

REVIEW AND COMMENT

Stalinism and Hitlerism—Progressive and regressive fiction—History in Florence and California

WE have here* the abridged text of Stalin's report of November 25 last to the Special All-Union Congress of Soviets. From his simple language and attitude in this speech, you would not guess that Stalin was introducing to the people of the Soviet Union their new constitution, the legislative sign of a victorious socialist economy. It is on the face of it a report and little more. There is some humor in one section, some quoting of salty peasant proverbs, some laughter at the expense of German pedants; but there is no rhetoric. The spirit of most of it is statistical, with Stalin working, as in all his compositions, towards a scientific clarity and logic. Nevertheless, the short work breathes the dignity of the man himself; and the greatness of the moment colors deeply the sober, stock-taking manner of most of it.

Indeed, introducing as it does a constitution which is not a program but a confirmation of achievements, the report is in large part just that—a stock-taking. The conditions which make this new declaration of basic law possible and necessary must first be established, and Stalin proceeds carefully to establish them. What changes, he asks, have occurred in the life of the U. S. S. R. since 1924, when the former constitution was adopted? The tasks of that period were to eliminate the vestiges of capitalism in industry and agriculture by exposing in practical competition the inadequacy of the old techniques of making and marketing as compared with the new—in Stalin's words, to "organize the superiority of the socialist system over the capitalist system." The limited revival of capitalism under the New Economic Policy provided a healthy competitive climate for socialist production to take root in. The years of the Five Year Plans were the great growing years of collectivism in factory and farm, resulting in the overwhelming and stifling of capitalist economy and the final maturing of socialism.

What have been the results of these developments on the human structure of the old Soviet Russia of 1924? The working class has ceased to be a working class proper, since it is no longer exploited by capitalists; for it, the term proletariat is out of date. It is a working class "having no counterpart in the history of the world," says Stalin. And the old peasantry, that "class of small producers, with atomized members, scattered over the face of the whole country, plowing their lonely furrows on their small farms with backward techniques, slaves of property, etc.," has disappeared. The Russian peasantry of 1936, with its economy based upon collective property which came into being as a result of collective labor, is a peasantry "having no counterpart in the history of mankind." The

intelligentsia, finally, springing nowadays in great part from the masses and serving the masses, is an intelligentsia "without counterpart in any country on the globe." At the same time, in the national sphere, the old federation has given way to a genuine multinational union of free and equal autonomous republics.

This is socialism, the first phase of communism; and such, says Stalin, is the base on which the new constitution rests. He then proceeds to point out how the constitution embodies the political principles arising from the changed economic and class status of the Union. Unlike bourgeois constitutions, which recognize in their tacit fashion the unequal distribution of property and the consequent class hostilities—which indeed spring from the very necessities inherent in such conditions—the new law of the U. S. S. R. recognizes neither these conditions nor these necessities. Its concept of democracy is a positive one. It is concerned not only with rights, but with the opportunities to exercise them.

Stalin makes other points in connection with the new basic law of socialism. He answers, moreover, certain capitalist critics of that law, and devotes considerable time to rejecting various inappropriate amendments which were submitted to the commission during the long period of public discussion which preceded the Congress. He concludes by pointing out—still with the same easy eloquence—how from the new constitution will flow the strength and confidence to defeat fascism and win new victories for communism.

While we are speaking of phenomena without counterpart, we should add that this is a document which for charm, frankness, and simplicity can have few counterparts among the state papers of history. And just as it confirms socialism in the field of law, so it exemplifies the new regime in the character of leadership.

F. W. DUPEE.

Drang nach Osten

HITLER OVER RUSSIA?, by Ernst Henri.
Translated by Michael Davidson. Simon & Schuster. \$2.50.

THE European crisis is rapidly coming to a head. Whether the spark of war is ignited by a Nazi putsch in Austria, in Spain, through an incident on the Polish-Soviet border or elsewhere, one thing is certain: Hitler is ready to plunge the world into a second war by an attack, direct or indirect, upon the Soviet Union. This, however, will not be merely a war between Socialist Russia and Fascist Germany. Leaping from the Dvina, the Baltic, and the Danube, right across the continent, as Mr. Henri puts it, it "will leave no country untouched and spare no state or group of states, no matter how 'isolated.'"

To achieve his aggressive aim, Der Fuehrer

is leaving no stone unturned. He is feverishly making new alliances and cultivating assiduously all the fascist elements in the Balkan, Baltic, and eastern-European states. He supplies arms to fascist Bulgaria and encourages Hungary in her treaty-revisionist designs. Goering's "hunting" trips to Poland and Dr. Schacht's visits to Central Europe are not accidents. Neither is the German-Japanese anti-Soviet pact an accident. Behind the recently concluded accord between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia—coming so soon after King Boris's visit to Berlin—the hand of Alfred Rosenberg's "foreign office" is clearly visible: both Belgrade and Sofia are important links in Hitler's "crusade against Bolshevism."

That is the theme of *Hitler Over Russia?*, a comprehensive and remarkably well-documented analysis of the present situation in Europe. Although Mr. Henri's thesis is a familiar one and some of his forecasts are open to question, *Hitler Over Russia?* is so richly informative that no one who wishes to understand the real facts behind the newspaper headlines can afford to miss it.

