

OCTOBER 1952

Soviet Technique Of Historiography

by BERTRAM D. WOLFE

Mr. Bertram D. Wolfe is one of the world's leading historians of the Soviet Revolution, with which he was connected because of his personal association with Lenin and Trotsky. He is the author of that well-known book "Three Who Made A Revolution". FREEDOM FIRST is privileged to carry his latest article, which will be featured in the October issue of FOREIGN AFFAIRS of New York.

FOR over two decades, Soviet historiography has been in steadily deepening crisis. Histories succeed each other as if they were being consumed by a giant chain smoker who lights the first volume of the new work with the last of the old. Historians appear, disappear, and reappear; others vanish without a trace.

Originally, only party history was subject to rigid prescription. Then Soviet history was added. Latterly, the area of command performance and commanded conclusions has spread outward to America and Asia and the wastes of Antarctica, backward to the Middle Ages, to Byzantium, to the shadowy origins of the Slavs and the pre-dawn of the Kievan State, to China's earliest culture.

One day a given statement of events or interpretation is obligatory, and the next condemned in words which seem to portend the doom of the historian who faithfully carried out his instructions. If it is a pronouncement of Stalin he is following, all the more severely must he condemn himself — of course, without involving the Leader in his *self-criticism*.

Often the central personages of an event become *unpersons*, as if they had never existed. The Civil War must now be re-written as if there never had been a War Commissar named Leon Trotsky. The Soviet theatre, once the subject of so many histories, is historyless once more, until somebody contrives to write a new version without a trace of the great innovator-director, Vsevolod Meierhold. On Feb. 15, 1951, *Pravda* accomplished the fact of "Commemorating" the tenth anniversary of the Eighteenth Party Conference, in which Voznesensky delivered the main report, without so much as mentioning the name of the Reporter!

Today the Balkarians are missing from Volume "B" of the new edition of the *Great Encyclopedia*; the Volga Germans have become an *unpeople*; and the Crimean Tartars, having been expelled from their centuries-old home to a region under the Arctic Circle, have had the place names of their former habitations extirpated, and are now being subjected to the shrinking of their historical role in the Crimea to the point where they are gradually becoming an *unpeople*, too. (See *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, June 4, 1952).

During the past Spring even objects began to become *unobjects*, as *Pravda* and the regional press from February to May reported a grim and thoroughgoing purge of scores of local and national museums all the way from Lithuania to Kazakhstan. The Lithuanian museums were rebuked for failing to show the influence of Great Russian culture and the struggles and longings of their peoples for extinction of their independence, while the Kazakh museums were condemned for the nostalgic splendour of their daggers, guns, harnesses, bridal costumes, and for failing to display any objects showing Great Russian civilizing influence and the "progressive" character of the annexation of Kazakhstan.

It would require many volumes to give an account of this continual retroactive rewriting of history. The present article aims to give some notion of the scope of this vast *operation palimpsest*, to seek the "line" or rather some of the fragmentary and frequently contradictory lines, discernible in the revisions; to seek the reasons, or a rationale, for what seems to contain an element of the personal and irrational as well; and to ask what these tamperings with the historical record portend concerning the present and immediate future intentions of the regime. History has become a "weapon", an arm of propaganda, the essential function of which is the justification of the changing policies of the Soviet Government through reference to the "facts" and "documents" of the past. The penchant for making every change in foreign relations or domestic policy historically retroactive, serves as a vast, though distorting glass, through which the observer may see these policy changes magnified. It is that which makes *Voprosy istorii* undoubtedly the most interesting and revealing of all present-day Soviet publications.

II

Macaulay once said that his idea of hell would be to have to listen to fiends endlessly misquoting history and be unable to correct them. But in the Soviet Union,

the historian himself must do the misquoting. His own point of view is neither consulted, nor, except by the accident of coincidence with the line of the moment, ever likely to find expression. The text-book writers and lecturers under the limited absolutism of the last Tsars could easily be identified as liberal and democratic as in the case of a Platonov, as conservative and monarchical as in the case of an Ilovaisky, as Marxist as in the case of a Pokrovsky. But under total state absolutism, history, as all of culture, has been "nationalized"; there are no individual viewpoints or private judgments or pluralistic approaches. Tarle, specialist on Napoleon, is now ordered to rewrite his principal work in such fashion as to "prove" that Napoleon himself burned Moscow (no doubt to make it untenable as his Winter Quarters!). And the liberal-democratic Vipper, who first wrote on Ivan the Terrible in the early years of the century, is charged with bringing his book of 1922 "up-to-date" and glorifying the protagonist.

"From my experience as a student of Moscow University in 1939-41," writes S. V. Utechin, "I know that the late professors K. V. Bazilevich and S. V. Bakhrushkin held a negative attitude towards the present regime. Yet in their volumes we find no traces of views different from those professed by Stalin. Thus the personal political opinions of the authors do not necessarily coincide with, and may even be contrary to the views expressed in their books. These reflect not their political biases... but their understanding of the party line". (S. V. Utechin: "Text-books on history," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. IV No. I).

As the great editing process embraces more and more of the remote corners of the earth and earliest past, there are no longer safe and neutral topics. Nor does the historian enjoy the right to pick his period and theme, nor the right of silence where he cannot in good conscience speak. As in music the politician-critic or the Supreme Critic in the Politburo tells the composers what and how and in what style to compose, so in history, *Voprosy istorii* bristles with menacing strictures upon historians for picking remote, neutral, sharply delimited or apolitical subjects; for neglecting fields which have been given priority in Party directives and the Historical Plan, for drawing their own conclusions or failing to find in the materials the conclusions predetermined for them.

