



by Isaac Deutscher

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From January to March 1967, Isaac Deutscher gave the George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures at the University of Cambridge, six lectures on Russia under the general title, "The Unfinished Revolution." The following is a condensation of Prof. Deutscher's third lecture.

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THE FIRST AND MOST STRIKING feature of the transformed scene [since 1917] is the massive urbanization of the USSR. Since the revolution, the town population has grown by over 100 million people. Within the lifetime of a generation, the percentage of the town dwellers in the total population has risen from 15 to about 55, and it is fast climbing up to 60. In America it took a century, from 1850 to 1950, for the proportion of town dwellers to rise from 15 to 60 per cent.

Only a small proportion of the expansion was due to natural growth or to the migration of town people. The mass of the new town dwellers were peasants, shifted from the villages, year after year, and directed to industrial labor. Like the old advanced nations of the West, the Soviet Union found the main reserve of industrial manpower in the peasantry.

The transfer of the rural population began for good only in the early 1930's, and it was closely connected with the collectivization of farming, which enabled the government's agencies to lay hands on the surplus of manpower on the farms and to move it to industry. The beginnings of the process were extremely difficult and involved the use of much force and violence.

The habits of settled industrial life, regulated by the factory siren, which had in other countries been inculcated into the workers from generation to generation by economic necessity and legislation, were lacking in Russia. The peasants had been accustomed to work in their fields according to the rhythm of Russia's severe nature, to toil from sunrise to sunset in the summer and to sleep through on the tops of their ovens most of the winter. They had to be conditioned into an entirely new routine of work.

They resisted, worked sluggishly, broke or damaged tools, and shifted restlessly from factory to factory and from mine to mine. The government imposed discipline by means of harsh labor codes, threats of deportation and actual deportation to forced labor camps. Lack of housing and acute shortages of consumer goods aggravated the hardships and the turbulence. It was common in the cities, even quite recently, for several families to share a single room and a kitchen; and in the industrial settlements, workers were herded in barracks for many years.

As time went on, the social friction and conflicts, engendered by the upheaval, lessened. And since the second

world war the feats of Soviet industry and arms have appeared to justify retrospectively even the violence, the suffering, the blood and the tears. But it may be held, as I have held through all these decades, that without the violence, the blood and the tears, the great work of construction might have been done far more efficiently and with healthier social, political and moral aftereffects.

Whatever the truth of the matter, the transformation of the social structure is still on; and it continues without such forcible stimulation. Year after year the urban population is expanding on the same scale as before; and the process, though planned and regulated, has its own rhythm. If in the 1930's the government had to drag a sullen mass of peasants into the towns, in this last decade or so it has been confronted by a spontaneous rush of people from the country to town; and it has had to exert itself to make rural life a little more attractive in order to keep young labor on the farms.

The industrial workers, the small minority of 1917, now form the largest social class. The state employs about 78 million people in workshops and offices—it employed 27 million after the end of the second world war. Well over 50 million people work in primary and manufacturing industries, in building, transport, communications and on state-owned farms. The rest work in various services—13 million of them in health, education and scientific research.

It is not easy to distinguish with any precision the numbers of manual workers and technicians from those of office workers because Soviet statistics lump them together; I shall speak presently about the sociological significance of this lumping together. The number of the workers proper may be put at between 50 and 55 million.

Stalin's labor policy centered on differential scales of salaries and wages, and raised the labor aristocracy high above the mass of underpaid, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. To some extent this was justified by the need to offer incentives to skill and efficiency, but the discrepancies in wages went far beyond that; and their actual extent was and still is surrounded by secrecy. Since the 1930's, the government has not published the relevant data about the national wage structure, and students have had to content themselves with fragmentary information.

Throughout the Stalinera a ferocious witch-hunt against the levelers—or the "petty bourgeois egalitarians"—was in progress; but it was less effective than it appeared to be, and certainly less so than the political witch-hunts. The suppression of the data about the structure of wages and salaries indicates with what guilty consciences the ruling groups, under Stalin and after him, have pursued their anti-egalitarian policy.

