

most useful volume, not of the literary quality of the Deutscher or the Howe volumes perhaps, but free from polemics and critical but not unfair. Yet, although Knei-Paz has distanced himself from the more personal involvements of his fellow biographers, he has been touched by an occupational hazard of contemporary writers on the Soviet experience, a reverse determinism which judges the present as the inevitable consequence of the past—in this case, Stalinism as the inevitable product of the ideas and practices of the Bolshevik Revolution. There is in much of this scholarship no flexibility, all too little allowance for the unforeseen, the unanticipated, and for simple “historical bad luck.” Thus, Marxism—imposed on backward Russia through the agency of the Communist Party—equals bolshevism, which led to the development of a unique form of modern, collectivist society. This standard reading provides the framework within which events and ideas are fitted with little consideration for what fortuitously may have slipped in between theory and practice.

In any case, Knei-Paz has written a painstakingly detailed analysis of Trotsky's social and political ideas in the context of historical events. (The author has excluded from the scope of his study Trotsky's political record while in power.) The inquiry is organized into a coherent framework centered around the theory of permanent revolution, its practice, and “betrayal.” A section on Trotsky's ideas on art, literature, philosophy, and the Jewish question is of interest, but is not central to Knei-Paz's evaluation of Trotsky's thought. In the author's view, the international aspect of Trotsky's theory has obscured his primary concern with the social dynamics of backwardness in a given country in general, and with the problem of the relationship and applicability of Marxism to Russia in particular. Permanent revolution is a revolutionary theory of backwardness, of a process that would by-pass the capitalist phase, in which societies would modernize without undergoing the Western experience and without developing institutions paralleling those of advanced industrial countries. In this light, there may be a closer connection between Trotsky's “permanent”—or more exactly “uninterrupted”—revolution and Mao Tse-tung's revolutionary theory than has been reflected in recent scholarship.

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THE SECRET BETRAYAL: 1944–1947. By *Nikolai Tolstoy*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978. 503 pp. \$14.95.

The strident publicity and the waves of newspaper correspondence accompanying the British edition of this book are not attributable to its qualities as literature or history, which are poor. They are due instead to the author's determined attack on the United Kingdom Foreign Office, including many officials who are still alive, and, more by implication than by fact, on a former prime minister, Anthony Eden, foreign secretary at the time of the events described. These officials are held responsible for insisting, under the terms of the Yalta agreements, so as to maintain a policy of collaboration with Stalin, on the repatriation of about two million Soviet citizens liberated by the Allies—including those who did not wish to return or were being returned to death or to labor camps. Furthermore, these men are blamed for putting pressure on the Department of State to do the same, for concealing the fact that brutal cruelties occasionally had to be perpetrated by the military to effect the repatriations, for concealing their knowledge of the grim fate awaiting these people in the Soviet Union, and for flouting the principles of both British law and the Geneva Convention. Because of Tolstoy's more humane picture of the Department of State, this work may provoke milder reactions in the United States.

The book is the outcome of a great deal of uninspired hard work, much correspondence and talk with “witnesses,” an overflowing rancor toward the Soviet state, and the author's obvious desire to reach the best-seller market. From its jumble of

facts from all levels of reliability (virtually anything is accepted as evidence), of ill-remembered testimony, of pointless anecdotes, of citations from other books of even less historical authenticity, and its utter disorganization, what may be extracted that is of real importance?

The moral issues are unavoidable and it is entirely to Tolstoy's credit that he insists on them. They are not simple, because many of the people in question had chosen to be soldiers of a particularly detestable government and enemy. On one of them, however, there is no room for debate. To return by force or trickery people who had never been Soviet citizens, because they had fought with the German armies, was a disgraceful act which no confusion at the time can condone, whatever unpleasant acts these people may themselves have committed earlier during the Russian civil war. Not to have returned them would not even have stood in the way of the political expediency which, it might be argued, had to take precedence over morality. But by what morality should a historical judgment be reached? Apart from a relatively short period in the history of Europe and North America, the normal fate of captives has been death or slavery. The conventions which protected certain persons from these fates were based on assumptions about the individual's "rights" which were entirely unacceptable in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. For Tolstoy to point out repeatedly that the Nazi government frequently behaved in accordance with these conventions—for example, by accepting as British prisoners of war all those serving in British uniform—is a moral hypocrisy surpassing the cold and prejudiced cruelties of the Foreign Office. More than a million Soviet prisoners of war died or were killed in Germany. Those whose individual rights were protected anywhere in the war and its immediate aftermath were but a favored few. All others depended not on the law but on sporadic human compassion. Had an Allied country taken more than five million prisoners of war (the number of Soviet prisoners taken by Germany), would it still have behaved in full accord with the Geneva Convention? The Allied response when faced with about two million liberated Soviet peoples in Western Europe suggests not. It was in fact the sheer numbers involved which presented Western Allies with a problem they had been able to avoid during the war itself. Could they have given political asylum to perhaps one million Russian soldiers and an unestimated number of civilians? It would have been no mercy to have dumped them on Germany.

The book makes no attempt to answer the extremely important questions about how many Russians were in all of the relevant categories, and, indeed, numbers slide around vaguely throughout. It is true that both the Foreign Office and the State Department took refuge in legal dodges and hypocritical evasions, only rediscovering the morality they stood for when a manageable number of Russians was left in their hands. It was only to be expected that the Soviet Union, so desperately in need of labor for reconstruction, should simply assume that anyone found in Germany was tainted and a suitable subject for a further period of slavery. But, rather than anger at diplomats, what this story should evoke is a deep sadness for those chance victims of both German and Russian slavery and sometimes, in between, of Allied cruelty.

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PAMIAT': ISTORICHESKII SBORNIK, part 1. New York: "Khronika," 1978  
[Moscow: Samizdat, 1976]. xiv, 600 pp. \$15.00, paper.

Russia has need of bridges spanning the rifts that separate generation from generation. It is a land torn by massive catastrophes. Yet there lie even deeper chasms separating a Russian from himself. An abyss cannot be bridged. It is there, and it stares up at you.