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André Liebich

Mensheviks Wage the Cold War

The tattered remnants of the exiled Menshevik party organization arrived in New York in 1940 from their previous French refuge. They brought with them their twenty-year-old journal, *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, their internal quarrels and many dashed hopes.¹ Readily dismissed by US authorities as ‘long forgotten in Russia and with no real roots in American society’, they were not prepared to abandon their long struggle against bolshevism, although they were to wage it on different foundations.² As one Menshevik put it, in spite of the fact that the social democratic party networks which had served the exiled Mensheviks so well during the interwar period in Western Europe were unavailable, ‘our chances in contemporary America have risen considerably’.³ Astonishingly, this optimistic assessment was borne out. To be sure, the last Menshevik party institution, the Foreign Delegation of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, soon disintegrated over the issue of the post-second world war Soviet emigration. However, several prominent individual Mensheviks — notably, Raphael Abramovitch (1880–1963), David Dallin (1889–1962) and Boris Nicolaevsky (1887–1966) — succeeded in carving out a strategic niche in American discourse on the Soviet Union. Their outlooks and their contributions varied, both among themselves and in relation to earlier Menshevik critiques of Soviet Russia, but together their efforts constitute a distinct Menshevik contribution to the Cold War.

Raphael Abramovitch was the titular head of the Mensheviks. A consummate lobbyist and fundraiser, he had represented the Menshevik viewpoint in the innermost councils of the Labour and Socialist International (LSI) during the interwar years. His elevation to the chairmanship of the Foreign Delegation and to the editorship of *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik* more or less coincided with his arrival in America.⁴ However, Abramovitch’s standing

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rested on more than his party titles. For decades he had been a correspondent of New York's *Jewish Daily Forward*, at one time the largest Yiddish-language paper in the world. As a former Bundist, he was personally well-connected to American labour leaders of Russian-Jewish origin, such as the influential head of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, David Dubinsky. These connections with American labour were reinforced by several spectacular lecture tours of the United States over a period of thirty years.⁵

In America after 1940, Abramovitch was able to reap the benefits of his past efforts. A New York banquet on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday drew over six hundred people (and contributed over \$2000 to the party chest).⁶ Under Abramovitch's chairmanship, the American Federation of Labor set up its Labor Conference on International Affairs, which was to serve long and well as a funnel for union support to Mensheviks and various other causes, inside and outside the United States. During the second world war, Abramovitch collaborated with Americans and others in the International Council for the Study of European Problems, a Rand School Study Group on Post-War Reconstruction. After the war he was the 'moving spirit' of the prestigious but short-lived *Modern Review*, an English-language journal aimed at renewing socialist theory.⁷

As a charming and venerable socialist patriarch, Abramovitch enjoyed wide personal respect. A German exile rival for American attention acknowledged:

I admire this man [Abramovitch]. In spite of creeping blindness and constant headaches, he is unflinchingly active and informed about everything. He deals in English, Russian, German, and Yiddish (an important language here); makes excellent speeches and, moreover, is a truly good friend to us.⁸

Americans echoed these sentiments. A noted historian of the Russian Revolution even telescoped Abramovitch's importance backwards, referring to him incorrectly as one of the most important Mensheviks at the time of the Bolshevik/Menshevik split.⁹ Communist denunciations of Abramovitch — a 'travelling salesman of dirty and slanderous wares' had been Klara Zetkin's epithet; 'a conservative pedant whose every instinct had been outraged by the Revolution' wrote Trotsky — only added to Abramovitch's prestige in the eyes of his American admirers.¹⁰

Ideologically, Abramovitch was among the most rabidly anti-communist Mensheviks. Unambiguously pessimistic, in 1948 he was convinced that 'the world is moving toward war, towards a catastrophe of unseen proportions'.¹¹ Most alarming and incomprehensible was the West's failure to appreciate the situation. In his view, signing treaties with Soviet Russia was like creating 'A United Front with Polygamists against Polygamy', to cite the title of one of his articles in the New York social democratic weekly *The New Leader* (6 January 1945). Not surprisingly, Abramovitch welcomed the outbreak of the Korean War, lamented the Geneva Conference on Indochina (tantamount to a 'second Munich'), and denounced those who spoke of 'doing all, short of war'. Although he stated, regretfully, that it was too late to use the atomic bomb once the United States had lost its monopoly, he urged that 'we must rid ourselves of the fear of A and H bombs'.¹² According to Abramovitch, Eisenhower was 'a Kerensky on a world-scale', with the only difference that in 1917 the Revolution perished because of an impotent attempt to continue an unnecessary war, whereas now catastrophe loomed because of an equally impotent fear of undertaking the risk of war.¹³

Abramovitch's views did not change after Stalin's death.