Of course, nothing like our "normal" inequality between earned and unearned incomes exists in the Soviet

Union. The inequality is in the earned incomes. Yet to expose its full extent would evidently be too risky and dangerous an undertaking for any Soviet government. The discrepancies in workers' earnings seem similar to those that can be found in most other countries; and they are narrowed by the greater value of the Soviet Union's more comprehensive social services.

The bulk of the working class is strongly marked by its peasant origins. There are only very few working class families who have been settled in town since before the revolution, and who have a long industrial tradition and memories of pre-revolutionary class struggle.

Practically, the oldest layer of workers is the one which formed itself during the reconstruction period of the 1920's. Its adaptation to the rhythm of industrial life was relatively easy: these workers came to the factory of their own accord, and were not yet subjected to strict regimentation. Their children are the most settled and the most distinctly urban element of the industrial population. From their ranks came the managerial elements and the labor aristocracy of the 1930's and 1940's. Those who remained in the ranks were the last Soviet workers to engage freely, under NEP (New Economic Program), in trade union activities, even in strikes, and to enjoy a freedom of political expression.

The contrast between this and the next layer is extremely sharp. Twenty-odd million peasants were shifted to the towns during the 1930's. Their adaptation was painful and jerky. For a long time they remained uprooted villagers, desperate, anarchic and helpless. They were broken to the habits of factory work and kept under control by ruthless drill and discipline. It was they who gave the Soviet towns the gray, miserable, semi-barbarous look that so often astonished foreign visitors. They brought with themselves into industry the *muzhik's* crude individualism; official policy played on it, prodding the industrial recruits to compete with one another for bonuses, premiums and multiple piece rates.

THE TERROR OF THE 1930's left an indelible imprint on the men of this category. Most of them, now in their fifties, are probably—through no fault of theirs—the most backward element among Soviet workers, uneducated, acquisitive, servile. Only in its second generation could this layer of the working class live down the initial shocks of urbanization.

Peasants who came to the factories in the aftermath of the second world war still experienced the trying living conditions, virtual homelessness, severe labor discipline and terror. But most had come to town voluntarily, eager to escape from devastated and famished villages. They had been prepared for industrial discipline by years of

army life, and found in their new places an environment better able to absorb and assimilate newcomers than were the towns and factory settlements of the 1930's.

It became easier still for the next batches of trainees who arrived at the factories in the post-Stalin years, when the old labor codes were abolished, and who settled down to their occupations in relative freedom from want and fear. These latest immigrants, and the town-bred children of the earlier ones, have played a big part in reforming labor routines and in changing the climate of Soviet factory life. Nearly all of them have ("complete" or "incomplete") secondary education, and many take extramural academic courses. They have often clashed with their less efficient and less civilized foremen and managers.

This is probably the most progressive group of the Soviet working class, comprising the builders of nuclear plants, computers and space ships, workers as productive as their American counterparts, even though the average Soviet productivity per man-hour is still only 40 per cent of American productivity or even less.

If this analysis is correct, then the prospect for the future may be more hopeful. An objective process of consolidation and integration is taking place in the working class, and is accompanied by a growth of social awareness.

There is still a long way from this to freedom of expression and to workers' genuine participation in control over industry. Yet as the working class is growing more educated, homogeneous and self-confident, its aspirations are likely to focus on these demands. And if this happens, the workers may reenter the political stage as an independent factor, ready to challenge the bureaucracy, and ready to resume the struggle for emancipation in which they scored so stupendous a victory in 1917, but which they have for so long been unable to follow up.

THE OBLVERSE SIDE of the expansion of the working class is the shrinkage of the peasantry. Forty years ago, rural small holders made up more than three-quarters of the nation; at present the collectivized farmers constitute only one-quarter.

As one who witnessed the collectivization in the early 1930's and severely criticized its forcible method, I would like to reflect here on the tragic fate of the Russian peasantry. Under the *ancien régime*, the Russian countryside was periodically swept by famines, as China's countryside was and as India's still is. In the intervals between the famines, uncounted (i.e., statistically unnoticed) millions of peasants died of malnutrition and disease, as they still do in so many underdeveloped countries. The old system was hardly less cruel toward the peasantry than Stalin's government, except that its cruelty appeared to be part of the natural order of things which even the moralists' sen-

sitive consciences are inclined to take for granted.