It is suggestive both of the serious hazards in the field and the real feelings of the historians that, despite urgings, dangled prizes and repeated threats, no one has yet been found to complete a single volume or a single serious article in the field of the history of the Party and the regime, though Stalin himself first suggested it in 1931, has ordered it at regular intervals since, and forced it into the place of top priority in the Five-Year Plan for Soviet Historians adopted in 1946. Fifteen years after the task was first assigned by the Dictator, the lead editorial in *Voprosy istorii* warns that the failure to produce the ordered works creates a "completely impermissible situation" which "it would be completely wrong to look for objective circumstances to explain." (No. 8, 1949). This stubborn silence, continuing up to the moment in which I write, constitutes

the most eloquent page in present-day Soviet historiography.

III

In the twenties, not a politician but a professional Marxist historian, M. N. Pokrovsky, was the virtual dictator in Soviet historiography. He represented a consistent general line ("history is politics projected into the past") and made life difficult for fellow historians who did not accept it. But he held to professional standards, had regard for documents and evidence, though at times he wrestled mightily with them to compel them to yield what he sought. And as a historian he had enormous prestige, which was further enhanced by Lenin's preface to his *Short History of Russia*, praising it warmly and calling for it to become a text-book and to be translated into other European languages.

But in 1931 his excessive respect for the facts of Party history came under Stalin's personal scrutiny. In 1934 he was posthumously purged — he had the luck to die in time — along with all his works and disciples. At about the same time, Ryazanov, Russia's outstanding Marxologist, whose headstrong, self-directed devotion to Marxist documentary scholarship closely resembled Pokrovsky's attitude towards history, suffered a similar posthumous fate.

Pokrovsky was accused of being anti-national and anti-patriotic (he shared Lenin's internationalism and defeatism for Tsarist wars); of neglecting actual events, dates, facts; periods, and personages in favour of generalized sociological schemata (until then considered a hallmark of Marxist historical interpretation); of being "anti-scientific" and "anti-Marxist"; of "underestimating" Lenin (he wrote: "Whenever Lenin differs from me I blindly accept his view; he can see ten feet deeper into the earth than any of the rest of us") and of underestimating Stalin (which was undoubtedly true and the immediate though not the only explanation of his downfall.).

At first it seemed to historians that a new line might emerge which would put pluses where he had minuses, and offer them considerably more freedom for examination of sources without regard to Marxist interpretive schemata.

But alas, life was not to be that simple. Though Pokrovsky had been condemned for neglect of concrete historical facts, ere long *Voprosy istorii* was to give warning that "the proper historian" must be free from "objectivism" and from "an exaggerated attachment to facts," and at home in the citation and application of the "theoretical generalizations" and dictates of the Party line. (No. 12, 1948). Now it was not a single, simplistic, recognizable line like Pokrovsky's, but a continuous bombardment by *ad hoc* fragments of lines, changing with each political shift or change in mood, frequently internally contradictory, constantly being more altered and even suddenly reversed. Apparently these fragments issue from Stalin's latest pronouncement or some earlier one exhumed from context after four decades, or from the quotations from Lenin or

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Notes

FISCHER & RADHAKRISHNAN

LOUIS Fischer's criticism of certain remarks publicly made by Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, India's Vice-President, when Fischer was in this country, has raised around him a hornet's nest. Not even Mr. Fischer's critics have sought to justify the Vice-President's un-neutral and untrue statement, which has been aptly described by *Thought* magazine as "A Philosopher's Folly". Nor is it necessary to labour the irresponsibility of the Vice-President's pronouncement beyond recording that he appears to have justified the confidence shown in him by *Cross Roads*, the Communist Party weekly, which proposed his name for Presidentship of the Union even before he was nominated as Vice-President. The official version of his remarks later released by New Delhi does not materially affect the implications of the Vice-President's observations.

The really important issue raised by Louis Fischer's remarks and the resentment expressed against them in certain sections of the press is that of the right of freedom of expression of a publicist visiting a country other than his own.

It would appear, according to Fischer's critics, that a foreign visitor has no right to comment on the actions or pronouncements of the Government or its officials of the country visited, however open to question they may be. By this logic, the right exercised by Indian journalists in India to criticise the actions of President Truman's administration disappears the moment the same writers land in New York! Conversely, it was these same neutralist quarters that objected when Dr. Lohia last year criticised certain aspects of Indian foreign policy to American audiences. By the same logic, then, a speaker or writer abroad must not comment on the policies of either his own or the local government. Would the poor wretch be permitted to discuss the acts of yet other countries? We do not know.

If taken seriously, all this would make nonsense of "One World." Visits by distinguished thinkers like Louis Fischer would become pointless to both countries concerned. But we have an idea that this is hardly what Fischer's critics have really in mind.

We have yet to know of neutralist quarters throwing up their hands in horror at criticism made by visiting Americans of the State Department's policies.

Such criticisms, which are often made, are welcomed gleefully by audiences in this country and praised in the columns of the Indian Press. Similarly, when Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa during a visit to the United States politely suggested to his American audiences that they were war-mongers, it was the American reactions, and not his remarks, which were the subject matter of complaints about a "witch hunt."

It will thus appear that there are people in India who seek to impose a double standard of morality—one in regard to criticism about foreign governments and another in regard to their own. This is yet another indication of that sense of inferiority which finds an outlet in chauvinism and xenophobia. These same circles would have been rubbing their hands in glee and describing Louis Fischer in eulogistic terms if he had gone to Cape Town and criticised some statement of Dr. Malan, the South African Premier.

