without the armed intervention of the "socialist" world.

But now the questions to which he must address himself are these: "Can the Soviet Union break out of the isolation which the specific events of the Revolution imposed upon it? Domestically, can it now democratize? In foreign policy, can it break through its hostility to

all things foreign, its fear of "capitalist encirclement"? And who will lead such a change if it is possible?

Deutscher sees three possibilities for the future of Russia. "1. a relapse into the Stalinist form of dictatorship; 2. a military dictatorship; 3. a gradual evolution of the regime toward a socialist democracy." And he makes it quite clear that he considers the third possibility a very real one, perhaps the most likely.

His argument against the relapse into Stalinism has already been presented: that the social basis of Stalinism, a primitive, semi-Asiatic society, no longer exists. As to a military dictatorship, Deutscher writes, "A Bonaparte can reach out for power and have his '18th Brumaire' only in a country ruled by a ineffective Directory, where disorder is rampant, discontent rife, and the Directory is in frantic search of a 'good sword.'" He does not feel that this condition exists. And he does feel that a consciousness on the part of the present government that strife would be a condition of Bonapartism is one of the factors causing them to act in the direction of the third possibility: "a gradual evolution . . . toward a socialist democracy."

## Character of Bureaucracy

But from where does he expect the initiative toward this evolution to come? . . . "In the meantime however, the initiative lies entirely with the men of the ruling group." Such a statement follows almost inevitably from one who maintains, in an analysis of the bureaucracy, "It was in the national interest that the government should foster a privileged minority consisting of administrators, planners, engineers and skilled workers," and leaves it at that. For the social meaning of the "privileged minority" is entirely left out of the question, and prediction of their behaviour must suffer from the omission.

The very character of the Soviet bureaucracy — totalitarian, privileged, opportunist, built on police terror — is opposed to democracy, limited or otherwise. To think that an elite relying on a monolithic state, party and police apparatus will initiate an evolution toward socialist democracy is to require the commission of political suicide. Indeed, a fear of Bonapartism may impel the regime toward a "liberalization", but certainly not to the extent of undermining its own existence.

Moreover, we must consider very carefully the social content of any change initiated from the top in the manner which Deutscher imagines. The change would take place within the limits of not undermining the regime. Its fundamental intent would be to strengthen the regime, even though conducted under the form of mitigation of harshness; its substance would be of direct benefit to the totalitarian bureaucracy and of only an indirect benefit to the people. This is a far cry from "a gradual evolution . . . toward socialist democracy."

Nevertheless, we do owe Deutscher a debt for stating the question in the terms which he uses. It is of critical importance that we understand that Stalinism did not

(Continued on page 31)

# Stalinism: A Student Reading List

**WE OFFER THIS** as a partial list of books which have captured, in one aspect or another, vital truths about Stalinism and Russian society. The books vary in level of approach to the subject as, frankly, do our readers. The readings differ, too, in essential *type*, since we consider the emotional reporting of personal experience or the unique insight of a novel to have the special validity for understanding Stalinism, which justifies placing it next to the sober academic appraisal.

We are indebted to Dwight Macdonald for some aspects of this bibliography. In the Spring, 1948 issue of the now defunct magazine, *Politics*, Macdonald published "A Layman's Reading List" of books on Russia. We liked the general format and have borrowed freely from it. We agreed with his choice of several books and include them here. But 1) much has happened in the Stalinist world since 1948 and even more has been published about it and 2) in so far as it is possible to tell where Mr. Macdonald stands (that it certainly difficult at times — on matters of political theory and the American Civil Liberties Union alike), we are often in disagreement with his appraisals of the books. Thus this evolves as essentially an Anvil list, reflecting our evaluations, our point of view.

THE EDITORS

## LIST A: 15 BASIC BOOKS

Berman, Harold J.: *The Russians in Focus*. Little, Brown, 1953.

A new book by one of the outstanding young Harvard students of Russian affairs. Attempts a sweeping basic portrayal of Russian life. Should be read less for details than for the general picture.

Blunden, Godfrey: *A Room on the Route*. Lippincott, 1947.

An emotion-stirring novel of the Moscow atmosphere during the post-Moscow trial period.