This cannot excuse or mitigate the crimes of Stalinist policy; but it may put the problem into proper perspective. Those who argue that all would have been well if only the *muzhiks* had been left alone, the idealizers of the old rural way of life and of the peasantry's individualism, are purveying an idyll which is a figment of their imaginations.

The old primitive small holding was, in any case, too archaic to survive into the epoch of industrialization. It has not survived either in Britain or in the United States; even in France, its classical homeland, we have witnessed a dramatic shrinkage of the peasantry in recent years.

In Russia the small holding was a formidable obstacle to the nation's progress: it was unable to provide food for the growing urban population, and it could not even feed the children of the overpopulated countryside. The only reasonable alternative to forcible collectivization lay in some form of collectivization or cooperation based on the peasantry's consent. Just how realistic this alternative was no one can now say with any certainty. What is certain is that forcible collectivization has left a legacy of agricultural inefficiency and of antagonism between town and country which the Soviet Union has not yet lived down.

These calamities have been aggravated by still another blow suffered by the peasantry—a blow surpassing all the atrocities of the collectivization. Most of the 20 million men that the Soviet Union lost on the battlefields of the second world war were peasants.

So huge was the gap in rural manpower that during the late 1940's and in the 1950's, in most villages, only women, children and old men were seen working in the fields. This accounted in some measure for the stagnant condition of farming; for dreadful strains on family relations, sexual life and rural education; and for more than the normal amount of apathy and inertia in the countryside.

The peasantry's weight in the nation's social and political life has, in consequence of all these events, steeply declined. The condition of farming remains a matter of great concern, for it affects the standard of living and the morale of the urban population. A poor harvest is still a critical event politically; and a succession of bad harvests contributed to Khrushchev's downfall in 1964.

Nor has the peasantry been truly integrated into the new industrial structure of society. Much of the old individualistic farming, of the most petty and archaic kind, is still going on behind the facade of the *kolkhoz*. Within a stone's throw of automated computer-run concerns there are still shabby bazaars crowded with rural traders.

Yet the time when the Bolsheviks were afraid that the peasantry might be the agent of a capitalist restoration has long passed. True, there are rich *kolkhozes* and poor ones, and here and there a crafty *muzhik* manages to

obviate all rules and regulations and to rent land, surreptitiously employ hired labor, and make a lot of money. However, these survivals of primitive capitalism are hardly more than a marginal phenomenon.

If the present population trend, i.e., the migration from country to town, continues, as it is likely to do, the peasantry will go on shrinking; and there will probably be a massive shift from the collectively owned to the state owned farms. Eventually, farming may be expected to be "Americanized" and to employ only a small fraction of the nation's manpower.

Meanwhile, even though the peasantry is dwindling, the *muzhik* tradition still looms very large in Russian life, in custom and manner, in language, literature and the arts. Although a majority of Russians are already living in town, most Russian novels, perhaps four out of five, still take village life as their theme and the *muzhik* as their chief character. Even in his exit he casts a long, melancholy shadow on the new Russia.

AND NOW WE COME to what is, in any sociological description of the USSR, the most complex and puzzling problem, that of the bureaucracy, the managerial groups, the specialists and the intelligentsia. Their numbers and specific weight have grown enormously. Between 11 and 12 million specialists and administrators are employed in the national economy, compared with only half a million in the 1920's, and fewer than 200,000 before the revolution. To these we must add between two and three million regular members of the political hierarchies and of the military establishment. In sheer numbers all these groups, amounting to about one-fifth of the total of those employed by the state, are almost as large as the collectivized peasantry (the *kolkhozes* have only 17 million members). Their social weight is, of course, immeasurably greater.

We must not, however, lump all these groups together and label them as the bureaucracy or the managerial class. A sharp distinction ought to be made between the specialists and administrators with higher education and those with only a secondary one. The actual managerial elements are in the former category, although they are not identical with it. The specialists with higher education form about 40 per cent of the total, i.e., over four and a half million people—or perhaps five and a half, if party cadres and military personnel are included.

Is this then the privileged bureaucracy at which Trotsky once pointed as the new enemy of the workers? Or is this Djilas' New Class? Trotsky, as you may remember, did not take the view that the bureaucracy was a "new class."

