

the Medvedevs fail to confront the systemic dilemmas of Soviet communism fully. Furthermore, there is ambivalence in the way they deal with the problem of comparing Khrushchev and his successors. They correctly credit Khrushchev with inaugurating détente, the post-Stalin borrowing of Western technology, and the gigantic post-Stalin housing program. They portray Khrushchev's successors as ideological reactionaries. They sometimes seem to imply—but do not explicitly say—that it is impossible to combine Khrushchev's humanitarian impulse with the greater efficiency of his successors. In a word, they do not take a firm, unambiguous position on the crucial issues they raise. But perhaps it is unfair to demand from the Medvedevs answers to the most difficult questions of Soviet politics. We can rejoice that they have outlined some of the essential issues so clearly and have given us much food for thought.

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DÉTENTE AND SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY: A DISCUSSION WITH ROY MEDVEDEV. Edited by *Ken Coates*. New York: Monad Press, 1976. x, 163 pp. \$9.00, cloth. \$2.45, paper. Distributed by Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.

Roy Medvedev is a representative of the Russian type of "socialism with a human face." Through the initiative of Ken Coates, Medvedev's 1973 essay on détente and socialist democracy was reprinted and commented on by twelve Western Marxists with similar political backgrounds. Medvedev deals with three major issues: (1) current repression of Soviet dissidents; (2) the relation between détente, democratization, and external pressures; and (3) the future changes in Russia. There is almost no disagreement about the first issue; it is accepted by all that—as aptly formulated by Tamara Deutscher—"the emancipation of the Soviet people will be the work of the Soviet people themselves" (p. 39).

The second question, concerning détente is more controversial, because several contributors (Y. Craipeau, G. Novack) have warned that détente will lead to reinforcement of restrictive measures, not to democratization. The best essay in the collection is Ernest Mandel's, who shows that, détente notwithstanding, military budgets increase and that monopoly of power is incompatible with socialist self-management. R. Pannequin adds that the party machine is the complete opposite of democracy and that its roots are to be found in Leninist centralism and its barracks-like spirit. The third issue—the proposed reform from the top—is unanimously rejected by the Western Marxists (M. Pablo, R. Milliband, F. Marek, and E. P. Thompson), who differ only in degree. However, the two East Europeans, Mihailo Marković and Jiří Pelikán—who have both had direct experience with the vicious circle of reforms from above—see more clearly than others that the future antibureaucratic revolution will be possible only if linked with "socialist enlightenment," and that controlled liberalization might really be the trigger of future change.

What is surprising is the outcome of this discussion. Medvedev's final comments on the opinions of his Western counterparts reveal the same dogmatic attitude which he likes to criticize in others, namely his semi-Stalinist type of thinking. Medvedev ignores the arguments and attributes to every opponent—left and right, Russian or Western—lack of understanding of the specific Soviet conditions. On top of that, he startles even the most sympathetic reader with a concluding statement—*after* the discussion!—that "in the present leadership of the Central Committee of the CPSU there are nowadays no proponents of authoritarian government" (p. 146). Whatever might be the shortcomings of Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov, and the Westerners, they at

least know with whom they are dealing. Medvedev does not, because his "Stalinism with a human face" does not allow him to see reality as it is, an attribute that used to be a prerequisite for Marxist thinking.

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BODALSIA TELENOK S DUBOM: OCHERKI LITERATURNOI ZHIZNI. By A. Solzhenitsyn. Paris: YMCA-Press, 1975. 629 pp. \$12.50, paper. Distributed by Association Press, New York.

Without any great surprises, this bulky, once deeply secret document provides a valuable memoir of the writer's struggle to live and write in the USSR from 1960 to his banishment in February 1974. In related essays, Solzhenitsyn re-creates the literary-political scene and traces his difficult emergence from anonymity to international prominence. The emphasis is clearly on moral and political, not literary, development.

In counterpoint, the narrative alternates between meetings and discussions in Moscow, usually at the offices of *Novyi mir*, and solitary writing at the secluded forest dacha Rozhdestvo. Solzhenitsyn graces this harrowing account with some rare lyrical intervals, describing the Rozhdestvo surroundings, which are reminiscent of "Matrenin dvor." But predominant is the inexorable tension between writing and protest, fiction and history. Solzhenitsyn emerges from these pages as a sternly disciplined man, driven to complete *Gulag*, his monumental record of past injustice, and thereby honor a debt to his fellow prisoners and history. At the same time he is bitterly torn by the moral dilemma this debt creates: he must eschew the present struggle in order to protect *Gulag*, though his silence and inaction belie the critical lesson of that work for the present. Here, as in the reflections on his conduct during his arrest and imprisonment and on his first wife's KGB connections, Solzhenitsyn renders the harshest judgment on himself.

Throughout the work one encounters short incisive sketches of the literary guardians Demichev and Lebedev and of the dissidents Chalidze, Shafarevich, and Sakharov, among other prominent contemporaries. Solzhenitsyn remains discreetly laconic regarding close friends. Yet, the prize is his sharp critique of the journal *Novyi mir* and especially of its editors, Dement'ev and Lakshin. The unsparing, deeply moving portrait of Tvardovskii, the editor and poet, is brilliant and worth the whole book. No other friend could match the perfect anger and sorrow of Solzhenitsyn at the poet's death.

Solzhenitsyn's ultraconservatism and his irritatingly uninformed declarations on Western affairs have eroded earlier sympathy and may obstruct the fair, careful reading this book deserves and will reward. Despite the peculiar self-centeredness and the gratuitous ill-tempered remarks about "left laborites" in the account, the man's suffering, courage, and talent prevail. Not many will come away liking Solzhenitsyn more, but few indeed will fail to respect him the greater after reading this book.

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