K. G. MASHRUWALA

WITH the passing away of Kishorlal Mashruwala India has lost a source of inspiration for good life. He was one of those very few people for whom Gandhi meant not a name to be mouthed on appropriate occasions for some ulterior purposes, but an embodiment of certain principles and practices which make for a full and free life. He was known as a philosopher of Gandhism, and his right to be so recognised was granted more by Gandhiji himself than by anyone else. In his brief commendation attached to his *Essence of Gandhian Thought* Gandhiji said that Kishorlalbhai had an unusual acquaintance with his thought and that his understanding matched his acquaintance. If Rajaji was called the "Conscience-Keeper" of Gandhiji, Mashruwala was known in the Gandhian circles to be the repository of Gandhi's system of thought. If he did not get the blazing publicity which some of his less deserving colleagues got, it was only the result of self-effacement which was his second nature. But just as Vinoba's worth was known when Gandhi chose him as the first "Satyagrahi" in the Individual Satyagraha campaign of 1940, so also Mashruwala's worth was established when he became the natural successor of Gandhiji as the editor of *Harijan*. His crystal-clear style, though unadorned and unemotional (Vinoba compared it to cotton-fruit that has no juice but has the virtue of delicate fibres) had a remarkable strength born of clarity of thought and force of argument. He had the almost divine gift of criticising without the least trace of malice or hostility. His criticisms of the policies of the Congress Government therefore

were a model of their kind. They were for him only a performance of duty, of which he was really an embodiment throughout his asthma-afflicted but meaningful life.

EGYPT

MOHAMAD Naguib holds out new hope for Egypt. Very often when a soldier comes to power he creates more problems than he solves but Naguib seems to be a soldier only by profession and not by temperament.

That is why when Farouk was forced into exile Naguib chose Aly Maher, a wealthy conservative with a good record of reform, to run the Government, but the Moslem Brotherhood which is backing Naguib, and other officers who carried out the *coup*, insisted on his taking matters more immediately under his control.

It remains to be seen, as the *New Statesman and Nation* says, whether he can carry through his programme without substituting military dictatorship for parliamentary procedure, but he has certainly set the pace and in six weeks' time he has done an enormous amount to reduce the terrible contrast between the Palace and the poor, and to rid the country of corruption, which were the most glaring political facts in Egypt.

The most important of the reforms which he is putting through is the land reform Bill which will limit any single holding to about 200 acres, and the rest will be sold to landless peasants on the basis of 30-year annuities. This single measure will do more for Egypt economically and socially than almost anything else, and if the General can steer this measure successfully through Parliament and the Civil administration his "dictatorship" will have been justified.

TROJAN HORSE

A NEW Trojan Horse has been brought on the field by the Communists. The horse is called International Student Relief. The I. S. R. claims to be 'wedded to fostering a spirit of self-help among students and engaged in rendering financial, material and medical aid to needy students.' Its Secretary-General Jacques Varges—is currently in India selling I. S. R. to credulous Indian students and university men and women.

What is inside the Trojan Horse?

The I. S. R. was sponsored by the Communist-controlled International Union of Students, and in fact operates from the headquarters of the I.U.S. in Praha.

What is more pertinent is that this agency was started as a rival to an already existing body, the World University Service. The W.U.S. was sponsored in 1950 jointly by several other organisations such as the International Student Service, the World Students Christian Federation, the World Students Jewish Federation and Pax Romana. The I.U.S. was invited to join this organisation but it refused to do so because it could not tolerate any university agency undertaking any activity other than relief. The other activities, namely international education and research on student problems, the I. U. S. wanted to be left as its own close preserve. As the organisations that had met to form the W.U.S. did not agree to such a restriction of the scope of W. U. S. activities, the I. U. S. not only refused to join the W. U. S. but immediately sponsored this rival organisation, calling it the International Student Relief. The Communists having failed to make the W.U.S. subservient to the I. U. S. are trying to break it from outside by running a parallel organisation without any regard for the unnecessary duplication in fund-raising and relief-distribution. The I.S.R. is only another front set up by the Communist-controlled I.U.S.

Mr. Varges is reported to have claimed that this I. S. R. has branches in nearly all countries including the U. S. A., U. S. S. R., Britain, France, Czechoslovakia, India and China. The claim is a classic Communist presentation of facts. The fact is that the I. S. R. exists only in the Iron Curtain countries and in other countries it is run *only* by the Communist-controlled National branches of the I. U. S. In the U. S. A. the National Students Associations is *not* associated with the activities of the I. S. R. but cooperates with the World Students Service Fund in which name the W. U. S. operates there. In England again, the British National Union of Students participates in the W.U.S. and had opposed the setting up of a rival body. Incidentally it may be mentioned that most national student organisations of countries outside the Iron Curtain have now left the I. U. S. which remains like its Indian counterpart, the All India Students Federation, a Communist student organisation.

As far as India is concerned the W. U. S. National Committee with Dr. Zakir Hussain as chairman has been in existence since 1947. The Communist A. I. S. F. left it in 1950 and the A. I. S. F. alone runs the Indian Branch of the I. S. R. The National Union of Students of India is not associated with the Indian I. S. R. The I. S. R. is not a genuine relief organisation, nor is it strictly international. It is one of the 'new fronts' opened by the Communists.

International Congress Of Jurists—Berlin

25th July—31st July 1952

by PURSHOTTAM TRICUMDAS

THE Congress was convened by the Investigating Committee of Jurists, a body organised by West German Lawyers under the able guidance of Dr. Friedenau and was sponsored by the Federal Minister of Justice and Dr. Reuter, Mayor of Berlin. The Investigating Committee ruthlessly exposes the acts of flagrant violations of law, interference by the Executive in the administration of justice and practices like torture in the People's Democratic Republic (East Germany). This organization has a large office and is manned by 80 full-time workers. Every day a large number of East Germans (about 200 to 250) come to this office with their tales of woe and their difficulties. That this organization is effectively exposing the happenings in East Germany is evident from the virulence of the East German Press in denouncing its activities as well as from the fact that Dr. Linse, one of the lawyers actively associated with this organisation was kidnapped in broad daylight from the street as he was getting out of his house. The gangsters raced to East Berlin with machine-gun fire to aid them. A dozen East Germans have also been sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from life to 3 years for "giving information" to this Committee really seeking their aid.