Borkenau, Franz: *World Communism*. Norton, 1939.

A solid, exhaustive study of the development of world-wide communist parties between the two world wars. Good research backed by the personal experience of a former leading member of the German Communist Party.

Counts, George S.: *The Country of the Blind*. Houghton Mifflin, 1949.

An extremely interesting, heavily documented discussion of recent (1948) purges in the arts, sciences and education. A general picture of the decline of culture under totalitarianism.

Dallin, David J.: *The Real Soviet Russia*. Yale, 1944.

The emphasis is upon bureaucratization and social structure. Broad in scope, carefully documented. His Menshevik bias is evident, but does not intrude excessively upon the material.

Deutscher, Isaac: *Stalin*. Oxford, 1949.

The most up to date history of Stalin's lifetime, in the context of the development of the Bolshevik Party and rise of the new Soviet society. Striking in portrayal of personalities and happenings of the time. Relies heavily upon earlier biographies by Souvarine and Trotsky. Reliable in documentation of earlier period, but his analysis of WW II period in particular has many pitfalls stemming from what was at that time his rather brotherly attitude toward Stalinism.

Eliot, T. S. (preface): *The Dark Side of the Moon*. Scribner, 1947.

Written by an anonymous Polish deputy at the time of the mass deportations of Poles, 1939-42. Extremely moving untouched narrative of Polish former inmates of Soviet concentration camps.

Kravchenko, Victor: *I Chose Freedom*. Scribner, 1946.

Despite the deadly dime novel tone, and, we fear, tendency to fabrication, Kravchenko, who was a big industrial bureaucrat, gives a wonderful picture of the life and mind of the Russian bureaucracy.

Maynard, Sir John: *Russia in Flux*. Macmillan, 1948.

A study of Russian history in a series of illuminating essays. Fine presentation of important social and intellectual groups in Czarist period, but strictures of his academic approach mar discussion of post-1917 happenings.

Schwartz, Harry: *Russia's Soviet Economy*. Prentice Hall, 1950.

By the New York Times Russian expert. A veritable encyclopedia of facts. Covers all phases of the Soviet economy, from cultivation of soybeans to banking operations. Section on labor conditions especially good.

Serge, Victor: *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*. Doubleday, 1950.

A minor classic of a novel dealing with old Bolsheviks' experiences in Stalinized Russia.

Shachtman, Max: *The Struggle for the New Course*. New International, 1943.

An analysis of causes of the rise of Stalinism, by an exponent of the bureaucratic collectivist theory of Soviet society. Valuable for many of its now forgotten facts as to the real nature of the political struggles of the 20's, and of the social forces involved.

Souvarine, Boris: *Stalin — a Critical Study of Bolshevism*. Alliance, 1939.

The earliest first-rate study of the life of Stalin, upon which all subsequent biographies have relied. A penetrating analysis of the role of Stalin both before 1917 and during the intrigues and factional struggles of the 20's. A very important book.

Trotsky, Leon: *History of the Russian Revolution*. Simon and Schuster, 1932.

He certainly was there. (An excellent, comprehensive study.)

Ulam, Adam B.: *Titoism and the Cominform*. Harvard, 1952.

By a young American scholar. A very worthwhile examination of the basic causes leading to the Tito-Cominform split.

## LIST B: SELECTED BOOKS, BY TOPICS

### 1. Bibliography

All books on Russia written in English, and published up to 1942, are indexed and annotated in Philip GRIERSON'S *Books on Soviet Russia, 1917-1942 — a Bibliography and a Guide to Reading* (Methuen, London, 1943). He emphasizes the British publications. For the years 1945 to the present, get hold of *The Russian Review*, which prints a complete annual list of articles and books on Russia.

### 2. Magazines on Russian Affairs

Among the best are *The Russian Review*, *American Slavic and Eastern European Review* and *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*.

### 3. History

The classic one volume history of Russia is Sir Bernard PARES' (Knopf, 1947).

#### FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD (1914-1921):

The two standard histories are CHAMBERLIN'S (Macmillan, 1935) and TROTSKY'S (see list A). We recommend Mikhail SHOLOKHOV'S epic novel of the Russian peasant for that period, *The Silent Don* (Part I *And Quiet Flows the Don*, Knopf, 1935; Part II *The Don Flows Home to the Sea*, Knopf, 1941). There is John REED'S justly famous *Ten Days that Shook the World* (reissued by Modern Library, 1935). For an 'I was there', Louise BRYANT'S *Six Red Months in Russia* (Doran, 1918). Also TROTSKY'S *Stalin* (2nd edition, Harper, 1946) and anarchist Alexander BERKMAN'S *The Bolshevik Myth: My Diary, 1920-22* (Boni and Liveright, 1925).

For good collections of documents, speeches etc. of the period: *The Bolsheviks and the World War; the Origin of the Third International*, edited by O. H. GANKIN and H. H. FISHER (Hoover War Library Publication No. 15, Stanford U. Press, 1940); *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1918*, edited

by James BUNYAN and H. H. FISHER (Stanford U. Press, 1934); *Intervention, Civil War and Communism in Russia*, edited by James BUNYAN (Johns Hopkins Press, 1936).

#### FOR THE NEP PERIOD (1921 - 1928):

Though he's often wrong, Rene FULOP-MILLER, *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism* (Putnam, 1927), makes the rare attempt at a comprehensive analysis of the dynamic socio-cultural forces of the twenties. We especially recommend Valentin KATAEV'S novel, *The Embezzlers* (Dial, 1929).

#### FOR THE PERIOD OF THE FIRST FIVE YEAR PLAN (1928 - 1932):

Wandering from the *Reader's Digest*, there's Eugene LYON'S *Russia's Iron Age* (Little, Brown, 1934) and Anton CILIGA'S *The Russian Enigma — Ten Years in the Country of the Great Lie* (Routledge, 1940).

#### FOR THE PRESENT PERIOD:

Read Isaac DEUTSCHER'S *Russia, What Next?* For an evaluation of it, see Mike Harrington's review in this issue of *Anvil*.

### 4. Politics

#### A. THEORY

Indispensable to an understanding of basic Bolshevik theory is LENIN'S *What Is To Be Done?* (1902; translated in v. 4 of the "Selected Works", International Publishers, 1929, pp. 89-257). Also of theoretical importance are his *State and Revolution* (1918; translation, International, 1932) which contains his concept of Soviet democracy, and "*Left-Wing*" *Communism: an Infantile Disorder* (1920; translation, International, 1934).

Rosa LUXEMBURG in *The Russian Revolution* (Workers Age, 1938) criticizes 1917-1918 Bolshevik practices from a libertarian viewpoint. R. L. HUNTS' *Theory and Practice of Communism* contains a highly simplified, rather crude exposition of what the title says. Bertram WOLFE'S *Three Who Made a Revolution* (Dial, 1948) has its real merits, but also has a tendency to misconstrue Lenin's role. There is contained in James BURNHAM'S *The Managerial Revolution* (Day, 1914) a popularized appreciation of the significance of the bureaucracy to the development of the Stalinist state. Peter MEYER'S article in *Politics* of June, 1944, expounds the theory that Stalinism is a form of bureaucratic collectivism. For legal theory, see Harold J. BERKMAN'S *Justice in Russia*, an interpretation of Soviet law (Harvard U., 1950).

#### B. PRACTICE

SOUVARINE (see list A) is particularly good. We also suggest Arthur ROSENBERG'S *A History of Bolshevism, from Marx to the First Five Year*

*Plan* (Oxford, 1935), Leon TROTSKY's *The Revolution Betrayed* (Doubleday, 1937), Victor SERGE's *Russia, Twenty Years After* (Hillman-Curl, 1937). There is also David SHUB's *Lenin, a Biography* (Doubleday, 1948).

### C. "THEORY AND PRACTICE"

George ORWELL's 1984 (Harcourt, 1949).