In relation to bolshevism, we and they are two poles and I do not personally see any method of resolving this dispute between two worlds other than by bloody war, which can be avoided only through 'our' or 'their' capitulation,

he wrote to a party comrade in 1955.¹⁴ Time was working for the East against the West, he warned in the *New Leader*. The Soviets could not and would not depart from their traditional goal of achieving world communism by war and revolution. The narrowing of the industrial gulf between the West and the communists and, once more, 'the organic inability of the Western mind to grasp the real nature of totalitarianism and the full measure of the Stalinist threat', meant that Stalin's death promised little respite. Shamefully, however, the West was concentrating on making life pleasant.¹⁵

Only once did Abramovitch depart from his blanket refusal to count on any internal changes in the Soviet leadership. 'Was Beria The Great Chance?' he asked wistfully (*New Leader*, 20 July 1953). To be sure, since Abramovitch expressed this sentiment only after Beria had been deposed, the communist press may have been

correct in claiming he was unhappy with Beria's arrest just because it reduced the struggle within the Kremlin. In any case, Abramovitch never again expressed hope in any of Stalin's successors. He conceded that a second Stalin, this Genghis Khan with an atomic bomb (*New Leader*, 16 March 1953) was unlikely, because history showed that great despots did not appear twice in a single epoch. However, he set no store by destalinization, differing even from his closest party comrades in his belief that no Russian thermidor was in sight and merely regretting that the West had lost its opportunity to stop red imperialism.¹⁶ When *Pravda* mentioned Abramovitch, for the first time in twenty-six years, as an admirer of Soviet sputnik technology, he refused the compliment and replied that he considered it his greatest duty to warn American workers of the Soviet danger.¹⁷

Abramovitch's views, shrilly expressed and radical even in the context of their time, attracted attention because of his personal prestige as a veteran socialist politician. On the other hand, Boris Nicolaevsky, the leading historian among the Mensheviks and a noted scholar in his own right, gained an American audience by virtue of his much vaunted expertise on the inner workings of the Kremlin. Like a scholarly detective, Nicolaevsky shifted partial evidence and dissected obscure texts in order to explain events in the USSR. The result — presented in hundreds of articles; almost a hundred in the *New Leader* alone — exemplified the new science of 'Kremlinology'. In 1965 a popular American writer spoke for several generations of specialists on the USSR when he stated: 'Nicolaevsky is without doubt the greatest authority in the world on Soviet politics. . . . He is our master, the master Kremlinologist.'¹⁸

According to Nicolaevsky, Stalin had destroyed the 'independent dukedoms' of early Soviet years and replaced them with a 'service nobility' subordinate to himself in an autocratic, monolithic state. Stalin held absolute power as the ultimate arbiter of rival apparati which checked and controlled each other; only the war years had momentarily hindered Stalin in his constant intervention to prevent these apparati struggles from transcending narrowly defined boundaries. In marked contrast to Abramovitch (and to unnamed 'American correspondents in Moscow'), Nicolaevsky dwelt on divisions and nuances within the Soviet power structure. The Soviet regime was not immobile, he argued, and even a purely formal change in government ministers was signifi-

cant both as a symptom of the evolution of power and as a key to the struggle of élite factions, the surrogate politics of the Soviet Union.¹⁹

The essence of Kremlinology was the identification of the rising (and falling) stars in the Soviet political firmament. Early on, Nicolaevsky placed his bets on Georgii Malenkov, as against Andrei Zhdanov and other contenders for Stalin's ear and eventual succession. After Stalin's death, he declared Malenkov and Beria allies and, as the imminent targets of Stalin's last purge, the beneficiaries of the dictator's demise. Beria's liquidation was therefore a triumph of the Stalinists and, inasmuch as this was Khrushchev's doing, Nicolaevsky concluded that Khrushchev belonged to the Stalinist camp.²⁰ Although Nicolaevsky had been the first to note the disappearance of Stalin's secretary Poskrebyshv and of Beria, Khrushchev's dramatic denunciation of Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress caught him off guard (as it did everyone else). He could only explain it, feebly, in terms of Khrushchev's effort to improve relations with Tito.²¹

Underlying Nicolaevsky's approach was not only the assumption that factional struggles in the Soviet Union existed but also that they had policy significance. For instance, the meaning of the Kirov Affair might have been that 'Soviet Secret Policy Turned Pro-Nazi in 1934', to cite the heading of an early *New Leader* article. The postwar rivalry between Zhdanov and Malenkov, broadly speaking one between a Western proletarian and an Eastern guerrilla orientation, played a part in such postwar issues as the founding of the Cominform, the break with Tito, the Berlin Blockade, the recognition of Israel and the Prague Coup.²² Disputes over agriculture, at the heart of Khrushchev's conflict with Beria and Malenkov both before and after Stalin's death, were internationally significant, too, inasmuch as radical agrarian policy went hand in hand with radical foreign policy.²³

Nicolaevsky, with his penchant for conspiracy theories and clever but unverifiable conjuncture, was not always convincing.²⁴ 'Who are these correspondents of Nikolaevskii from whom nothing can be hidden in the Soviet Union and who are these non-correspondents from whom he obtains full mouthfuls of information?' scoffed his critics.²⁵ The *New Leader*, however, had no doubts about Nicolaevsky's merits. It emphasized the accuracy of his predictions, commenting with pride that his insights, formulated from afar, were later confirmed by correspondents on the

spot. It lauded in particular his prescience and his knowledge of Malenkov, although Nicolaevsky's full-length Malenkov biography, announced by the *New Leader*, never appeared. It was, naturally, Nicolaevsky, too, who edited and annotated the *New Leader* edition of Khrushchev's secret speech.²⁶

The Menshevik best known to American readers was surely David Dallin. His twelve English-language books on the Soviet Union all attracted attention in their time and some are still considered classics. This 'outstanding writer . . . on national and international affairs', as the *New Leader* (6 October 1945) had introduced him, was also the most constant star in that magazine's firmament. Abramovitch's Cassandra warnings and Nicolaevsky's Kremlinological pyrotechnics were frequent features, but Dallin's more soberly formulated analyses were a regular weekly staple from his appointment as *New Leader* associate editor in 1945 until 1953; later, he continued to contribute almost on a monthly basis. In short, Dallin became the ultimate Menshevik pundit.