The Congress was attended by nearly 150 delegates from 45 countries, Japan being represented by the Vice-President of the Supreme Court among others and Canada by two judges of the Supreme Court and one judge of the High Court. Apart from Japan, Siam, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and Egypt were also represented. We also had two delegates from South America viz. from Brazil and Uruguay.

CONTROVERSY OVER THE SCOPE

Even before we had met the East German Stalinist press denounced us as "gangsters, howling hyenas, American spies" and used such other choice but rather stale expressions to describe us. Needless to say so far as I am concerned I was amused. The Congress met on the 25th morning and there were welcoming speeches by a representative of the

Minister of Justice who was unavoidably absent and by Dr. Friedenau. Dr. Reuter spoke the next day. The speeches emphasized the need to uphold democratic freedom and values in a world threatened by totalitarianism. Before the morning session ended after the election of the Chairmen of various Committees, I raised the question as to the scope of the deliberations of the Congress and of the Committees as I felt that it was going to be restricted to the happenings in East Germany. I pointed out that whatever our conclusions might be regarding the happenings in East Germany we must in the preamble to our report assert that we were unequivocally against any violation of the Charter of Human Rights whether by way of racial discrimination as in South Africa or by way of colonial exploitation as among other places in Tunisia and Algeria and not merely in the Iron Curtain Countries. One of the British delegates hastened to oppose it. I later on discovered that he opposed every sensible or progressive suggestion. After a short debate in which the Brazilian delegate Sgr. Nabuco supported my suggestion it was decided that the matter may be fully discussed later on before the presentation of reports of the various Committees. I deem it very short-sighted and unfortunate that the Congress ultimately decided to present a factual report of the wholesale contravention of the Charter of Human Rights in East Germany without having the courage to assert that the Congress was unequivocally opposed to such contravention wherever it might take place. This was on the specious ground that we could only report after investigating and all my efforts to convince the Congress that the assertion of principles needed no investigation failed.

The Congress then broke up into four Committees viz. Public, Penal, Civil, and Economic and Labour. In the Committees documents, many of them originals, were placed before us to show how those in power in East Germany completely ignored and disregarded the law declared by their own Constitution and that the Police was above the law. Witnesses, many of them refugees, deposed similarly. The documents and testimony left little doubt regarding the sorry state of

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Review

Russia and her Colonies

By Walter Kolarz (George Philip and Son Ltd., London)

ONE of the many myths sedulously propagated and accepted by many otherwise discerning people in India is that Soviet Russia has solved the problem of nationalities; and since India like the U.S.S.R. is made up of many nationalities many are anxious to see their India in the image of Soviet Russia.

Mr. Walter Kolarz, who was born in Czechoslovakia which, between the wars, was inhabited by six nationalities, and who is therefore naturally equipped to see the tensions and urges of the problem, and who, besides, has earned a wide reputation as a writer and broadcaster on the subject, has so thoroughly exploded this myth in this book that one is left wondering how one could have been living so long in the world of such a make-belief.

The fact is that the original inspiration given by Lenin did mean a healthy approach towards the nationalities problem. Lenin did think in terms of the liberation of the non-Russian subject people from the thralldom of Czarist imperialism, and of genuine development of the language and culture of the various nationalities. The general degeneration which Leninism has suffered at the hands of Stalin had ominous consequences in this sphere also, with the result that the various Soviet nationalities in spite of their economic and educational development, have never experienced the free flowering of their culture and have always found the soul of their living choked under the suffocating hand of Moscow.

Broadly speaking, the national aspirations of these people have gone through three periods of suppression. Immediately after the Revolution and Civil War the Bolsheviks found it genuinely impossible to compromise with the "bourgeois nationalism" that accompanied the urge of emancipation from the Czarist stranglehold. Under Stalin, during the black period of the purges, Stalin's political opponents from these lands, who thought in terms of some kind of national Communism were charged with Fascism and Trotskyism and appropriately liquidated. It should be noted that during this period almost every top-ranking Communist leader from almost all the republics was declared to be a spy or traitor or worse! After the Second World War a fresh wave of suppression

started against the innate national aspirations of these peoples and even today Moscow is reported to be purging the local leaders of the Communist parties in Uzbekistan, Azerbaidjan and Kazakhstan. This is nothing but the result of the new philosophy of Russian chauvinism, of which the Georgian Stalin has emerged as the most blatant champion. On May 24, 1945, while addressing the Red Army commanders at a great victory celebration Stalin demonstratively toasted the Russian people whom he described as "the most outstanding people of the U.S.S.R.". Lenin always knew the real chauvinistic nature of Stalin. He always warned that "the Great Russian chauvinist dwells in many of us" and called Stalin "true Russian derzhimorda" (a character of the brutal, stupid policeman from Gogol's *Revisor*). He was of course conscious of the fact that Stalin was a non-Russian, but, he said, "a Russified non-Russian always shoots beyond the mark in his true-Russian mood". The nationalities of the Soviet Union have been suffering from the Russification of the non-Russian dictator.

There is no denying the fact that Soviet Russia has carried out extensive developmental projects in her colonies. These projects have certainly brought material benefits to the people. But they no more represent the fulfilment of their national aspirations than did the Czarist Trans-Siberian Railway for instance. They do not necessarily mean development as desired by the local people. The peoples of Azerbaidjan and Uzbekistan, for example, are opposed to the cotton policy of Moscow which has confined their lands to cotton, to the detriment of the growth of cereals. The Soviet policy is not to allow the many-sided economic development of the various republics, but to assign to them a specialised role in the context of an all-Union policy. This dominating centralism of Soviet economic policies is reflected in the Soviet budgets where the expenditure for national economy is covered by the central budget to the extent of 86.3%, whereas only 6.3% and 7.4% is derived from the republican and local budgets respectively.

