

LANDMARKS: A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS ON THE RUSSIAN INTELLIGENTSIA, 1909: BERDYAEV, BULGAKOV, GERSHENZON, IZGOEV, KISTYAKOVSKY, STRUVE, FRANK. Edited by *Boris Shragin* and *Albert Todd*. Translated by *Marian Schwartz*. New York: Karz Howard (200 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028), 1977. lx, 210 pp. \$12.75.

Because of the seminal character of the contributions to *Vekhi* and their impact on Russian intellectual life and political thought since their appearance in 1909, the publication of an English translation in book form should be a source of gratification. As there can be no question of even a summary discussion of *Vekhi* (which would require a full-length essay), I will restrict myself to a few formal observations concerning this particular edition.

This is not the first appearance of *Vekhi* in English; all articles have appeared in installments in *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 2-4 (Summer 1968-Summer 1970), in a thoughtful and annotated translation by Professors Marshall Shatz and Judith Zimmerman. It is puzzling that no reference is made to this earlier translation, though a few lines from its introduction are quoted on the dust jacket! Personally, I find the earlier translation better, more accurate and fluent than that of Marian Schwartz which is clumsy and bespeaks little knowledge of the historical context. *Vekhi* cannot be properly understood by the contemporary Western reader without some annotation and introduction. The edition under review does have at the end a glossary of terms and names, as well as brief biographical sketches of the contributors. The glossary is helpful but not completely reliable or satisfactory. There are two introductions. The first by a certain R. Khazarnufsky verges on the scandalous: confused, unfocused, in dreadful English—it is hard to figure out to whom or for what it can be of help. The second, by Boris Shragin (one of the authors of *Samosoznanie*) purports to put *Vekhi* in meaningful focus for today's reader; but it fails to do so by assuming too much background knowledge and by not specifying the areas and ways in which *Vekhi*'s seminal role may be of relevance to Soviet dissidents and instructive to Western readers. All in all, in my opinion, the appearance of this English edition of *Vekhi* is rather unfortunate, since it probably precludes the planned publication of Professors Shatz and Zimmerman's better translation with more pertinent introduction and commentary.

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STALINISM: ESSAYS IN HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION. Edited by *Robert C. Tucker*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1977. xx, 332 pp. \$19.95.

What was Stalinism, and what were its causes? What was its relationship with Leninism, with Marxism, with the traditional Russian political culture? Such questions as these are of great interest to anyone concerned with twentieth-century Russia or with socialism. It is therefore a pleasure to welcome the appearance of this symposium. It contains a number of exceedingly valuable papers, which must figure in any bibliography of essential reading on the subject. There are thirteen contributors. As in any symposium, some papers are more distinguished than others, but the general standard is high.

Robert Tucker himself not only wrote an introduction and "some conclusions for a scholarly agenda," but also an intellectually challenging paper, "Stalinism as Revolution from Above," in which he stresses, more than any other contributor, the traditional Russian despotic elements. He naturally does not deny the importance of economic and social factors, but emphasizes that the way problems were perceived, and the solutions thought to be feasible, were influenced by historical-political culture,

and also by Stalin's own despotic personality. This raises the fascinating but perhaps unanswerable question: what was Stalin's own personal contribution to the *system* we know as Stalinism, to the creation of what Rigby, in his valuable paper, calls "the mono-organizational society"? This in turn raises the general issue of the role of personality in history. Some Marxists, including Trotsky himself, have had to recognize the decisive role of Lenin in the Russian revolution, and since they ascribe decisive significance to the revolution, this does raise certain conceptual problems. And what of revolutionary despots such as Ivan IV and Peter? Was Stalin's role comparable? One is tempted into parallels with the *Oprichnina* (was Ezhov Stalin's Maliuta Skuratov?) and, of course, with Peter's *tabel' o rangov*.

Such temptations are resisted by the Trotskyists, whose several interpretations are skillfully analyzed in Robert McNeal's paper. Neither Trotsky nor his followers were ready to recognize Stalin's stature as a political leader. But, true enough, many others beside Stalin were responsible for his success, and it is therefore good to have Moshe Lewin's fascinating analysis of "the social background of Stalinism." He lays stress on the isolation of the "professional revolutionary cadres," as well as on "the dangers inherent in the transformation of dedicated revolutionaries into rulers," and the subsequent "swamping" of administrative positions by poorly educated, greedy, and incompetent "newcomers from the popular classes." That the officials who rose to power with Stalin were, in the main, semiliterate, boorish, and crude is certainly true. To what extent was Stalin responsible for selecting them? If Trotsky or Rakovskii (whose striking analysis of the sources of Stalin's power should have had a mention in this volume) had been in command, whom else could they have relied on? Was the use of such cadres the inescapable consequence of backwardness? Stalin can be said to have used their ambitions, their anti-intellectualism, their grasping for petty privileges, in his rise to power, and they in turn gave to "Stalinism" some of its most characteristic features. But, as Lewin rightly points out, Stalin was not ready for the role of top bureaucrat; he wished to be an autocrat, and in the process he destroyed not only oppositionists but also many "Stalinists." Is the terror system which reached its apogee in the thirties to be treated as an essential feature of Stalinism, or was it a pathological deformation, attributable to the specific character of the despot? Lewin's contribution helps us to see the issues more clearly.