Beginning with a detailed account of the "June purge" of 1934, which signalized the defeat of the German middle class and its army, the S.A. (which had raised Hitler to power only to betray it), and the ascendancy of Thyssen and the Ruhr barons, Mr. Henri paints a grim picture of the "Fascist International," the little Hitlers and their satellites who operate today in every nook and corner of Europe: Mikhailoff and his Macedonian I.M.R.O., Dr. Ante Pavelic and the Ustashi organization in Yugoslavia, the Hungarian Tszists, Mannerheim and the Lappo movement in Finland, and, of course, the group of adventurers of the Baltic Brotherhood. Subsidized by Thyssen, trained and "inspired" by Alfred Rosenberg, they commit terrorist acts, stage *coups d'état*, and sow chaos in Europe, preparing the ground for the "Hoffmann plan."

Some skeptics will, no doubt, disparage Mr.



George Schreiber

*THE NEW SOVIET CONSTITUTION, by Joseph Stalin. International Publishers. 2c.

Henri's credulity in considering seriously General Hoffmann's plan. The whole thing is indeed a weird fantasy, the dream of an obsessed general who, although he has had no contact with the Red Army of today, has never been able to forget the spectacle of Lenin's ragged and barefooted revolutionary battalions suing for peace at Brest-Litovsk. One should not forget, however, that psychopathology is important to an understanding of the Nazi mentality. The conquest of the rich and fertile area of the Soviet Ukraine—the core of this plan—has long been an object of the predatory desire of many pretenders. The vision of a Germany extending from the Rhine to the Black Sea has long been obsessing the minds of Hitler and Rosenberg. There is every indication that Mr. Henri is right: the Hoffmann plan, hopeless though it is, is the number-one plan on the Nazi program. It supersedes all Herr Hitler's other pet plans for the creation of a "world Teutonic order," even the old Schlieffen plan for the invasion of Belgium and France which, while by no means abandoned, has been for the moment "forgotten."

Are there any chances for the Hoffmann plan to succeed? Mr. Henri believes not. His reasons are based, as his publishers truthfully remark, not upon propaganda but upon the bare facts of strategy, tactics, economics, and technical equipment. At this point, however, he commits several errors which, while they do not invalidate his thesis, tend to confuse somewhat the situation in eastern Europe. The success or failure of the Nazis' attack upon the Soviet Union depends upon numerous factors, not the least of which is Hitler's ability to win over to his side such key countries as Rumania and particularly Poland.

Will Poland be won over to the Nazi cause? According to Mr. Henri, Polish fascism which, like that in Germany and Hungary, is already in possession of state power, will be at the head of Hitler's columns in eastern Europe. It will have the same rallying and commanding role as Hungarian revisionism in the Danubian states. On the surface, this may appear logical. It is well known that Marshal Pilsudski, whose foreign policy Colonel Josef Beck is now carrying on, never gave up his dream of erecting a Great Polish Empire out of the triple union, Poland-Lithuania-Ukraine. He concluded a non-aggression pact with Germany in which he renounced opposition to German expansion in Austria, towards Czechoslovakia, and in the Balkans, while Hitler in turn renounced, officially at least, all claim to Danzig, West Prussia, and Upper Silesia for ten years. The well-known P.O.W. (Polish military organization) and the "Colonels' group" (the unofficial party of the Polish feudal aristocracy), which had been hitherto ruling the country, are rabidly anti-Soviet and pro-German.

In spite of all these seemingly strong pro-Nazi forces in the country, there are many reasons to believe that Poland will never join Germany in a war upon the Soviet Union. For one thing, Poland more than any other

country has reasons to fear her own population. Of the thirty million inhabitants, more than ten million are not Poles. In a war upon the Soviet Union, seven million Ukrainians of western (now Polish) Ukraine and Volhynia and three million Jews, oppressed and exploited, together with the organized Polish workers, are a great force to be reckoned with. As to the urban, commercial, and industrial bourgeoisie, for purely economic reasons it is as rabidly anti-German as it is pro-French. Its party, the Endeks, anti-Semitic and fascist though it is, is definitely pro-French. It is largely because of their pro-French orientation that the Endeks were able to maintain their prestige and wield such enormous power even after they were so badly defeated after Pilsudski's last coup. Most important, however, is Poland's well-justified fear—this view was impressed upon me time and again by well-informed Poles during my visit to Poland—that if she continues to play Hitler's imperialist game, to permit the Austro-German *Anschluss* and the partition of Czechoslovakia, thereby strengthening Hungary's revisionist designs, she will alienate her Rumanian and French allies and leave herself at the mercy of the Nazi expansionists. The

Poles are no fools. They know well that a Nazi victory means ultimately the death of Poland as an independent state.

In the main, however, Mr. Henri is right. Poland or no Poland, no matter what the odds against the Nazis may be, we may hear any day of Goering's air squadrons dropping bombs upon defenseless Ukrainian peasants. An aerial bombardment of non-combatants, however, as the Spanish situation has shown, does not win wars. When the fascist armies are finally forced to meet the class-conscious and vastly superior army of socialism—described so excellently by Mr. Henri in his chapter "Can Germany Beat the Soviet Union?"—it bodes ill for Nazism.

LEON DENNEN.

Ivory Tower: Red Square

A BOOK OF CONTEMPORARY SHORT STORIES, by Dorothy Brewster, Ph.D., with an Appendix on Writing the Short Story, by Lillian Barnard Gilkes. Macmillan. \$3.50.

IF making an anthology is a creative act, the best results will appear when the anthologist's purpose is most clearly defined (at least in his own mind) and the scope of



Three Wise Men

Tschaobasov