The political centralism of the administration and of the party organisation has further curbed the aspirations and inspirations of the different nationalities. This centralism has, in fact vitiated a situation which was basically unfortunate because of the geographical distribution of Russians and Ukrainians almost throughout the territory of the U.S.S.R. and the numerical disproportion between the Russians and the non-Russians, which naturally ensures the Russian

domination. The rapidly developing industrialisation which demands the services of Russians has only served to accentuate this disproportion.

Mr. Walter Kolarz has illustrated all these developments with such a wealth of facts that one wishes that he had space and time to work out the extent of the economic exploitation which the whole process undoubtedly means for the non-Russian people. As it is, the book is profoundly revealing. The really remarkable thing about this book is that the facts have been almost exclusively taken from Soviet publications. As the author says, "with significant exceptions, I have refrained from using any other material." The authenticity of the detailed documentation, therefore, cannot be questioned.

POLEMICUS

The Life and Death of Stalin

By Louis Fischer (Harper & Brothers, New York, 272 pp. \$3.50).

DURING one of his wartime visits to Moscow, Harry Hopkins had the unpleasant task of informing Stalin that the dispatch of Lend-Lease weapons from the United States would be delayed somewhat on account of strikes.

Stalin lifted his eyebrows. "Strikes?" He asked, "Don't you have police?"

This is one of the innumerable revealing anecdotes and firsthand observations in Louis Fischer's *The Life and Death of Stalin* that makes this book one of the most informative and the most readable studies of the Soviet Union published in recent years. It is brilliant and solid at the same time and can be expected to hold the undivided attention even of readers who usually give political books a wide berth.

To borrow one of Churchill's famous phrases, Russia is a riddle inside a mystery, wrapped in an enigma. The riddle is the personality of Stalin, the cobbler's son from Georgia, who became the ruler over a nation of more than 200,000,000 people. The mystery is the forces at work inside the Soviet Union, including the Soviet people. The enigma is the ultimate plans of the Soviet rulers. Mr. Fischer, who spent many years as correspondent in Russia and enjoyed the confidence of several high-ranking Soviet officials, comes as close to solving the three-layer puzzle as seems possible for anyone who is not a member of the Politburo and who has not the run of the Soviet State archives.

Without the use of six-syllable words from the more advanced psychology textbooks, the author sketches a plausible and convincing picture of Stalin's character. Here are a few examples: "Stalin craves

the freedom to zigzag." "He rejects quixotic methods. Rather than tilt at windmills with a long lance he would put sand in the mechanism and, as opportunities occur, take the windmill apart piece by piece . . . Stalin's guiding rule is piecemeal." Stalin is the apotheosis of a system in which the system matters most and man least. . . . He is a mechanic in politics. . . . his castle in the air is the biggest political powerhouse." "Stalin despises well-educated, contemplative . . . soul-searching, idealistic men and women. There are none of them on the first and second leadership level . . . Stalin wants doers not thinkers."

As these few quotations show, Mr. Fischer successfully establishes the close connection between Stalin's personality, preferences, and prejudices, and the character of his methods as well as of his policy. What starts as a biography thus gradually expands into a comprehensive and illuminating analysis of the entire history of the Soviet Union from 1917 until today. All the major events, from the feud with Trotsky to the Yalta conference, are competently dealt with, and Stalin's deviation from Marxism is brought out as clearly as the rise of the managerial class, the fostering of nationalism, and the still unbroken peasant opposition.

The author's interesting speculations about Stalin's succession have been given a firm basis in the most recent convocation of a Soviet Communist Party congress for next October. If this congress, as seems very likely, will prepare for a smooth transition of power from Stalin to his successor, it will bear out Mr. Fischer's contention that Stalin "wants the battle for his succession to take place now . . . while he can direct it . . . and prevent it from wrecking or disrupting the Soviet system."

In view of the author's astute forecast it is encouraging to see him confident that the success or failure of Stalin's life work will not depend on his heirs, but that "history's verdict" on Stalin will be written by non-Stalinists.

ERNEST S. PISKO

in the CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR.

Socialism: A New Statement of Principles

(Presented by Socialist Union, Lincoln-Prager, Ltd., London, 3sh.)

THIS examination of the principles of Socialism has come from a group of earnest inquirers who are all members of the British Labour Party and form a representative cross section of it. In their book of 64 pages they have looked beyond a rechartering of programme or approaches or alignments and ventured to see into the origins of human action and aspiration. It

may be asked why this present hesitation and search when even now loud voices assert the word that is Marx and the "god" that is Stalin. Did not Marxism once have validity for all Socialists? Are the members of the Socialist Union then making a pathetic attempt to shake old man Marx off their shoulders?

This thoughtful and significant treatise is not just an excursion into theory. It is an assertion of human values that can alone be the basis of a good and just society. It is born out of an experience that is gathering insistence for Socialists in every country. In the agonising sequence of events in Russia they have seen the mockery of their hopes and of their faith. They have seen their belief in collectivism with its concomitants of "economic determinism" and the "inevitability of progress" shattered into debris by the tragedy of the two world wars and the threat of a third. This experience within the Labour Party when in office had shown that nationalisation lacked the completeness of Socialist implementation, while the concentration of political and economic power in the same hands became a serious threat to freedom. So they posed the question, "what sort of society, embodying what values do we as socialists hope to build?" And their answer is in their emphasis on ethical values. For, ideals depend on their fulfilment not only upon changes in the social structure but also in changes in human attitudes and relations. And so they have defined the syllogism of these personal elements in the basic ideals of Socialism.

Socialism equates the continuous striving for equality of opportunity for every individual to lead a full and free life. This unfolding of personality can only be achieved if people live in freedom and fellowship. But these ideals cannot be realised unless there is a change in the class structure of society which can be brought about by Socialist action. That action demands the "responsible participation" of every individual in the carrying out of a Socialist programme which will transform society while respecting the dignity of the individual. This is the main thesis of the book.