Of quite especial interest is Stephen Cohen's lucid discussion of "Bolshevism and Stalinism." After carefully examining the arguments of the proponents of the "continuity" thesis, Cohen attacks it with vigor. How, for instance, can one argue that Stalinism was consistent with the Leninist view of the primacy of the party, when Stalin and his henchmen massacred a high proportion of the party cadres, and when party institutions atrophied? Cohen is also wholly correct in pointing out that the events of 1929–39 are inconsistent with the view that the "bureaucracy" (defined as conservative and privilege-seeking) was a *ruling* class or stratum. How can this be reconciled with forcible collectivization and the wild excesses of the first five-year plan? Stalin reduced the bureaucracy to the status of terrorized servants. Cohen too refers to the Russian political tradition, and notes that the Stalin cult, though promoted from above, found a fertile soil. Stalinist despotism had, alas, a popular base.

Space limitations compel me to omit any reference to a number of other interesting papers, except for those by Kolakowski and Marković. Both discuss the same theme: the relationship between Marxism and Stalinism. These two contributions are an intellectual feast, and their quality cannot be adequately reflected here. Kolakowski has renounced Marxism, Marković clings to it. Both are highly intelligent men. Marković shows himself capable of a critical view of important aspects of the Marxist intellectual tradition. Naturally, he stresses most of all the non-Marxist aspects of Stalinism, but one of his subheadings reads: "the roots of Stalinism in unsolved problems of Marxism." Thus, "how will the *whole* proletariat form its common will . . .

organized as a ruling class"? Is not the term "*dictatorship* of the proletariat" open to misunderstanding and misuse? Is there not danger in the denigration of bourgeois-democratic and universal-cultural values? Marković also takes issue sharply with Marx's views on the rights of small nations. Kolakowski in his turn accepts that certain key features of Stalinism are inconsistent with many of Marx's values, but then, as he argues, attempts to implement in practice *some* of Marx's ideas have required the abandonment or negation of others, since certain of the values are incompatible. Perhaps the best way of summarizing the conclusions is to cite a sentence from Tucker: "Both parties agree that Stalinism was *in some sense* an offspring of classical Marxism. . . . What one views as a legitimate child, the other sees as a bastard."

Apart from minor blemishes, the editing has been thorough, and the whole volume reflects great credit on all concerned.

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THE GREAT GAME: MEMOIRS OF THE SPY HITLER COULDN'T SILENCE. By *Leopold Trepper*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977. xii, 442 pp. Photographs. \$10.95.

The author of this book was the organizer from 1938 to 1942 of a Soviet spy network covering Brussels, Paris, and Berlin. The Gestapo called it *die rote Kapelle*, and as the Red Orchestra it is familiar to newspaper and thriller readers. Trepper was arrested, escaped, made his way back to Moscow, was rearrested, and survived to be released after ten years in prison.

By ethnic origin Trepper is a Polish Jew, born near Cracow in 1904. He joined the Communist party in Palestine in 1925, and was an active militant there and in France till 1932, when he went to Moscow. There he experienced the spread of fear, as a driving force over his party: "The glow of October was being extinguished in the shadows of underground chambers. The revolution had degenerated into a system of terror and horror; the ideals of socialism were ridiculed in the name of a fossilized dogma which the executioners still had the effrontery to call Marxism." He was glad to get away in 1938 to found his spy network in Brussels for Red Army intelligence. Contrary to legend, he was given no special training. He recounts in lavish detail how his network of informers worked, but he says nothing that would compromise any living survivors. He also explains how it came unstuck: his superiors in Russia sent him the addresses of his three main collaborators in Berlin, with a code word for making contact, in a code the Germans broke ten months later. Numerous arrests of Soviet agents followed. They were all quite junior, and the author does not try to assess how much real use the data which they supplied were to the Russians.

Much else of interest is here, nevertheless. Among other points, one deserves to be singled out: the long delays that often attended deciphering of spies' messages by the Russians. Maybe Stalin took no notice of Sorge's warning, three weeks in advance, that the Germans were going to attack him because the warning was not deciphered in time.

The rest of Trepper's book describes his interrogations by the Gestapo, his simple escape from them, and his much more prolonged interrogations by the Soviet secret police. Because General Berzin had recruited him, he had been suspect since 1938. In a coda, he explains how after ten years in the Lubianka, Lefortovo, and Butirki prisons he was released to meet his family, who had been living in a Moscow hovel. He returned with them to Poland, survived several more years of anti-Semitic persecution, and was allowed out to die in the West. He now lives in Denmark.