## 5. Economics and Labor

Solomon SCHWARZ deserves a place of honor with *Labor in the Soviet Union* (Praeger, 1952). The last chapter of Abram BERGSON's *The Structure of Soviet Wages: A Study in Socialist Economics* (Harvard, 1944) is particularly good. HARRY SCHWARTZ' *Russia's Soviet Economy* is discussed in List A. Leonard E. HUBBARD's *Soviet Labor and Industry* (Macmillan, 1942) is a fine, reliable general survey. For an important study of the rise of the industrial bureaucrats, we suggest *Management in Russian Industry and Agriculture* by G. BIENSTOCK, S. M. SCHWARZ and A. YUGOW (Oxford, 1944).

## 6. Forced Labor Camps

The best is *Forced Labor in Soviet Russia* by David DALLIN and Boris NICOLAEVSKY (Yale, 1947). It is highly comprehensive and very well documented, in case there are any sceptics left. There are also Jerzy GLIKSMAN's *Tell the West* (Gresham, 1948), which is a shocker, and, the anonymously authored *The Dark Side of the Moon* (see List A).

## 7. Sex, Family, Education

In the pre-orgone box days, when he was making real contributions to socio-psychological theory, Wilhelm REICH wrote *The Sexual Revolution* (1936; translation, Orgone Institute Press, 1945). He uses the degeneration of the Russian revolution as the case in point for his thesis that social freedom and sexual freedom are dynamically related.

On sex, education, family: Rudolph SCHLESINGER's *Changing Attitudes in Soviet Russia: Documents and Readings* (Routledge, 1949). A particularly good article on sex and the family is one by Louis COSER, entitled "Some Aspects of Soviet Family Policy" (*American Journal of Sociology*, 1951, XVI, pp. 424-35). [This was reprinted in the Fall, 1951 issue of *Anvil*].

For a study on education, there is John DEWEY's *Impressions of Soviet Russia and the Revolutionary World* (New Republic, 1929).

## 8. The Moscow Trials

The most important expose of the Trials is the report of the John DEWEY commission titled *The Case of Leon Trotsky — Report of Hearings on the Charges Made Against Him in the Moscow Trials* (Harper, 1937). A good pamphlet showing the maze

of falsehoods used to 'prove' the case for the prosecution is Francis HEISLER's *The First Two Moscow Trials* (Socialist Party USA, 1937).

Alexander WEISSBERG's *The Accused* (Simon and Schuster, 1951) is written by one who was himself a political prisoner of Stalin.

## 9. Nationalities

Both highly recommended: Solomon SCHWARZ' *Jews in the Soviet Union* (Syracuse U., 1951) and Walter KOLARZ' *Russia and Her Colonies* (Philip, 1952).

## 10. Culture

Czeslaw MILOSZ' *The Captive Mind* (Knopf, 1953). See Irving Howe's review in this issue of *Anvil*.

### A. LITERATURE

There is a comprehensive new survey by Gleb STRUVE, called *Soviet Russian Literature (1917-1950)* (U. of Oklahoma Press, 1951). George COUNT's *Country of the Blind* is one of the "basic books". (See List A). Max EASTMAN's *Artists in Uniform* (Knopf, 1934) contains an incisive criticism of the party line on art.

### B. MUSIC

You might try to locate Nicolas NABOKOV's article "The Music Purge" in *Politics* magazine of Spring, 1948.

### C. SCIENCE

Julian S. HUXLEY's *Heredity East and West: Lysenko and World Science* (Schumann, 1949), Eric ASHBY's *Scientist in Russia* (Penguin, 1948) and Charlotte F. HALDANE's *The Truth Will Out* (Vanguard, 1950).

## 11. Foreign Policy

For the period up to 1929, a reliable book is Louis FISCHER's *The Soviet in World Affairs* (Cape and Smith, 1930). For the 1929-1936 period, there is Max BELOFF's rather dry *The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia* (Oxford, 1947), which emphasizes relations with the Far East.

Felix MORROW tells of the Stalinist role during the Spanish Civil War in *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Spain* (Pioneer, 1938). The role of Soviet military intelligence in international Stalinist maneuverings is discussed by former Western European Soviet military intelligence chief, W. G. KRIVITSKY, in *In Stalin's Secret Service* (Harper, 1939).

David DALLIN's *Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy, 1939-1942* (Yale, 1942) has something to say about Nazi-Soviet relations.

