

millan and incriminate Lord Aldington. Tolstoy has been informed by a friend in British intelligence that this was not an "independent" commission at all, but one arranged by Sir Robert Armstrong, recently retired cabinet secretary. Tolstoy suspects that the government wishes to preserve the former Conservative prime minister's reputation, and says the materials have been mishandled by the commission (even though they strengthen the case against Aldington) and will be easily refutable, should they be introduced at the trial.

In spite of the pressures of public scrutiny, Tolstoy is grateful for the notoriety. For although he already had the testimony and support of many former British military personnel who observed, or were forced to participate in, the atrocities in Austria, many more have come forward, along with members of the victims' families and a handful of survivors, who would not have known of his work without the public exposure. "As much significant material has come to light since the publication of my book as before," and he believes the commitment of his supporters all over the world has deepened accordingly. He told me how he'd just received an anonymously donated five-pound Australian note with "God bless you" written on the card in Ukrainian.

"This trial is the only way to bring the reality of these massacres home to public understanding. And we hope, if the funds hold out, to bring a great number of witnesses, in order to imprint it on the record and the public consciousness."

The legal expenses are, in fact, a source of serious concern. While Lord Aldington is a man of considerable means, Tolstoy is not able to assume his legal costs himself, and a charitable organization, the Forced Repatriation Defense Fund, has been set up by his supporters to assist him.

Fortunately for Tolstoy, *The Coming of the King* spent two months on the British best-sellers list.

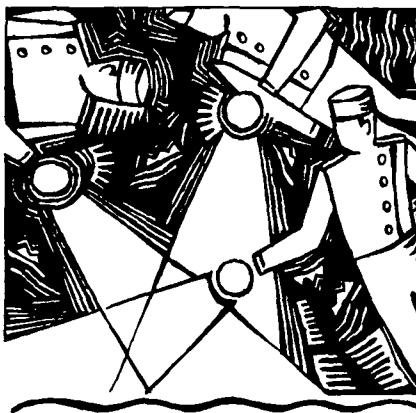
Nikolai Tolstoy has come full circle, from a fiction manuscript that was destroyed in a fire, through years of scholarly research on England and Russia, only to return to fiction that couldn't have been written without a lifetime of study.

"If my first books, which I'd set my heart on, had been published, not only would I have become arrogant and conceited, but that arrogance would have led me to write more books of the same sort. It would not have forced me to come to terms with myself, to find very slowly and painfully what I was capable of, and ought to be doing. A lot of achievement in writing is doing things and having them destroyed, but it's really a regenerative process. I think we really need tempering in life. And we just have to go on working.

"But I do love the exercise of trying to slip into another age, as much as you possibly can."

Sally S. Wright lives in Bowling Green, Ohio.

## FILM



Jeanne Berg

## Caution: Historical Revisionism at Work

by Arthur M. Eckstein

"He who controls the past controls the future." Nowhere is Big Brother's dictum truer than in the case of Vietnam and the antiwar movement. Lately, one can detect a new and persistent attempt to remold the history and goals of the antiwar movement in a way designed to make it more acceptable to the mass of the American people. And obviously, how one is taught to view the movement as it was in the 60's will help determine how one ought to view various move-

ment efforts of the 80's: the encouragement of a nuclear freeze, for instance, or the fierce support for Commandante Ortega's Nicaragua. Hollywood, of course, has always sentimentalized the radicals of the 60's: the outrageous *Running on Empty* (1988), with its warm, fatherly and motherly ex-bomb throwers still (for some reason) pursued by a harsh and unbending government, is only the latest in a long string of ideological epics that stretches back to *Alice's Restaurant* (1969) and *Zabriskie Point* (1970). But what is particularly at issue here is not the romanticizing of radicalism. Rather, it is the denial of the *existence* of radicalism, radical ideas, and radical goals among the movement in the first place.

As far as I am aware, this new tack was first taken by Stanley Kauffman, in his review of *The Hanoi Hilton* for *The New Republic* in March 1987. Kauffman bitterly objected to the depiction of representatives of the antiwar movement in that movie: the movement wasn't sympathetic to the North Vietnamese (as it is portrayed in the film), didn't idealize them, didn't see them as angels. The mass of antiwar marchers, Kauffman insisted, had no opinion one way or the other about the Hanoi regime: they simply wanted the war to end, they wanted to "bring the boys home." In that sense, they were, if anything, *sympathetic* to our soldiers in Vietnam. This same theme—that the antiwar movement was basically patriotic in its goals—recently appeared again in Curtis Gans' review of an excellent new book of memoirs from disillusioned movement people such as Peter Collier, David Horowitz, and Carol Iannone: *Political Passages: Journeys of Change Through Two Decades, 1968-1988*, edited by John H. Bunzel. Writing in *The Washington Post* (July 24, 1988), Gans insisted that the authors of these memoirs had a fundamentally misguided view of the movement: the movement did not consist of sympathizers with the North Vietnamese, such people constituted a mere "handful"; and meanwhile "the millions of patriotic Americans" who actually made up the movement are ignored in the book. The same point is pushed by Kauffman. Oh yes, he says, there were a "few" people in the movement who dressed in Vietcong

black pajamas, burned American flags, and wanted the North Vietnamese to win; but to concentrate one's attention on such people misses the attitude of the vast majority of demonstrators and marchers.

