

Warth has tried, with considerable success, to cover the highlights. He has also sought to treat Trotsky with scholarly detachment. The latter is probably impossible for a study of a figure who has aroused such passions; and though Trotsky in this book is neither hero nor villain, what ought to be detachment at times reads more like irony. The author's emphasis on character and personality, his effort to bring out Trotsky's humanness, at times amounts to the trivialization of a major historical figure, although at times we are given glimpses of shrewd insight into the differences which personal traits make in revolutionary movements. The reader is left with an image of Trotsky as a brilliant and versatile leader who was totally inept as a party politician and who ultimately was betrayed by ideological blindness as well as fatal flaws in character.

By concentrating on Trotsky's ultimate failure, in my opinion, the author minimizes some of Trotsky's achievements. He slides over his successes as a military commander and plays down the contributions Trotsky seems to have made to Communist theory. He does not even mention the suggestion made some years ago by this reviewer that Trotsky should be seen as one of the principal pioneers of Stalinism.

Having suggested these inadequacies, I hasten to concede that, for its brevity, this must be considered a highly competent work. Since every scholar is likely to criticize it for neglecting his or her pet topics, the various inadequacies probably balance each other. Warth has done well in the amount of space at his disposal. He tells his story in a lively style; the book is easy and pleasant to read. I have discovered only one minor factual error.

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CLASS STRUGGLES IN THE USSR: FIRST PERIOD 1917–1923. By *Charles Bettelheim*. Translated by *Brian Pearce*. New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1976 [Paris: Maspero/Seuil, 1974]. 567 pp. \$18.95.

LES LUTTES DE CLASSES EN URSS: DEUXIÈME PÉRIODE 1923–1930. By *Charles Bettelheim*. Paris: Maspero/Seuil, 1977. 605 pp. Paper.

In these volumes, Charles Bettelheim, a French Marxist scholar who has written extensively on socialist planning and has studied the Soviet Union since the 1930s, presents an overview and Marxist analysis of Soviet social development (to be continued in subsequent volumes), rather than results of original research. The first volume will contain few surprises for those familiar with Lenin's works and Marxist debate on the period of the Revolution and civil war, although it includes an interesting account of the author's own evolution from enthusiasm for the Soviet experiment, through a somewhat disillusioned phase of "economism," to renewed enthusiasm for the process of revolutionary transformation in Cuba and China.

The second volume, which contains more specific analysis of economic policies and their social and political implications, examines many of the same issues discussed by such Western historians as E. H. Carr and R. W. Davies, Alec Nove, Alexander Erlich, Moshe Lewin, and Theodore Shanin. On the peasant question, Bettelheim sees significant class differentiation, but rejects the idea that the drastic policy changes of 1928–29 were made imperative either by a kulak threat or a major economic crisis related to problems of grain procurement. In regard to workers (treated as a relatively undifferentiated group), the author sees dissatisfaction with the increasingly managerial attitudes of industrial management and the party leadership, but concludes that the proletariat remained the party's chief source of social support during the NEP. His analysis of the emerging elite, which has much in common with that of Trotsky and Djilas, emphasizes "bureaucratization" and *embourgeoisement*. The

repressive aspects of Soviet rule are treated as deviations from original bolshevism, indicative of the leadership's partial alienation from the proletariat.

Where Bettelheim departs from traditional Marxist interpretation is in his treatment of Stalin's "revolution from above" (Bettelheim's phrase) during the late 1920s. In the First Five-Year Plan, he argues, technological and economic progress replaced socialism as the Soviet goal. The essential *smychka* of rural and urban society was broken, and the "backward" groups of peasants and artisans were rudely thrust aside. The intelligentsia, still an essentially bourgeois stratum, emerged as the partner of the proletariat in the drive for modernization. The party absorbed the capitalist, managerial, and antiegalitarian values inherent in a primary commitment to economic progress but incompatible with the development of true socialist relations.

This antimodernization position, which is clearly related to the author's interest in the Chinese alternative, may be morally justified or even justifiable in Marxist terms, but the author is surely on shaky ground when he equates it with original bolshevism. As Alexander Gerschenkron has pointed out, the appeal of Marxism to the late nineteenth-century Russian intelligentsia consisted largely in its promise of economic development out of backwardness: to be a Marxist was to separate oneself from the Socialists whose hopes lay in the allegedly traditional collectivism of the peasant *mir*. For the Bolsheviks, modernization—like the dictatorship of the proletariat—was a means toward the ultimate goal of socialism. But these were the *only* means by which socialism could be achieved. During the transitional period, economic development had as clear a priority over egalitarianism as the proletarian dictatorship had over political democracy.

Another serious objection to Bettelheim's interpretation in volume 2 is its almost complete neglect of the implications of social mobility. If the Revolution promised a "better life" for workers and peasants, this promise meant more than a new deal at the factory and land for the peasants. It meant the opportunity to rise into a higher stratum of society, to obtain privileges formerly reserved for the bourgeoisie, to receive an education and a white-collar job or, for the peasants, to move to towns and enter the industrial labor force. The Bolsheviks, although chary of too much theoretical discussion of the point, always treated these aspirations as legitimate. During the NEP, a tight labor market inhibited peasant movement into towns; but "promotion" (*vydvizhenie*) of workers into white-collar and administrative jobs was given every possible encouragement because the Bolsheviks did not trust the old bureaucracy and sought proletarian replacements. During the First Five-Year Plan, upward mobility among both the working class and the peasantry attained massive dimensions: this was not only a consequence of industrialization but a very important part of Stalin's "revolution from above."

Since the social dislocation caused by World War I, the Revolution, and the civil war was so quickly followed by an extended period of large-scale upward mobility, the whole question of class identity becomes extremely tricky. Were workers who wished to rise—those with more skills and education, who were also those most likely to enter the party during the NEP—less proletarian than workers who were content to remain at the factory bench? Were former workers promoted to administrative jobs less proletarian than the recently uprooted peasants who formed the bulk of the industrial labor force in the 1930s? If these questions are, as they appear to be, unanswerable, it seems doubtful that class struggle is the most useful focus of analysis of Soviet society in the 1920s and 1930s.

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