Four of the more worthwhile books covering the Stalinization of Eastern Europe are: Hugh SETON-WATSON's *The East European Revolution* (Me-

thuen, 1952), Hamilton Fish ARMSTRONG's *Tito and Goliath* (Macmillan, 1951) Hal LEHRMAN's *Russia's Europe* (Appleton-Century, 1947) and David DALLIN's *The New Soviet Empire* (New Haven, 1951).

On Stalinism in Asia: One of the most important studies, a highly intelligent, valid analysis of Chinese Stalinism is Harold R. ISAAC's *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* (1938 Stanford U., revised 1951). We also suggest Benjamin I.

SCHWARTZ' *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* (Harvard University Press, 1951). — This is one of Harvard's Russian Research Center studies. In addition, David DALLIN's *The Rise of Russia in Asia* (Yale, 1949).

## 12. Miscellaneous

The satire: George ORWELL's *Animal Farm* (Harcourt, 1946). And there is Arthur KOESTLER's novel, *Darkness at Noon* (Macmillan, 1941).

## "Russia, What Next?"

(Continued from page 26)

develop in a vacuum but rather out of certain historical conditions. It is even more important that we understand that the very process of Stalinization did create forces — urbanization, literacy, industrialization — which can be made the social basis of a democratic society if the political structure of totalitarianism is overthrown.

But who is to lead the political revolution? If we answer, as Deutscher does, that it is to be initiated by the bureaucracy, we require an event without historical precedent — an anti-historical event: the suicide of a ruling class. I see no warrant for such an assumption. Deutscher makes the assumption because he fails to acknowledge the facts of the political structure of Stalinist Russia.

If we must be very careful of talking of the "liberalization" of a totalitarian regime, we must be even more careful of attributing this progress to the overlords of the regime. On this point Deutscher is inexcusably careless — and he owes us an apology.

However, there is hope in the situation, and Deutscher is right in pointing it out. The material accomplishments of all the human suffering inflicted by Stalinism do offer the possibility of a radically different, democratic society in the Russia of the future — but the force to make the political revolution will, and must, come from the oppressed, not the oppressor.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Michael Harrington is a member of the editorial board of *Anvil*. He has also contributed to *Commonweal*.

## 'Banker and Boss Hate Red Soviet Star...'

The average work week in the Czech textile industry is now 62 - 66 hours. There is no extra pay given for this overtime. Explaining, in February, that "the eight-hour day is a remnant of capitalism," Minister of Defense Nejedly warned workers that it would be an "unpardonable offense" to leave work simply because they had finished their eight-hour shift.

## Do You Feel Lonely, Uncared For. . . ?

A practical measure favored in the Soviet Union and its Satellites for exercising control over the life of workers is to assemble them in workers' settlements; i.e., housing colonies located near the plant where they work. In Lithuania, a model 6-block settlement was built during the summer of 1952 in a suburb of Wilno called Antopol.