David Dallin had always been something of a maverick within the Menshevik party. He had left the party's Foreign Delegation in 1933, published nothing in the next six years, and then rejoined *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik* in Paris in 1940. In America, Dallin's views continued to appear idiosyncratic. Pessimistic about the chances of Soviet democratization after the war, Dallin was virtually alone among Mensheviks in refusing to adopt a defencist policy vis-à-vis the USSR.²⁷ At odds with his comrades and tired of the émigré milieu, Dallin soon struck out on his own.

Within four years, Dallin had published four books in English at Yale University Press. The first, *Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy 1939–1942* (1942), was remembered by the *New York Times* forty-five years later (29 August 1988) as 'remarkably prescient' for having reconstituted some of the secret clauses of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. In its time, the same newspaper described Dallin's next book, *Russia and Post-War Europe* (1943), as a 'cold-blooded book with a warm-hearted conclusion' (7 January 1944), thus giving as much importance to Dallin's brief conjecture about an alternative to Soviet isolationism as to his thesis. In fact, Dallin's argument was that since no collective security system would emerge from the war, the German problem, and with it the Russian problem, would return. Suspicious of the unreliable and distant West and fearful of an inevitably resurgent Germany, the USSR was likely to build up its military strength, seize and mobil-

ize Eastern Europe and, if unable to impose itself upon Germany, come to terms with it as it had in the past. Historians have since pointed to this book and its sequel, *The Real Soviet Russia* (1944), as the first break in the publishing industry's informal policy of not putting out books critical of Russia during the war years.²⁸

As the contours of the postwar world became fixed and, no doubt, as Dallin's confidence and reputation grew, his message became clearer. 'From the optimistic to the ridiculous is only a short step', he warned, disparaging 'rosy hopes . . . of universal peace' (*Real Soviet Russia*, vii; *Russia and Postwar Europe*, x). In spite of superficial similarities, Soviet policy was unlike that of imperial Russia. There might be continuity in Moscow's war aims in both world wars, and Moscow, like Saint-Petersburg, continued to be primarily interested in the West. However, in contrast to its predecessor, the Soviet Union's expansionist ambitions were unlimited, encompassing even the internal order of its victims, and excluding the possibility of lasting co-operation with other powers. Moreover, Soviet policy had to be seen as a single unified system since, as one communist leader had put it, 'bolshevism is not an umbrella which can be opened or closed at will'. Consequently, Dallin warned: 'No greater mistake can be made than to see Soviet policy as moderate', or to see all its twists and turns as anything but the 'natural manifestations of the consistent policy of communism' (*Russia and Postwar Europe*, 4-5).

American reviewers were impressed. 'He is said to be a political exile from Russia and consequently he cannot be a buddy of Stalin', wrote the *New York Times* (25 November 1944), going on to describe Dallin as a 'a hard-headed, tough-minded professional thinker'. 'Grim reading [but] few can compete in dry and trenchant political analysis', commented the same reviewer (11 August 1945) on Dallin's *The Big Three* (1945). The *New Republic* (17 January 1944) thought Dallin wrong but its reviewer was impressed, despite himself. It was Dallin's ability to combine geopolitical analysis with apparent ideological insight that gave him authority in the eyes of his American readers. Reviewers also noted Dallin's call in the *New Soviet Empire* (1951) for a 'pro-Russian anti-communist policy for the West', and sympathized with his protest at new social anthropological interpretations that branded the Russians as naturally aggressive. Dallin concluded here that Soviet aggression was 'the thunder of a storm' long past but, since Russia could not be conquered or even occupied, war could not change

the regime. Change could only come from within and the West's task was to destroy Stalin's aura of invincibility so as to spur on such internal change (*New Soviet Empire*, 209–10).²⁹ Advocates of a certain moderate Cold War viewpoint greeted such arguments warmly.

Some of Dallin's other books were received more critically. *The Rise of Russia in Asia* (1949) was described as useful and important but also as erratically constructed, insufficiently interpretative, and too journalistic. Dallin was told that he should have taken account not only of Soviet 'lust for power' but of Asian aspirations for a better life as a factor in Soviet expansion, a view which he explicitly combated.³⁰ Nor did Dallin's biggest and perhaps most ambitious book, *Soviet Espionage*, receive the acclaim he wanted. Intelligence work, according to Dallin, was one of the few areas in which the Soviet Union had taken a wide lead over the rest of the world. The subject was key, he had unique materials, and he even left his regular column at the *New Leader* to work on them. In fact, the book displeased the FBI at the time and its sources have since been disparaged as almost worthless.³¹ Ironically, *Soviet Espionage* appeared just before Dallin discovered that he and his wife had been unwittingly associating for years with the former Soviet spy, Marc Zborowski.³²

Dallin's most noteworthy book was *Forced Labor in Soviet Russia* (1947) with Boris Nicolaevsky as co-author and another Menshevik, the former Gulag inmate Boris Sapir, as a contributor. As the *New Leader* put it (8 November 1947), this was 'an account of the return in this century of slave labor as a government institution'.³³ It was not, however, the first report on the subject, even by Mensheviks. In the 1920s, party members abroad had published their own reminiscences of the origins of the camp system. In the 1930s, *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik* had hosted the first revelations of the author of the classic *Russian Enigma*, Anton Ciliga.³⁴ Now, early general studies, such as the Duchess of Atholl's *Conscription of a People* (1931), written with the help of the London-based Menshevik, Anatolii Baikalov, were swollen by a growing postwar literature. As Dallin put it, to speak of the Soviet Union without mentioning forced labour was like telling 'the story of Germany during the last decade without mentioning the fate of the Jews'.³⁵