I must confess that I hesitate to answer these questions too categorically. I cannot go here into the semantics of

the problem and discuss the definition of class. Let me only say that I make a distinction between economic or social inequality and class antagonism. The difference between highly paid skilled workers and unskilled ones is an example of an inequality which does not amount to a class antagonism; it is a difference within the same social class. To my mind Djilas' view about the "new class of exploiters" and similar ideas about the Soviet "managerial society" are simplifications which, far from clarifying the issue, obscure it.

The status of the privileged groups in Soviet society is more ambiguous than the one or the other label suggests. They are a hybrid element; they are and they are not a class. They have certain features in common with the exploiting classes of other societies; and they lack some of the latter's essential characteristics. They enjoy material and other advantages which they defend stubbornly and brutally.

Here again, beware of sweeping generalizations. About one-third of the total number of specialists are poorly paid teachers—the Soviet press has recently been vocal with many complaints about their living conditions. The same is true about most of the half million doctors. Many of the two million engineers, agronomers and statisticians earn less than a highly skilled worker. Their standard of living is comparable to that of our lower middle class.

This is admittedly well above the standard of living of the unskilled and semi-skilled worker. But it would be poor sociology, Marxist or otherwise, to ascribe this modest prosperity to the exploitation of labor. Only the upper strata of the bureaucracy, of the party hierarchy, the managerial groups and the military personnel, live in conditions comparable to those enjoyed by the rich and the *nouveaux riches* in capitalist society.

It is impossible to define the size of these groups; let me repeat that the statistical data about their numbers and incomes are carefully concealed. What these groups have in common with any exploiting class—I am using the term here in its Marxist sense—is that their incomes are at least partly derived from the "surplus value" produced by the workers. Moreover, they dominate Soviet society economically, politically, and culturally.

But what this so-called "new class" lacks is property. They own neither means of production nor land. Their material privileges are confined to the sphere of consumption. Unlike the managerial elements in our society, they are not able to turn any part of their income into capital: they cannot save, invest and accumulate wealth in the durable and expansive form of industrial stock or of large financial assets. They cannot bequeath wealth to their descendants; they cannot, that is, perpetuate themselves as a class.

Trotsky once predicted that the Soviet bureaucracy

would fight for the right to bequeath their possessions to their children, and that they might seek to expropriate the state and become the shareholding owners of trusts and concerns. This prediction, made over 30 years ago, has not come true so far. The Maoists say that capitalism is already being restored in the Soviet Union; presumably they refer to the present decentralization of state control over industry. The evidence for these assertions has been less than scanty so far.

Theoretically, it is possible that the present reaction against the Stalinist overcentralized economic control may stimulate neo-capitalist tendencies among industrial managers. Signs of this may be detected in Yugoslavia—I would not put it higher than that. Yet it is unlikely that such tendencies should gain the upper hand in the USSR, if only because the abandonment of central economic planning would be a crippling blow to Russia's national interest and position in the world.

Speculation apart, the fact that the Soviet bureaucracy has not so far obtained for itself ownership in the means of production accounts for a certain precariousness of its social domination. Property has always been the foundation of any class supremacy. The cohesion and unity of any class depends on it. Property is, for the class that owns it, a character-forming factor. It is also the positive element to the defense of which the class rallies. The battle cry of any possessing class is the "sanctity of property," and not just the right to exploit others.

The privileged groups of Soviet society are not united by any comparable ties. They are in command of industry, as our business managers are; and they exercise the command in an absolute manner. But behind our business managers there are the shareholders, especially the big ones. Soviet managers have not only to acknowledge that all shares belong to the nation, but to profess that they act on the nation's behalf, especially on behalf of the working class. Whether they are able to keep up this pretense or not depends solely on political circumstances. The workers may allow them to keep it up or they may not. They may, like a sluggish lot of shareholders, accept bad managers; or they may dismiss them.

In other words, bureaucratic domination rests on nothing more stable than a state of political equilibrium. This is—in the long run—a far more fragile foundation for social dominance than is any established structure of property relations, sanctified by law, religion and tradition.