The book indicates in its last section "The Way Forward" how these principles can be directed to solve immediate problems. And the courage with which they have been applied is evident in their refusal to take a pacifist or neutralist line when there has loomed once again the possibility that democratic society may be destroyed by totalitarianism. This is only the first of the publications of the Socialist Union. We shall look forward to their future work where we hope they

will discuss in fuller details problems like decentralisation, freedom movements in colonial countries and economic aid to backward countries, on each of which they have indicated their stand in this book.

K. K. MENON.

In Place of Fear

By Aneurin Bevan (William Heinemann Ltd, London, 6 sh.)

IN this brilliant book Mr. Bevan has attacked the old enemy of all Socialists the world over, viz. the *Laissez faire* economy, with an originality of thought and style that is truly arresting. Much of his criticism of the capitalist economy and many of his arguments for public ownership are old, but the way he proves that capitalism is unscientific because it is unpredictable and devoid of moral values because it is inconsistent with a priority of social aims throws an amount of fresh light on the old problem.

But the main weakness of Bevan's book is that he is unable to develop some of the aspects of the problem which he undoubtedly sees. He is aware of the fact, for instance, that there is as much danger of a rigid bureaucracy in public ownership, as in private ownership, he also knows that remoteness of control is the result of bigness and not of any particular kind of ownership; he equally realises that the ballot-box democracy is formal and that the worker must be enfranchised not only at the ballot-box, but also at the workshop. But, when it comes to the problems of his own country, he fails to develop the valuable suggestions which he has obviously picked up from the Yugoslav experiment and only pleads for staying the demon of private ownership. No wonder, if Milovan Djilas, the Yugoslav theoretician, was unable to appreciate his excessive preoccupation with nationalisation!

Mr. Bevan quite obviously hates the dictatorial structure and philosophy of Soviet Russia, but is unable to see its consequences in the field of foreign policy, where he betrays a strangely naive faith in the Soviet intentions. For instance, he proposes that Soviet Russia should be invited to join in an international programme of economic development of the backward countries. He seems to believe that Russia is even remotely interested in helping a country or a region that does not accept her hegemony. This naive attitude towards Russia has naturally made his appreciation of the 'cold war' extremely defective.

P.A.P.

To The Editors

Dear Sirs,

May I be permitted to congratulate you on the publication, in your September issue, of the very significant article by Jayaprakash Narayan on "Incentives for Goodness." No one can read that "confession of faith" without being profoundly moved. It may well mark a stage in the social and cultural evolution of new India.

This greatly respected Indian leader whose record of devotion to the country and the people gives him a position of exceptional importance, here states unequivocally that individual and social good cannot be secured or promoted on the basis of a materialist creed. Here is a return to the spiritual foundations of Indian culture.

Jayaprakash Narayan declares that the materialist postulates, on which the latest school of "Humanism" bases its doctrine of progress, cannot give an incentive to be good. In other words his revolt against materialism is on moral grounds. Matter is necessarily subject to determinism. It is incapable of reflection, that is, of "entering into itself." It is on the spiritual activity of man, his freedom, his capacity for abstract thought, that philosophy has based some of the strongest arguments for the existence of spirit as the ultimate reality. Some of us earnestly hope that Jayaprakash Narayan's unsatisfied quest of philosophy may reach its goal along these lines. The formula "Know Thyself" still remains one of the most fruitful sources of philosophical inquiry.

Yours truly,
J. D'Souza, S.J.,

Director, Indian Institute of Social Order, Poona.

(BERTRAM D. WOLFE—Continued from page 2)

Marx or Engels which adorn their promulgation. But study of such texts will not help the historian, nor is there any real defence in an umbrella of quotations, for in any vast and historically evolved sacred scripture you can find quotations for any side of anything. To quote yesterday's Stalin may today be "talmudism and scholasticism". The historian must divine the dictator's coming pronouncement, for his latest word is always the last word in history though Marx, Engels, Lenin and yesterday's Stalin all be united against it. A sudden reversal in Stalin's relations with Germany or England or America is pushed backward retroactively so that the present enemy is absolute evil, and though yesterday an ally, must always have been an enemy. All books, articles and documents that testify to the contrary must be consigned to the Orwellian "memory hole" to be consumed in flames, or must be "rectified" and brought upto date, without any mention of the fact that there was ever an earlier version.

Not only changes in relationships, strategy and tactics, but even changes in the Dictator's awareness of the nature of his own regime, or his subjective identification with some deed of a figure of the past, say an Ivan IV or a Marshal Kutuzov, can require a complete retroactive revision of the figure thus honored. Such re-evaluations cannot be deducted by the historian from a study of sources, but only by sensing in courtier fashion the reactions of the Dictator whose attitude toward history has been summed up by Orwell in the formula: "Who controls the present, controls the past".

IV

Stalin first entered historiography through the field of personal and party history. In January, 1924, one week after the death of Lenin, he chose the occasion of a Memorial Address to predate by some four years the beginning of their personal acquaintance. (See the writer's *Three Who Made a Revolution*, pp.424-7, for the evidence). At the time it might have seemed merely a faintly ghoulish example of the natural human inclination to reshape the past nearer to the heart's desire. But when one remembers that Lenin had just called for the removal of Stalin as General Secretary, and when one contemplates the subsequent struggles that carried Stalin from "loyal disciple" to "best disciple" and then "only loyal disciple," and on to "faithful companion-in-arms" (*soratnik*) and "wise guide and counsellor" and more than equal partner, one cannot but be struck by the meticulous attention to detail and long-range planning implied in this first little retouching of history.