Forced Labor in Soviet Russia was painstakingly detailed, containing maps of the camp system, facsimiles of documents and statistics. Above all, it proposed an overall vision of the Gulag

and an explanation both of its rise and of its persistence. Hannah Arendt, then working on her classic *Origins of Totalitarianism*, noted that the book offered a political interpretation of the camps by showing their role as a source of cheap slave labour for industrialization; in her view it cast light on the most incomprehensible aspect of totalitarian regimes, their emancipation from economic laws. The *New York Times* called the book 'gruesome reading' and predicted it was 'certain not to be read'.³⁶

In fact, *Forced Labor* was read and passionately debated. The *New Statesman and Nation* launched the most extensive criticism of the book with an ambivalent review by the popular former Moscow correspondent, Edward Crankshaw. After remarking that the 'sickening aspects' of 'penal servitude *à la russe*' reflected 'the difference between Russian and English conceptions', Crankshaw commended this 'elaborate and laborious study' for its facts. He also criticized it as dull, imperceptive and reductionist, 'trying for duty's sake to make the flesh creep'. He rejected Dallin's argument about the economic function of slave labour and called it mere wastage of manpower, likely to 'perpetuate the irresponsible strain in the Russian character'. While agreeing that such labour was an organic part of the system, he complained that Dallin had not shown why this should be so. Crankshaw concluded with some ambiguous remarks about the need to see the 'Russians whole and plain' and the human suffering that could have been spared if the West had earlier adopted a more reasonable attitude to Russia.³⁷

Crankshaw's remarks were mild compared to the onslaught that followed. A letter to the *New Statesman and Nation* poked holes in Dallin's calculations of prison population and in his evidence. The letter rather discredited itself by its intemperate tone: 'utterly worthless . . . a tissue of distortions and malicious gossip, useful only to professional poisoners of international relations'. References to Dallin's Menshevik past were, one must assume, supposed to clinch the argument.³⁸ The Franco-British journalist and author on Soviet matters, Alexander Werth, also stepped into the fray, moved perhaps by Dallin's disparaging remarks about the ignorance of foreign correspondents in Russia. Werth's language was more moderate, his statistical analysis more complex, and he added personal reminiscences. He too, however, found that Dallin's 'figures and generalizations' made it one of the most 'cock-

eyed books' he had read and that Crankshaw's 'applause' (such as it was) was irresponsible.³⁹

The editors of the *New Statesman and Nation* finally put an end to the discussion. Reviewing the correspondence pro and con, including a letter from Dallin, they concluded that 'nobody knows much about these labour camps'. The Russians themselves were to blame for distortions and exaggerations 'because of the secrecy surrounding the whole wretched business'. It was clear that forced labour existed but that the term was also mistakenly applied to phenomena such as internal colonization. Finally, it was clear that books like this belonged to 'the familiar category of anti-Soviet literature which increase prejudice in the United States'.⁴⁰

Virtually all reviewers zeroed in on Dallin's figures, largely inferred from partial information, as the most vulnerable part of his book. Those, such as the *New Statesman* critics, who would have preferred to deny the existence of forced labour, recounted Dallin's categories or extrapolated from them to show that his figures were inconsistent or incredibly high. Other critics endorsed sources, such as the Soviet defector Victor Kravchenko, who gave even higher figures. In fact, Dallin's chapter 'How Many Camps and Prisoners?' considered various evidence, ranging from émigré economist S. Prokopovitch's estimate of five to seven million, through two Polish authors' anecdotally cited figure of thirty-five million. Dallin concluded that his earlier figures of seven to twelve million, presented in *The Real Soviet Russia* and drawn from the late Bundist leader Viktor Adler, were approximately correct.⁴¹ Later, Dallin was to cite a slightly higher US Army estimate of thirteen million, while his Menshevik comrade, Naum Jasny, revised the figures sharply downward to 3,500,000.⁴² Debate on the issue continues and, indeed, has intensified in recent years, but it does not yet appear possible to determine definitively the accuracy of Dallin's figures.⁴³

Forced Labor in Soviet Russia quickly became a political issue. At a meeting of the first committee of the UN General Assembly, the South African delegate held up a copy and quoted from it. The book was immediately denounced before the committee by Ukrainian representative, D. Manuisky, and by former Menshevik and Moscow Trial prosecutor, A. Vyshinsky, now at the UN as Soviet deputy minister. 'Gangsters', 'idiots' and purveyors of 'information from Hitlerite agents' were some of Vyshinsky's epithets, backed by the assertion that the authors claimed there were

twenty million political prisoners in the USSR. Noteworthy is not the fact that Vyshinsky distorted the book's findings but that he was familiar with it and that his main quarrel concerned the size of the Gulag. Dallin's and Nicolaevsky's reaction was to launch a one million dollar slander suit against Vyshinsky which floundered upon the latter's diplomatic immunity, but, no doubt, served its purpose in publicizing the issue.⁴⁴