Misses, that is, the dupes (I speak as one of the duped). Both Kauffman and Gans argue that sympathizers with Hanoi were only an infinitesimal and unimportant part of the movement. There is, I suppose, something to this, in that the actual numbers of such people were (relatively) small—though to tell the truth, I really don't remember seeing very many waving American flags at the antiwar demonstrations I attended. But: what was important about the Communist sympathizers was not how many they were but *who* they were. They were the intellectual and political *leadership* of the movement. Both Kauffman and Gans need to face the fact that the intellectual and political leaders of the antiwar movement—the type of people who, as in the film, visited Hanoi—were firmly on the side of the North Vietnamese, *did* idealize and sanctify them, *did* see North Vietnamese society as angelic (as they saw America as satanic). Kauffman and Gans may be uncomfortable with this, and they may try to obfuscate the implications of this, but there is plenty of evidence to show that both *The Hanoi Hilton* and *Political Passages* hit the nail right on the head.

During the war, the following central figures of the antiwar movement visited North Vietnam and brought back absolutely glowing accounts of its leaders, its society, and/or the way it treated American prisoners of war: Ramsey Clark (North Vietnam characterized as a country of total spiritual unity); Susan Sontag (North Vietnam a country of love); Mary McCarthy (a humane leadership, greatly concerned about the welfare of American prisoners); William Sloane Coffin (a humane, gentle, compassionate leadership—plus great good humor, too!); Daniel Berrigan (a country characterized above all by “a naive faith in human goodness”); Tom Hayden (a country characterized by deep humanity, and also by “poetry and music”); Jane Fonda (a leadership compassionate toward American prisoners, who, for their part, were “liars and hypo-

crites”); Staughton Lynd (a country of “humane socialism, socialism with a heart”—indeed, this was the specifically Vietnamese contribution to the world socialist movement). One may add Noam Chomsky, who never visited the North, but wrote in 1973 that it was the most genuinely popular system in the entire world, a just system, and a rewarding one.

In his attack on *The Hanoi Hilton*, Kauffman remarked that such idealization of the North would have been “sickeningly grotesque” especially after 1975, because of the terrible consequences of the Communist victory for the condition of the Vietnamese people. I fully agree. But Kauffman clearly means to suggest that because such idealization was “sickeningly grotesque” it did not occur, or if it did occur it was only of very minor importance. Once again, he is wrong. The panegyrics of the North *did* continue after 1975; they came from very prominent people; in fact, they came from the heart of the antiwar leadership.

Thus George McGovern, visiting the South in 1976, found a moderate and humane government, far less dictatorial than the old Thieu regime. He found no signs of oppression, no signs even of secret police. In 1977 Richard Falk, Richard Barnet, David Dellinger, Corliss Lamont, Paul Sweezy, and Cora Weiss praised the Vietnamese government for its spirit of moderation, and its extraordinary efforts towards reconciliation (!) with its people. Two years later, in 1979, they went further and declared that “Vietnam now enjoys human rights as it has never known in its history.” Dellinger, in his most recent book on Vietnam (1986), *still* praises the regime's human rights policies.

This group of people and their ideas were not insignificant, nor somewhere out on the fringes of the antiwar movement—as both Kauffman and Gans suggest. On the contrary: these people were the central leaders of the movement; their ideas were the leading ideas of the organizing cadre, and were influential to some extent everywhere. And those ideas, heavily criticized by the disillusioned authors of *Political Passages*, were every bit as sycophantic toward the Communists as the scenes in *The Hanoi Hilton* showed. (In fact, if anything the movie was more re-

strained than the reality. It did not depict the Jane Fonda figure doing some of the things Fonda really did do: like sitting at an enemy anti-aircraft gun and pretending to take aim at American planes, saying “I wish I had one of those murderers in my sights,” or ratting to the North Vietnamese when American POW's complained to her about being mistreated.) As for the alleged sympathy the broad movement displayed toward ordinary American soldiers—everyone remembers that returning veterans shed their uniforms as quickly as possible, for fear of being accosted by protesters and identified as “baby killers” and “rapists.”

“A handful”; “a few.” The story of the antiwar leadership, of course, is not the whole story of the antiwar movement. But it is an important—indeed crucial—part of the story. Those “few” formed the energetic organizing core of the movement, offered the movement its dominant ideology, and manipulated the popular emotions of hundreds of thousands so that the goals of the leaders might be fulfilled. What were those goals? The “unification” of Vietnam (under Communist rule), the defeat of the United States, the destruction of American power in Southeast Asia. It is highly misleading for Kauffman and Gans to focus solely on the myriad dupes of the antiwar leadership—those whose motives were (often) more honorable and less knowingly political—and not on the ideology and behavior of the leadership itself, as if those people were irrelevant or nonexistent, as if their purposes were never fulfilled.

