

had been in the 'twenties, with co-educational schools, enlightened prisons, and civil marriage. There was even a healthy anti-clericalism—a great improvement on Soviet Russia, for no one could feel anti-clerical about the Orthodox Church. The one thing that went wrong was unfortunately the one thing that mattered. The Left failed to break the official refusal to supply the Spanish republic with arms. Left meetings demanded “arms for Spain.” Major C. R. Attlee gave the Communist salute to the International Brigade. No arms went to Spain.

Still, the agitation over Spain was a real struggle, as deeply felt as the General Strike ten years before. There was genuine and justified emotion. The Left were asserting the great principles of freedom and democracy, however unsuccessfully. They were seeking to resist the systems of dictatorship which plunged the world into war only three years later. What were Baldwin and the so-called

governing classes doing during this great crisis? They were fussing over the question whether a middle-aged man should marry a woman who had two previous husbands, both living. Much can be said against the Left. They were romantic, idealistic, unworldly, often foolish. But one thing can be said in their favour. No one on the Left cared whom Edward VIII married, whether he married, when, or how often. The age of Baldwin was over so far as the Left were concerned.

Totting up the account, I make one thumping debit and two credits. Ramsay MacDonald was the debit: the Left's present to the British people. The credits were the General Strike and support of the Spanish republic—two honourable causes of which any political movement could be proud. It is true that the Left failed to decide what it meant by Socialism, or how to get there. But these are problems to which no one has found a solution.

Delmore Schwartz

Holderlin

Now as before do you not hear their voices
Serene in the midst of their rejoicing,
Chanting to those who have hopes and make choices,
Clear as the birds in the thick summer foliage:

It is! It is!

We are! We are!

Clearly, as if they were us, and not us,
Hidden like the future, distant as the stars,
Having no more meaning than the fullness of music,
Chanting from the blue peaks where success,
Effort and desire are meaningless,
Surpassed at last in the joy of joy,
Chanting enchanted the blue's last view:

It is! It is!

This is eternity! Eternity is now!

Many Winters Ago in Moscow

Malcolm Muggeridge

WHEN I was a newspaper correspondent in Moscow in the early 1930's I used to spend a lot of the day just walking the streets. This was partly because there was nothing else to do, but even if there had been I think I might still have thus employed my time. The unending stream of people, grey-faced, anonymously clothed, treading soundlessly on the snow, had a curious attraction. They seemed to be going nowhere in particular, to have no particular object in view. There was nothing in the shop windows to look at, and they did not, like street crowds in other cities, take stock of one another. Anonymous, inscrutable, drifting along without any evident expectation of better times or fear of worse ones, I found them comforting and companionable. They evoked none of the excitement or despair which make most large cities so uneasy and sleepless an environment. As evening came on, the effect was even more pronounced. It was like living in the mountains of the moon, with no restless desires or insistent ego to trouble the quiet, unmolested passage of time.

Padding thus about Moscow's streets I had an overwhelming conviction that this scene would set the pattern for our time. So it was to be everywhere. So we were all to live. It was our inescapable fate. Here, in this remote and barbarous capital, in some inscrutable way the future was being shaped—a future symbolised by people padding, padding, interminably through drab, monotonous streets.

The life of a foreign correspondent in Moscow was even then largely detached from the society whose affairs we were supposed to be reporting. In the mornings we thumbed over the day's newspapers, spelling them out ourselves or with the help of a secretary. They were inconceivably long-winded and flat—enormous, turgid articles about the Five-Year Plan or the collectivisation of agriculture. I used in those days to nourish the hope that the Soviet régime would collapse under the weight of its sheer tedium. No human beings, I would reflect, not even Slavs, could indefinitely sustain this boredom of portentous words, these unilluminated sentences meandering down column after column, this endless repetition of the same slogans and propositions. How wrong I was! There is, as I now know, no limit to what contemporary human beings will endure, in what is written, spoken, or visually presented to them, however repetitious, long-winded, and inherently false it may be. The more they venerate literacy, the greater becomes their capacity for suffering gladly any amount of boredom in terms of words and images; the more they persuade themselves that facts and figures can explain their circumstances, the greater is their credulity and tolerance of charlatanism.

Out of the newspapers we managed to extract items which could be made to seem like news. The newspapers were our only source of information. This vast, diverse country in which we were living, as far as we were con-