Pressure intensified, prompted by *Forced Labor in Soviet Russia*, to have the UN set up an investigation into slavery and forced labour. The AFL had the issue raised in the UN Economic and Social Council and the British representative showed photostats of Soviet documents on the Gulag. Nicolaevsky headed a delegation to the council president that presented a petition signed by 4,000 Russian exiles. The council voted to call for an investigation, as Dallin had urged in 1947, and the UN secretary-general responded by sending inquiries to member states, but the discussion scheduled for that session of the council did not take place.⁴⁵

It was Dallin's weekly *New Leader* articles that reflected his perception of the ebb and flow of the Cold War. The most personal and passionate pieces were directed against fellow-travellers and other Soviet dupes. Prime among these was Henry Wallace, 'in effect a Soviet puppet', whose presidential platform Dallin referred to as 'the Stalin-Wallace Program'.⁴⁶ Those who misled and distorted public opinion on the question of China incurred Dallin's particular wrath. They included Wallace, but, above all, the controversial Asia specialist, Owen Lattimore. Even the Alsop brothers, 'two of our most intelligent and best informed columnists', were taken severely to task as appeasers for suggesting Chinese communists might be nationalists or there could be a rift between Moscow and Peking.⁴⁷

The need for vigilance and consistency was the most constant theme of Dallin's articles. This implied not only watchfulness but self-restraint on the part of the United States. Dallin opposed compulsory registration of communist front organizations as a measure that would only serve anti-American propaganda abroad and he argued against State Department plans to sever relations with Soviet satellites. He complained about 'no nationalization' conditions attached by Congress to the Marshall Plan, about American reluctance to seek allies among liberals and socialists in Europe, and about the transformation of military occupation

of Germany into a colonial administration.⁴⁸ Dallin attributed defeat in China directly to Secretary of State George Marshall's 'zigzags'. According to Dallin, Stalin was conscious of his own weaknesses and preferred to tire out adversaries in a war of nervous attrition. Even when Stalin toyed with the idea that war was inevitable, it was Western confusion that led him to this position.⁴⁹

The death of Stalin did make a difference in Soviet foreign policy. The new Soviet leaders were 'graduates of the Stalin school of crime', but they were not risk-takers as Stalin had been since 1939.⁵⁰ Dallin even expressed optimism about Soviet internal evolution after Stalin. To be sure, there was no political underground in Russia and, although discontent was widespread, it was only a latent force. Still, a new generation of intellectuals was growing up there, Dallin wrote in 1957, and it yearned for 'liberty to live, to think, and to create'. This was a 'return to the basic ideas of the pre-Soviet democratic revolution of 1917' and it was 'perhaps the most important development in present-day Russia'. This tendency would 'not make itself felt immediately in Soviet politics, [but] it augur[ed] well for the future'.⁵¹

In addition to the three individuals discussed here, other Mensheviks also wrote for an American audience in various fora.⁵² Inasmuch as the *New Leader* was the Mensheviks' 'flagship', one's assessment of their impact depends on an evaluation of this journal, described as 'more anti-communist than socialist', but, uncontestedly, more consistent and ideologically coherent than its rivals.⁵³ Beyond their literary activities, Mensheviks were also involved in some of the campaigns of the Cold War, most notably in the Kravchenko Case, and in the frustrating attempts to mobilize the Russian emigration which eventually led to the founding of Radio Liberty.⁵⁴ Properly speaking, the Mensheviks in America were no longer a party and, as we have seen in comparing Abramovitch, Nicolaevsky and Dallin, they did not have a common party line. They did remain, however, very much a community of fate and outlook. It is in their shared intellectual framework and their common sense of mission that one can identify a continuing Menshevik ethos.

The Menshevik analysis of Soviet reality was grounded intellectually in the concept of totalitarianism. Indeed, the Mensheviks had been instrumental in inciting the leading German Marxist theoretician, Rudolf Hilferding, to apply the concept of totali-

tarianism to Soviet Russia in 1940, well before such application had become popular.⁵⁵ After the second world war, Abramovitch invoked the concept almost automatically, attributing to it an explanatory power which brooked no argument.⁵⁶ It was Abramovitch's understanding of one of the iron laws of totalitarianism, that is, the impossibility of overthrowing a totalitarian regime from within, that led him to abandon any hope of internal change within Russia. The USSR's inherent external aggressiveness thus became Abramovitch's main object of study. Nicolaevsky, too, promoted the concept of totalitarianism even as he expressed interest in such other constructs as the Asiatic mode of production.⁵⁷ In Nicolaevsky's case, however, recognition of the totalitarian nature of the Soviet Union directed him toward the internal micropolitical considerations that were to stand at the heart of his Kremlinological method. Dallin's writings, policy-oriented by nature, presupposed rather than affirmed the concept of totalitarianism. It was this concept, for instance, that underpinned his insistence on the elements of identity between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia.

Espousal of the concept of totalitarianism replaced an earlier Menshevik adherence to Marxist categories of explanation. It also succeeded previous hopes of a positive evolution in the USSR, once summarized under the programmatic heading, the 'Martov Line'.⁵⁸ One cannot judge to what extent this Menshevik reorientation was determined by the devastating effect of Stalinism on socialist hopes, by the *Zeitgeist* in America in the 1940s and 1950s, or by more personal factors. Only rarely did the Mensheviks address the discrepancy between their later and their earlier outlook.⁵⁹ Then as now, they saw themselves as foot-soldiers of social democracy. When they found themselves soldiers in the Cold War, they entered this new campaign with as much conviction as in past battles. They had new allies and new arguments but they were convinced that their cause remained the same.