A Napoleon, a Trotsky, a Thucydides, a Xenophon or a Josephus may wait to turn his energies into the writing of history until defeat has deprived him of the opportunity of making it. But Stalin engaged in writing history as one of the means by which he climbed to power. That explains the ruthless political utilitarianism, the pugnacious factionalism or *partiinost*, which he has impressed upon it. That is why first "rotten liberalism" and then "objectivism" were to become the gravest of historiographical crimes. History was one of the "weapons" with which he fought his way to power, and he enlarged the scope of his revisions with every increase in the actual power at his command.

There was much to revise. First there was that personal symbol of the Revolution and the Regime: the duality-unity: *Lenin-Trotsky*. Mountains of books, newspapers, pamphlets, decrees, documents, had to be consigned to the "memory hole", mashed to pulp, or brought out in "corrected" editions, in order to substitute for *Lenin-Trotsky* a new duality-unity: *Lenin-Stalin*.

Then there were the other close associates of Lenin, glorified as "Old Bolshevism" in the struggle with Trotsky, and then themselves destroyed. To obscure all traces of their actual deeds and substitute nameless and monstrous evils that would justify their murder, is another task that Stalinist historiography has never ceased to concern itself with.

With notable impartiality Stalin has barred foreign and domestic accounts, pre-Stalinist Bolshevik histories,

Stalinist histories written to order by Knorin, Popov and Yaroslavsky, the footnotes to the Second and Third Editions of Lenin's *Works*, the *Great Encyclopedia*, and all the tell-tale passages in the letters, writings and speeches of Lenin and of Stalin himself. There is a mass of Lenin-Trotsky correspondence at Harvard that can never be published in the Soviet Union. There is Lenin's *Testament*. Typical of Stalin's self-censorship is his omission from his *Collected Works* of his tribute to Trotsky, published in *Pravda* of Nov. 6, 1918, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution.

For the foreign observer, the most important document that Stalin has omitted from the corresponding volume of his *Works* is a letter he wrote to Lenin in 1920, criticizing the latter's *Theses on the National and Colonial Question* because they failed to provide an intermediate or transitional form for the annexation of new Soviet States, like a "Soviet Germany, Hungary, Poland, Rumania," which have never formed part of the old Tsarist Empire and therefore may object to immediate incorporation in the Soviet Union. This early foreshadowing of the future "People's Democracies" can be found, however, as a footnote to Lenin's *Theses* in the Second and Third Russian Editions of his *Works*, Vol. XXV, P.624.

The writer was in Moscow during the first six months of 1929 when on central command every periodical and paper in the Soviet Union broke out with a picture of Stalin on the front page. This was the beginning of the Stalin cult.

At first it seemed to me wholly "rational". Having just eliminated Bukharin, the last of the close comrades of Lenin, Stalin had now to become "Old Bolshevism".

But a number of circumstances have since caused me to conclude that there is an irrational element also. First there was the fury of the purges, with the arrest, execution, or reduction to unskilled slave labour of millions: the neutral, the indifferent, the innocent, the loyal, including entire technical, bureaucratic and military layers desperately needed for the enhancement of the very power of the State. It may be urged that such random terror was "needed" on the principle: "If you want to make your enemies afraid, begin by cutting off the heads of your friends". And that total State power in a populous State can spend a few million lives on the process of completely atomizing society so that every particularized atom depends absolutely on the State and no man can depend upon any other. Still it is hard to believe that so many millions were required, or that the State had so greatly to weaken itself technically in the process.

Second there is the insatiable and unappeasable appetite of the dictator for the enlargement of the incense, the trembling obedience, the worship, to the point where he is now the "Coryphaeus" of all the arts and sciences (history of course being one), and is increasingly being endowed with the attributes of a living god.

Third, there was an unexpected discovery while going through pages of *Zhizn natsionalnostei* (Life of the

Nationalities — Stalin's personal organ when he was Commissar of Nationalities) that Stalin had retroactively inserted two minor "prophecies" into one of his articles when he included it in his *Collected Works*. And more startling, still, the discovery of an item headed, "GREETINGS TO COMRADE STALIN", with the following (slightly abbreviated) text:

"The Conference of National Sections . . . sends you its greetings and declares its conviction that by following firmly along the path pointed out by you for the solution of the national question . . . we will create throughout the world a united, brotherly communist family which we will teach to appreciate those great merits which belong to you . . . the leader of the oppressed peoples".

Here is the beginning of that *potok privetstviu* (flood of greetings) which has filled the columns of all the Soviet papers and journals for these many years. But the date was December 24, 1920! Lenin was still alive and in leadership, and, by general consent, it was Lenin who had pointed out the solution of the national question and who was the leader of the oppressed peoples of the world. Stalin was still outranked by five or six of Lenin's associates and had neither expropriated their deeds nor executed them. Thus the craving for flattery and the need that "the world appreciate his great merits", preceded by almost a decade the "rational" motivation of the Stalin cult!

In 1931 Stalin issued his first public directive on the spirit of the new historiography, in the form of an angry open letter to the editors of *Proletarskaya Revolyutsia* charging them with "rotten liberalism", for having printed a "discussion article" on the problem of why Lenin had continued to admire Kautsky and the Orthodox-Marxist majority of the German Social Democracy until he was shocked by their stand on the war of 1914.

Bolshevik published Stalin's open letter with its own appropriate editorial gloss, headed: "Give the Study of the History of our Party a Scientific Bolshevik Footing!" All the earlier histories, from Shlyapnikov's to Yaroslavsky's and Popov's were attacked. "There must be a thorough housecleaning in all book, text-book and journalistic literature dealing with the history of the Party . . . The ruthless struggle against every manifestation of rotten liberalism must be intensified . . . The significance of Stalin's letter far transcends the gateposts of history . . ." (No. 22, 1931).

The Dictator next turned his attention to a close supervision of a new History of the Civil War which was to eliminate all trace of Trotsky . . . except as a secret agent of the other side. Then he began to dictate all the details of the now renowned *History of the Communist Party: Short Course*. On January 20, 1946 *Pravda* reported that Stalin was himself the author of this strange work of historical falsification, endless self-quotation and self-glorification, and that it would appear as Volume XV of his *Collected Works*.