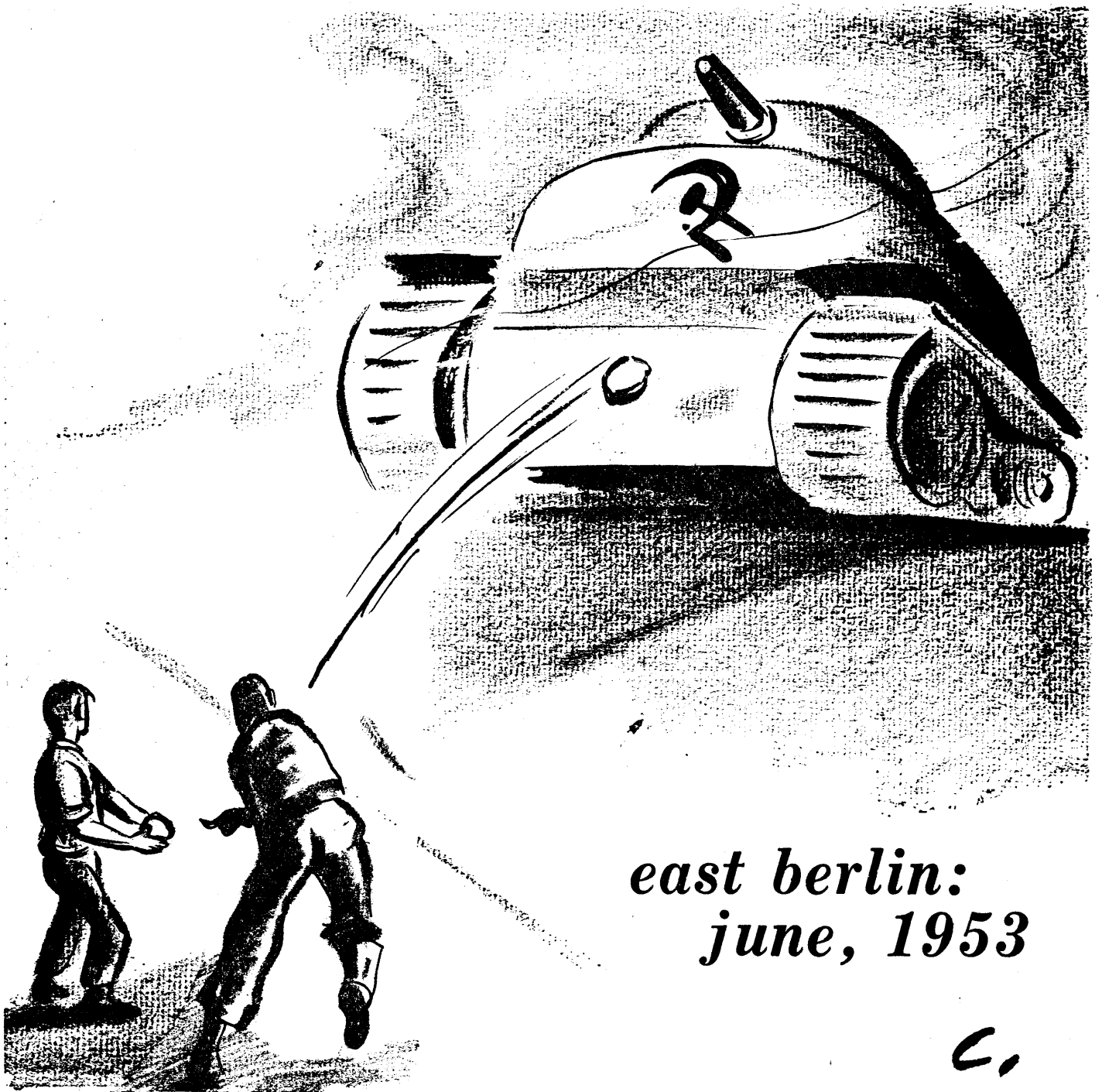
Block committees, composed of members of the Communist Party, are the instruments of control over the life and behavior of the inhabitants. Their authority is never clearly defined, but is exercised in such a way that the workers quickly sense what is expected of them. And so, for example, those who wish to go to the city after work are not required to notify anybody about it — in practice, however, they prefer to sign up in a book provided for their "convenience," indicating where and when they are going. Workers who receive letters from friends and relatives submit them after reading to the block leader, to demonstrate their harmlessness. Letters written by workers are also given to the block leader, unsealed, with money for stamps. The workers profess to be in a hurry and ask the leader to post their letters for them. This, of course, is a pretext for having their letters examined and approved.

Block "correspondents" are another instrument for checking the life of workers. As reporters whose duty it is to supply the workers' bulletins with information on the achievements, needs and conditions of the workers' life, they are permitted to investigate almost everything that concerns the workers. These correspondents, in practice, address more of their reports to the local Party Committee than to the workers' bulletins. In the Antopol settlement, the correspondents are recruited from among the young girls who are Komsomol members, organized for the purpose by a secretary of the Wilno district Komsomol, a Russian Communist named Wolczakowa.

Every Sunday before noon political meetings are held and attendance is carefully checked. It is believed that one of the main objects of these meetings is to prevent residents from going to Mass.

From *Behind the Iron Curtain*





*east berlin:  
june, 1953*

*C.*