Notes

1. On the Mensheviks in exile until 1940, see A. Liebich, 'I mensevichi di fronte alla costruzione dell'Urss', in E.J. Hobsbawm et al. (eds), *Storia del marxismo*, vol. 3, tome 2 (Turin 1981), 132–66.

2. V. Turin, 'Memorandum for Mr James R. Sharp, Chief, Foreign Agents Registration Act Section, Re: The Russian Social Democratic Labor Party', US Department of Justice, 5 November 1942, file no. 144–1163 (Document obtained under US Freedom of Information Act [FOIA]). In fact, over the next twenty years, various US government agencies invested countless hours and processed thousands of pages on the activities of the Menshevik group and its individual members. A considerable portion of these files is still denied to researchers on privacy as well as security grounds.

3. G.A. Aronson, 'Neotlozhnaia zadacha', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 468, 10 February 1941.

4. Abramovitch's elevation occurred as a result of a split within the party which ousted the formerly dominant left-wing Mensheviks, led by the previous party chairman Fedor Dan who, until his death in New York 1947, published an increasingly pro-Soviet Menshevik journal, *Novyi put'*.

5. Obituaries in *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik* 775/776 (March/April 1963), *New York Times*, 12 April 1963. Further biographical information from files of Menshevik Project Archives, Columbia University, and from Abramowitsch Archives, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

6. 'Banket v chest' R.A. Abramovicha', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 468, 10 February 1941.

7. D. Bell, 'The Modern Review: An Introduction and Appraisal', *Labor History*, 9 (1968), 380–3. See also Bell's bemused but sympathetic portrait of Abramovitch in 'At a Vecherinka [letter from New York]', *Encounter*, 7 (July 1956), 65–8.

8. Fr. Stampfer to SOPADE, 10 February 1943, in *Mit dem Gesicht nach Deutschland: Eine Dokumentation über die sozialistische Emigration. Aus dem Nachlass von Fr. Stampfer*, ed. by Erich Matthias (Düsseldorf 1968), 581–2.

9. W.H. Chamberlin, review of Abramovitch's *Soviet Revolution*, *New Leader* (NY), 25 June 1962.

10. K. Zetkin, *Trozkis Verbannung und die Sozialdemokratie* (Berlin 1928), 13. L. Trotsky, trans. M. Eastman, *History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 2 (Ann Arbor 1957), 28. Even Abramovitch's banishment from the second edition of the Soviet Encyclopaedia (the first had contained a full-length attack by Bukharin) was cause for publicity. M. Khinoy, 'What Happened to Abramovich?', *Commentary*, June 1951.

11. R. Abramovitch, '1938 i 1948', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 606, 29 March 1948.

12. R. Abramovitch, 'Otvergnutyi Miunkhen i opasnost' voiny', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 634, July 1950; 'After Geneva', *New Leader*, 2 August 1954; 'Does the US Have a Policy?', *New Leader*, 17 May 1954; 'Outlook at Bermuda', *New Leader*, 7 December 1953.

13. Abramovitch to N. Valentinov-Vol'skii, 14 April 1954, Volsky Collection, Hoover Institution Archives.

14. Abramovitch to N. Valentinov-Vol'skii, 12 April 1955, Volsky Collection, Hoover Institution Archives.

15. 'After Geneva' and 'Outlook at Bermuda'.

16. R. Abramovitch, 'Behind the Moscow Shifts', *New Leader*, 14 March 1955 and I. Trotskii, 'SSSR na novom etape; doklad R. A. Abramovicha', *Novoe russkoe slovo*, 31 May 1956.

17. R. Abramovitch, 'Pravda zitiert tsve artikelen fun Vorwärts', *Forwärts*, 26 November 1957. Reference is to *Forwärts* of 9 and 16 October and *Pravda*, 30 November.

18. L. Fischer, Review of Nicolaevsky, *Power and the Soviet Elite*, *New York Times Book Review*, 12 November 1965. These tributes are echoed in the commemorative volume *Revolution and Politics in Russia: Essays in Memory of B.I. Nicolaevsky*, edited by A. and J. Rabinowitch with L. Kristof (Bloomington, IN 1972). It contains a bibliography of Nicolaevsky's writings.

19. B. Nicolaevsky, 'Na komandnykh vysotakh Kremlia', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 585, 22 May 1946, contains a methodological statement and the two-part article is a perfect illustration of the Kremlinological method.

20. 'Na komandnykh vysotakh Kremlia. G.M. Malenkov i "malenkovtsy"', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 586; 'How Did Stalin die?', *New Leader*, 20 April 1953; 'The Strange Death of Mikhail Ryumin', *New Leader*, 4 October 1954; 'Russia Purges the Purgers', *New Leader*, 28 December 1953; 'For What Did Beria Die?', *New Leader*, 4 January 1954; 'Return to Stalinism', *New Leader*, 19 April 1954. However, another Menshevik found a Trotskyist past for Malenkov and called Khrushchev Malenkov's 'young cohort', L. Pistrak, 'Malenkov: Man and Myth', *New Leader*, 16 March 1953. Pistrak also wrote *The Grand Tactician: Khrushchev's Rise to Power* (London 1961).

21. For another Menshevik's more cautious view of Malenkov's primacy, contradicting both Abramovitch's and Nicolaevsky's view, G. Denicke, 'Russia — No Monoliths', *New Leader*, 27 July 1953. See A. D'Agostino, *Soviet Succession Struggles: Kremlinology and the Russian Question from Lenin to Gorbachev* (Boston, MA 1988), 189.