THERE HAS BEEN MUCH TALK recently about the antagonism, in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, between the political hierarchies and the technocrats; and some young theorists treat these two groups as fully fledged and opposed social

classes, and speak about their "class struggle," very much as we used to speak about the struggle between landlords and capitalists. The technocrats, one is told, with whom the workers may ally themselves, aim at overthrowing the "central political hierarchy" which has usurped power since the revolution.

Yet if the "new class" that has ruled the Soviet Union all these decades has consisted solely of the "central political hierarchy," then its identity is very elusive indeed. Its composition has been repeatedly and sweepingly changed in purge after purge, during Stalin's lifetime and after. Indeed, this "new class" looks very much like a sociologist's Cheshire cat.

In truth, Soviet bureaucracy has exercised power greater than that wielded by any possessing class in modern times; yet its position is more vulnerable than the position normally held by any such class. Its power is so exceptional because it is economic, political and cultural at the same time. Yet, paradoxically, each of these elements of power has had its origin in an act of liberation.

The bureaucracy's economic prerogatives are derived from the abolition of private property in industry and finance; the political ones from the workers' and peasants' total victory over the *ancien régime*; and the cultural ones from the assumption by the state of full responsibility for the people's education and cultural development.

Because of the workers' inability to maintain the supremacy they held in 1917, each of these acts of liberation turned into its opposite. The bureaucracy became the master of a masterless economy; and it established a political and cultural tutelage over the nation. But the conflict between the origin of the power and its character, between the liberating uses for which it was intended and the uses to which it has been put, has perpetually generated high political tensions and recurrent purges, which have again and again demonstrated the lack of social cohesion in the bureaucracy.

The privileged groups have not solidified into a "new class." They have not eradicated from the popular mind the acts of liberation from which they derive their power; nor have they been able to convince the masses—or even themselves—that they have used the power in a manner concordant with those acts. In other words, the "new class" has not obtained for itself the sanction of social legitimacy. It must constantly conceal its own identity, which the bourgeoisie and the landlords have never had to do. It has the sense of being history's bastard.

I have already mentioned the guilty conscience that compels the ruling groups to lump together "workers" and "employees" in one statistical total and to make a state secret of the wage structure and of the distribution of the national income. The "new class" thus disappears

in the huge and gray mass of "workers and employees." It hides its face and conceals its share in the national cake. After so many witch-hunts against the levelers, it dare not affront the egalitarianism of the masses.

As one Western observer neatly put it: "Whereas in our middle classes the rule is to keep *up* with the Joneses, in the Soviet Union the privileged people must always remember to keep *down* with the Joneses." This shows something of the methods of Soviet society, something of its underlying morality, and something of the vitality and compelling force of the revolutionary tradition.

Moreover, the Soviet Joneses are coming up *en masse*; they are being educated *en masse*. Where social stratification is based solely on income and function, and not on property, the progress of mass education is a powerful and ultimately irresistible force for equality. In a society expanding on so vast a scale and so rapidly, the privileged groups have constantly to absorb ever new plebeian and proletarian elements, whom they find it ever more difficult to assimilate; and this again prevents the "new class" from consolidating itself socially and politically.

Mass education is spreading faster than the privileged groups expand, faster even than the needs of industrialization require. It is indeed running ahead of the country's economic resources. According to recent educational surveys, 80 per cent of the pupils of Soviet secondary schools, mostly children of workers, demand to be admitted to the universities. The universities cannot accept them. The expansion of higher education cannot keep pace with the spread of secondary education; and industry needs hands. And so the huge mass of young people is being driven back from the gates of the universities to the factories. For all the difficulties this situation creates, it is also unique. It illustrates with dramatic effect how the gulf between brain and brawn is in fact narrowing in the USSR.

The immediate consequence is a relative overproduction of the intelligentsia which is being pressed into the ranks of the working class. The worker-intellectuals are a creative and potentially explosive element in the body politic. The force of the revolutionary tradition has been great enough to compel the bureaucracy to give the workers much more education than has been required on narrow economic grounds, and perhaps more than is safe for the privileged groups.

It may be argued that the bureaucracy is thus breeding its own gravediggers. Such a view may well overdramatize the prospect. But clearly the dynamics of Soviet society are becoming enriched with new contradictions and tensions which will not, I think, allow it to stagnate and ossify under the domination of a "new class."