But even Stalin's mighty name has not protected the *Short Course* from the ravages of retroactive obsolescence. Thus the first edition substituted for a number

With Many Voices

'The deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.'

—Tennyson.

Russia's latest popular song is called "The great Stalin is leading us to Communism."

It was played by Moscow Radio yesterday after reports on the forthcoming Communist Party Congress and the new five-year plan.

Both these, according to *Pravda*, aim at developing the Soviet Socialist society into a Communist one.

—*Hindustan Times*, August 22, 1952.

"All talk about controlling our birth-rate is utter nonsense," Mr. V. K. Krishna Menon said.

—*Hindustan Times*, August 22, 1952.

The former Kaiser Friedrich Museum in East Berlin had recently (March) offered an exhibition of paintings called "Artists Produce for Peace." The art dictator of the Soviet zone praised especially a painting bearing the title "Workers in an Iron Foundry."

A letter to *Neue Zeitung*, Frankfurt, reveals that the same painting was shown in 1941 in a Munich Exhibition patronised by Hitler and called "Artists Produce for War."

—*United Nations World*, March 1952.

In the April issue of *United Nations World* our editors predicted that the Kremlin would try to influence the American elections by playing on the anti-communist feelings of the American people, and that Stalin's aim would be to see the isolationists victorious.

of unpersons, the new chief purger, Yezhov, as having "prepared an uprising of the soldiers on the western Front in Byelorussia". (English edition, p.206). It soon developed that Yezhov was only sixteen at the time, and moreover, that the chief purger must himself be purged. Stalin's *Short Course* keeps appearing in revised editions as the greatest, dullest and most mendacious best seller in the history of literature. But he himself has streamlined the Great October Revolution further and further until the latest version to appear in the *Chronology*, in the back of the corresponding volume of his own *Collected Works*, actually reads:

"Oct. 24 (Nov. 6, New Style)—Lenin arrives at Smolny in the evening. Stalin briefs him on the course of political events.

Oct. 24-25—Lenin and Stalin lead the October uprising".

Whether it be wholly "rational" in terms of the

Almost sooner than we expected, the prediction came true, for *Pravda* in reporting for the first time in detail about our primaries insisted that Eisenhower's candidacy was in fact a Democratic ruse and that once elected, the general would declare himself openly as a Truman Democrat.

From "Letter from the Publisher"

—*United Nations World*, July 1952.

The first Universal Convention to safeguard and extend authors rights in countries to the west of the Iron Curtain has been signed at Geneva by 35 nations on 8th September, 1952. India is one of the signatories.

—*Times of India*, September 9, 1952.

General Dwight Eisenhower, Republican nominee for the United States presidency said that if elected he would appoint a Negro to his cabinet, if a Negro were the right man for the job.

—*Bharat Jyoti*, September 7, 1952.

Mr. Henry Wallace admitted frankly on 7th September, 1952, "I was wrong" about the Russian Communists. The former Vice-President said that he was now convinced that the Soviet Union wants the cold war to continue—and will risk a hot war to see that it does.

—*Times of India*, September 8, 1952.

rationale of the total State and the absolute ruler, or whether there be also an irrational element, it should be clear that we are dealing with the most striking example in all history of a man who has succeeded in inventing himself. It takes total organization and total power, not propaganda skill but the union of pen and sword in a single hand to do so complete a job. Once the total State has concentrated in its control not only all the means of production of material but no less of spiritual goods, all the modes of expression, communication, criticism, thought, feeling, all cheers, and boos, all love and hate, all paper, ink, type, loudspeakers, microphones, cameras, cinemas, montage and cutting rooms, theatres, halls, schools, churches, streetcorners, all books, magazines, newspapers, leaflets, caricatures, pulpits, chairs, lecterns, meeting halls, all import and export of and traffic in ideas, it becomes possible to reshape the public past nearer to the heart's desire.

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Having worked so efficiently in personal and party history, this spirit and method were now applied to general historiography.

(To be continued)

STALIN'S ANNUAL INCOME

Roubles
60,000 as Prime Minister
60,000 as General Secretary of the Russian Communist Party
600,000 from royalties on books published in his name
100,000 as expenses for 3 villas and 4 motor cars placed at his disposal by the State

In addition, he is given 'buying tickets' which enable him to get all goods at 80 per cent below price—altogether about 1 million roubles a year, one rouble equalling Rs. 1-3-0.

M. P. T. Acharya

(PURSHOTTAM TRICUMDAS—Cont'd from page 5)

affairs in East Germany where the usual totalitarian pattern of police state is functioning under a façade of a liberal constitution.

"THE RIGHT TO RESIST"

The Congress devoted one morning to the topic "The Right to Resist". I opened the discussion and in my speech suggested that during the short period between the usurpation by a totalitarian regime and the establishment of a terrorizing Police State it may be worth considering whether the method of Civil Disobedience could not be tried as a mode of resistance. After conceding the fact that totalitarianism was very ruthless, I pointed out that Civil Disobedience could possibly be effective even against such a system where the people are against the regime and where the issue was manifestly just. The European mind seems to be so obsessed with the might and ruthlessness of the totalitarian State that it cannot even bring itself to think of any form of resistance apart from violent resistance.

The Conference served a very useful purpose also by providing an opportunity to lawyers from various countries to meet and to face the totalitarian menace with which many were merely vaguely acquainted. The Chairman, Mr. Justice Thorsen (Canada) deserves all praise for the efficient and charming manner in which he conducted the deliberations.

I cannot end without paying a tribute to the courage and pertinacity with which Dr. Friedenau and his colleagues are facing the fight for freedom and against injustice. All honour to them and men like Dr. Linse.