22. B. Nicolaevsky, 'Soviet Policy 1934–1939', *New Leader*, 23 August 1941. D'Agostino, *Soviet Succession Struggles*, 159ff.

23. D'Agostino, *Soviet Succession Struggles*, 178. See Strannik [= Nicolaevsky] 'Zakat Khrushcheva', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 644, May 1951; and his 'New Soviet Spy Directors', *New Leader*, 21 June 1954. On the other hand, both Pistrak, 'Malenkov: Man and Myth', and Dallin, 'Race for Stalin's Throne', *New Leader*, 8 September 1952, saw Khrushchev as Malenkov's protégé before Stalin's death.

24. Nicolaevsky's first and most important book was *Aseff the Spy: Russian Terrorist and Police Stool* (New York 1934). In the 1930s he dealt with the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion'.

25. F. Dan, 'Znai meru', *Novyi put'*, 57/58, 10 February 1946.

26. (Editors) 'Between Issues', *New Leader*, 27 September 1954, comparing Nicolaevsky and Harrison Salisbury. For Nicolaevsky on Malenkov see, 'Palace Revolution in the Kremlin', *New Leader*, 19 March 1949; 'Malenkov: His Rise and His Policy', *New Leader*, 23 March 1953; 'How Malenkov Triumphed', *New Leader*, 30 March 1953. Even years later Nicolaevsky was still seeking confirmation of his hypotheses concerning Malenkov, 'Mao Checks Khrushchev', *New Leader*, 16 January 1961. Khrushchev's speech published as, 'The Crimes of the Stalin Era',

'annotated especially for this edition by Boris I. Nicolaevsky, Formerly of the Marx-Engels Institute, Moscow', *New Leader*, 16 July 1956.

27. See Dallin's 'Pervye itogi', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 464, 5 December 1940, and 'Zhestokii ekzamen', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 478, 17 July 1941.

28. W. O'Neill, *A Better World. The Great Schism: Stalinism and the American Intellectuals* (New York 1982), 78.

29. Reviews by P. Mosely, 'A Pro-Russian, Anti-Stalin Policy', *New Leader*, 21 May 1951; A. Berle, 'Beyond the Kremlin are the People', *New York Times*, 25 February 1951.

30. T. Durdin, 'Russia and the East', *New York Times*, 12 June 1949.

31. On the Soviet intelligence lead, D. Dallin, 'Cloak and Dagger in Soviet Strategy', *New Leader*, 17 March 1952. The FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, expressed his displeasure to Dallin in a letter dated 23(5?) November 1955, FBI file 105-35817 (FOIA). On the materials, V. Navasky, 'Transformation of Historical Ambiguity into Cold War Verity' in *Beyond the Hiss Case: The FBI, Congress, and the Cold War*, edited by A. Theoharis (Philadelphia 1982).

32. Dallin's own account appeared in *New Leader*, 21 November 1955 (under the pseudonym H. Kassen), and 19 and 26 March 1956.

33. The book also had spin-offs in the popular press, such as Nicolaevsky's 'Stalin's Eldorado', *Fortune*, August 1947; and Dallin's, 'Slave Empire Within the Soviet Empire', *New York Times Magazine*, 14 October 1951.

34. For two accounts that found their way into *Forced Labor*, see B. Sapir's memoir, '19-oe dekabria (k godovshchine Solovetskoi tragedii 1923)', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 141, 6 December 1926 (reprinted there 1933, 1948) and Nicolaevsky's rendition of a sailor's story, 'Krov'iu omytoe sovetskoe zoloto ('Dal'stroi — sovetskaia katorga v Kolymskom krae)', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 579/80, 10 December 1945. Ciliga, 'Po sovetskim tiurman i ssylkam', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 366, 27 May 1936; 'Po sovetskim izoliatoram', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 391, 12 June 1937, and other articles.

35. *Forced Labor*, op. cit., ix.

36. H. Arendt, 'Totalitarian Terror', *Review of Politics*, 12 (1949), 112-15. O. Prescott, review of *Forced Labor*, *New York Times*, 26 August 1947.

37. E. Crankshaw, 'Forced Labour in Russia', *New Statesman and Nation*, 15 May 1948.

38. A. Rothstein, Correspondence, *New Statesman and Nation*, 27 May 1948. On this prominent communist, see D. Cauter, *Fellow Travellers: A Postscript to the Enlightenment* (London 1973), 137, 342.

39. A. Werth, correspondence, *New Statesman and Nation*, 19 June 1948.

40. Comments, *New Statesman and Nation*, 19 June 1948.

41. B. Atkinson, 'Penal Servitude, Russian Model', *New York Times*, 31 August 1947, called Kravchenko's twenty million 'more authoritative than any other' but he had earlier quoted estimates of ten to fifteen million, *New York Times*, 7 July 1946, cited in *Forced Labor*, 84. Dallin's conclusions, *Forced Labor*, 84-6.

42. D. Dallin, 'An Unfinished Task', *New Leader*, 8 January 1949. N. Jasny, 'Labor and Output in Soviet Concentration Camps', *Journal of Political Economy*, 19 (1951), cited in B. Moore, *Terror and Progress USSR: Some Sources of Change and Stability in the Soviet Dictatorship* (Cambridge, MA 1954), 155 which relied on Jasny for facts and statistics but rejected most of his interpretations.