The Secret Circus

“Marriage is a very serious affair.”

LAEL TUCKER WERTENBAKER

Chapter One

[THE RELUCTANT DRAGON]

I HAD TO BANG PRETTY LONG on the cage before Margot finally came down. I'd even thought of banging on the wall, but I knew what *that* would get me.

“You *knew* I was dressing,” she said.

She seemed extravagantly lovely. She wore a black sheath, and its décolleté made her as lush as a jungle. Mostly I'm not particularly aware of her physically—like any other husband, I suppose. Or I'm aware of her in a negative way—that her face looks blotched, something like that, or that she's not as beautiful as I wish she were, or that she's not as feminine as I used to think she was.

But every so often she'll look this good and startle me with her beauty and with her self as much as she did when I first met her. Then I'm very happy to be married to her.

I thought: I'll say out loud to her, *Margot, I promise never again to get out of the cage with you.* But she spoke first.

She said, “Do you have enough ice?”

Margot has a fetish about ice. She never thinks there's enough.

“Yes,” I said. The ice bucket was full. “Plenty for right now. More would melt if you brought it out.”

“Well, don't skimp. The refrigerator is filled with it. I started making it yesterday.”

I could just see the refrigerator neatly filled with clear plastic bags full of ice cubes made from our three usable trays. Actually, it had been a long time since I'd gone into the kitchen at all, much less examined the refrigerator, and maybe Margot had gotten other ice trays: maybe, even, Margot had gotten us a separate freezer. But no, I would have known about that.

All in all, I thought the refrigerator was probably filled with those plastic bags of ice cubes. At least that's how Margot always brought me the ice, in those bags.

She started off toward the kitchen, but then turned to me again. “What were you banging for?”

“You forgot to give me the water.”

“Oh.” She paused and thought. She really did look lovely. I wanted to go over and undress her. But aside from being in the cage, there was the company coming shortly. She said, “I guess I'll just get one pitcher. It always seems to me the water gets flat if it's out too long.”

“Flat?”

“You know. Little bubbles along the sides of the pitcher.”

She went off to the kitchen. I thought about the little bubbles along the sides of the pitcher. She was right, of course. But I didn't know that I'd have been able to tell the difference just by tasting. But maybe it's so. Women are sensitive to things like that.

She came back and put it outside the little door of the cage, the one near the floor that I could get my arm through and bring in fairly sizable objects, but which I couldn't get through myself. She went across the room to the wall by the piano and pushed the button. The door clicked open without the fanfare of the big door and I reached out and got the pitcher.

“Thanks,” I said, and snapped the little door shut again so that she could hear it click *locked*.

“I hope the Elbertsons aren't late,” she said. “After all, I want them to meet everyone.”

Actually, she wanted everyone to meet the Elbertsons. She wanted to show them off as friends of ours. I suppose Margot thought that our knowing the Elbertsons made us look something special to our friends. I didn't care one way or another. I hadn't even met them yet. They were our new next-door neighbors, Hollywood people who had come east for some work in the theatre and had sublet from a minor theater type who had gone west to do some work in filmed TV. She was an actress, a sex goddess I was told, but of the variety which keeps its clothes on and can act and appeals to men who want something between a teen-age nymphomaniac and mother, that is, a filly who looks good in the paddock, can run the mile plus, and can command a price for bearing offspring any time in her career.

I had only seen an occasional shot of her in *Time* or *Life*, which was what Margot got me every week, along with *The New Yorker*, but of course there are no pictures in *The New Yorker*. And he was a producer of some sort. Apparently, he was producing a play in New York, which our community is a suburb of. I was interested in it because I think the title was something like *There's No Tomorrow Except the Tomorrow That Finished Last Today, Baby*. Eventually, when it opened, the play finished last, too. In between, it gave Mrs. Elbertson a lot of time.

Mrs. Elbertson, I remembered from *Life*, had the kind of legs that can give you an erection if you live in a cage. There were never any bosom shots, just the legs with the skirt pulled up a bit as she sat on a ship's rail or climbed into a private airplane.

by Richard Frede