But my point is not that the new depiction of a “patriotic” antiwar

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movement—a basically nonradical, nonpolitical “peace” movement—is bad history. The problem is that the movement, or rather its core of ideologies, continues to exist and function: it therefore belongs not to history but, precisely, to current events.

The movement cadre never ceased its activities, not even after the “victory” of 1975. It formed the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy (CNFMP) in the late 70’s; it formed the backbone of the nuclear freeze project in the early 80’s; it now forms the backbone of opposition to American attempts to block the spread of Communist power in Central America. The ideology of these people remains the same. It was best expressed by Richard Barnet in 1969: “The first imperative is that the world must be made safe for revolution.” And the basic method used by these people remains the same. They cloak attempts to diminish American power (a purely political objective) under the name of appeals to general morality (e.g., “Stop the War, Stop the Killing!”; “Arms are for Hugging”; “No War in Central America: Nicaragua Wants Peace”). This is a tactic designed to mobilize thousands of people sincerely concerned about *moral* issues (hence the enormous and frightening success of movement people within the established churches), in order that the *political* agenda of the leadership can be fulfilled. And as long as the educated public (the real target of the movement) has no understanding of how it was manipulated in the 60’s, it will have no defense against being manipulated again in the 80’s. Thus bad history—bad historical understanding—can lead to disastrous present politics.

In fact, what is most disturbing is that some of these people, apparently unencumbered by their past, have in the 80’s achieved positions of increasing importance and influence. Frank Borosage, a leading light of the radical Institute for Policy Studies (founded by Richard Barnet and Cora Weiss), was a chief advisor to Jesse Jackson’s presidential campaign in 1988. Gareth Porter, after Noam Chomsky the leading apologist for the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia, is now an important figure on the staff of Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts (and Kerry, in

turn, is a pillar of the pro-Sandinista lobby in Congress). Richard Barnet himself appears as a political commentator on the *MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour*. And in September 1988 the Democratic presidential nominee spent two full days campaigning in California with Tom Hayden—Tom Hayden, the pilgrim to Hanoi, the founder of SDS, known in the 60’s as “the American Lenin,” and husband of Jane Fonda. Hayden hasn’t changed much: at the time, he had one of his children down in Nicaragua, “serving the Nicaraguan people.” Mr. Hayden is currently only a member of the California State Assembly. But great things are expected of him. Revising the history of the antiwar movement will make the achievement of those great things all the easier.

*Arthur M. Eckstein is a professor of history at the University of Maryland.*

## ACADEMY



## Postwar Oxford

*by Geoffrey Wagner*

**I**t was an interesting time. The Second World War had gone on two years longer than the First, with resultant fatigue in England’s industrial north, which gave the Labour government its 1945 landslide. Such is admirably explained in Corelli Barnett’s *The Audit of War*, which shows how the appeal of the shadow Attlee government, particularly the full employment, cradle-to-grave promises of the

Beveridge Plan, was understandably irresistible to this element, as it was also to the services underclass, war-weary and longing for demobilization. No politician, not even Churchill, could be *against* a guarantee of employment, any more than could a French politician be, two years later, *for* legal prostitution. But I can certainly testify that in late 1948, when I was working as press officer for ICI (Imperial Chemical Industries), and I visited 120 factories throughout the British Isles, ranging in products from plastics to paints to explosives, not forgetting a wonderful salt mine in Cheshire, almost without exception I was told by my hosts that the resident shop stewards were militantly Communist. They were the only men who would sacrifice their spare time for the task of organization and, after all, Russia was an ally.

Those of us who had been “up” at Oxford before the war—and by Oxford I also mean “the other place,” Cambridge—got preference in demobilization via the so-called “B” release. I was one of those returning to complete my studies at Christ Church. The war had had its rough times, of course, but it had introduced me to parts of the world I had never seen before (nor want to again), and during it we had been generally on the move. The static horrors of long trench warfare had been spared our generation. Nor had I, except for a period in North Africa, known undue hunger. We returned to an England that, in the first year after the war, had stricter rationing than during it. This rationing was exiguous. In 1947 the English were rationed to 1/2 lb. of meat a week, plus three ounces of bacon, two of butter, one ounce of cooking fat, and three of cheese (mousetrap variety). US spam helped out a lot, though I confess I can’t stare it in the face today. This was Crippsian austerity, with *work or want* posters everywhere, Bevin-controlled foreign currency allowing you just £25 a year to take out of the country (strictly supervised by customs officials). Colleges supplied their own ration tickets for Hall. During my subsequent job with ICI, I draped a topcoat over my knees under my desk, it was that cold in unheated London.

Half Cambridge’s size, 1946 Oxford consisted of 14 small colleges, most of them numbering only two or three