43. V. Tolz, 'Archives Yield New Statistics on the Stalin Terror', *Report on the*

USSR, 7 September 1990. R. Conquest, who relied on *Forced Labor* as a source for the first edition of *The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties* (London 1968), lowered the estimates in the revised edition without repudiating *Forced Labor*. His most recent statement is in 'The End of This Time', *New York Review of Books*, 23 September 1993. A thorough recent study is N. Werth, 'Goulag: Les vrais chiffres', *Histoire*, 169, September 1993, whose figure of 2,000,000 to 2,500,000 Gulag inmates on the average over fifteen years is, coincidentally, very close to his father's figures (1,500,000 to 2,000,000) in the *New Statesman* letter of 1948 cited above. On A. Werth's defence of these figures in 1967, see Cauter, *Fellow Travellers*, 103.

44. D. Dallin, 'Bad Habits', *New Leader*, 1 November 1947. 'Million Dollar Slander Suit against Vyshinsky', *New York Times*, 2 November 1947.

45. 'Poimannye s polichnym', *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 622, 29 July 1949. 'Soviet Exiles Urge Slave Labor Study', *New York Times*, 17 February 1950. Also, Dallin's call for investigation in 'Bad Habits'.

46. D. Dallin, 'The Stalin-Wallace Program', *New Leader*, 22 May 1948; 'Why Stalin votes for Taft', *New Leader*, 10 January 1948. Apparently Stalin did not vote for his own puppet.

47. D. Dallin, 'Henry Wallace and Chinese Communism', *New Leader*, 22 October 1951. 'Lattimore on China', *New Leader*, 11 June 1949; and 'Mao No Tito; US Must Act', *New Leader*, 7 May 1949. US Government references to Dallin's help in the Lattimore case, US Department of Justice file dated 30 September 1955, file no. 146-1-51-10830 (FOIA). On the Alsops, D. Dallin, 'Myth of Chinese "Titoism" Revived', *New Leader*, 27 August 1951.

48. D. Dallin, 'The Mundt-Nixon Bill', *New Leader*, 8 May 1948; and 'How to Deal with the Satellites', *New Leader*, 18 February 1952. On the Marshall Plan, 'Capitalism in One Country', *New Leader*, 23 August 1947. On Europe, 'Europe's New Anti-Americanism', *New Leader*, 30 May 1953. On Germany, 'We Are Staying Too Long', *New Leader*, 11 September 1948.

49. D. Dallin, 'More Zigzags or Consistency? The Need for a Dynamic Policy for America', *New Leader*, 22 March 1947. On Stalin's weakness, D. Dallin, 'The Fruit of the Molotov Plan', *New Leader*, 15 May 1948. D. Dallin, 'Stalin Wants War', *New Leader*, 24 July 1948.

50. D. Dallin, 'Moscow's Strategic Retreat', *New Leader*, 5 April 1953; 'What Malenkov Wants', *New Leader*, 25 January 1954.

51. 'The Soviet Revolution: Shattered Hopes [1957]' in D. Dallin, *From Purge to Coexistence: Essays on Stalin's & Khrushchev's Russia* (Chicago 1964), 174. This volume also contains a bibliography of Dallin's writings.

52. Among these was the prolific and popular economist, Wladimir Woytinsky; the labour specialist Solomon Schwarz, one of whose books was distributed abroad by the US government; Schwarz's wife, Vera Alexandrova, an editor at the Ford Foundation-sponsored Chekhov Publishing House and, like her husband, a contributor to the United States Information Agency's *Problems of Communism*.

53. 'More anti-communist', is the term used by Samuel Estrine, a Menshevik active in the New York Jewish Labor Committee, in a letter to the French politician, Jules Moch, 27 April 1954, Nicolaevsky Collection 208, Hoover Institution. Sidney Hook and Arnold Beichman complained in a letter to the editor, *New York Times Book Review*, 25 March 1984, that *Partisan Review's* historical role was being magnified at the expense of the *New Leader*.

54. See G. Malaurie, *L’Affaire Kravchenko, Paris 1949. Le Goulag en correctionnel* (Paris 1982) and N. Berberova, trans. A. & I. Markovicz, *L’Affaire Kravchenko* (Paris 1990). More specifically on Dallin’s ties to Kravchenko, see FBI file 100–59596 (FOIA). W.H. Chamberlin, ‘Émigré Anti-Soviet Enterprises and Splits’, *Russian Review*, 13 (1954), 91–8.

55. See A. Liebich, *Marxism and Totalitarianism: Rudolf Hilferding and the Mensheviks*, Kennan Institute of Advanced Russian Studies, Occasional Paper 217 (1987). Published in a shorter version in *Dissent* (Spring 1987), 223–40.

56. See, for example, R. Abramovitch, ‘Totalizatsiia bol’shevizma’, *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 646 (August 1951).

57. See Liebich, *Marxism and Totalitarianism*, and on the ‘Asiatic mode of production’, Nicolaevsky to Volsky, 18 March 1947, Volsky Collection, Hoover Collection.

58. Named after the revered Menshevik leader and founder of *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, who died in 1923, the ‘Martov Line’ was the classic expression of left-wing Menshevism. See Liebich, ‘I menscevischi di fronte alla costruzione dell’Urss’, *op. cit.*

59. Dallin addressed this discrepancy with characteristic vigour and lucidity in his ‘O samom glavnom’, *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, 470, 11 March 1941.

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