

faint whenever somebody (even Mr. Dulles) displayed any sign of tactical flexibility.

Let me repeat: I know that I don't have to tell Richard Lowenthal this. But only a few of those who make use of his words do so in his spirit. The West's foreign policy may face the

same danger that confronted Khrushchev in 1956—political methods designed to soften up the opponent's position may, in the end, put one's own position in jeopardy.

F. R. Allemann

Leon Trotsky as Diarist

WHILE Trotsky lived on Prinkipo, it seemed to him that if he could but get to some western land, he might resume the shaping of history and man's destiny. But when Daladier granted him refuge in France (in 1935), the two years he spent there were the loneliest and saddest of his life.

At first there were at least secretaries and close disciples around him. But he had to keep out of French politics, avoid the public eye, live incognito, stay away from the big cities. The Government trembled lest there be a physical attack upon him—from the Communists who asserted that he had been invited to advise Daladier on war with Russia, from the Right for whom a Communist was a Communist and "World Revolution" worse than "Socialism in one country," from aggrieved White Russians, from the Soviet police. How then was he to sink into the landscape, yet continue the activities which were the sum and substance of his life?

He settled in an isolated villa over the Mediterranean, where the local officials were unaware of the identity of the stranger. Then Rudolf Klement, Trotsky's courier from Paris, arrived at night on a motor cycle with the lights out, bringing police, a scandal, and the need to move.

He had to dispense with secretaries and couriers, shave his beard, part his hair differently, don French "bourgeois" clothes, put on deep mourning to minimise casual conversation. Trotsky without a secretary was as unwonted a sight since 1917 as Trotsky without his beard. Accompanied only by his loyal wife, Natalia Ivanovna, he sought seclusion in a tiny mountain village in the south-eastern Alps. This was more isolated than Prinkipo, forcing him to talk to himself in diary form in order to record his analyses of what he read in the press, and leave for posterity his Marxist forecasts of its future.

The result—Harvard has just published it as

Trotsky's Diary in Exile—is a poor and melancholy thing, melancholy in both senses of the word. Yet it is a psychological document of the highest importance, isolating as if in a laboratory the spirit of infallibility and dictatorship as it lives in one who has lost the power to dictate but not the will, nor the faith in his own infallibility.

His first word is a protest that a diary "is a literary form I am not especially fond of." We may believe, as he asserts, that he would "prefer a daily newspaper." Yet, unlike Lenin, Trotsky was one who glanced frequently at his own image in the mirror of history. He had already written an *Autobiography*, two brief wartime diaries, one of a stay in Switzerland, another in Spain, a marvellous account of being transported to Siberia and escaping ("My Round Trip"), and innumerable passages of an autobiographical character in *The Stalin School of Falsification*, his *History*, his *Lenin*, and other political-polemical works.

Yet it is clear that he is writing this diary *faute de mieux*. It consists of sporadic entries in three notebooks, written with little of his usual care for form and literary skill: 12 entries for February 1935; 13 for March; 11 for April; 14 for May; 8 for June; 4 for July; 1 for September. The July and September entries were written in Norway after France had refused to renew his permit, and Norway's Labour Government had granted him asylum. All the entries smack of boredom and disgust, disgust not so much with Stalin as with the Western socialist and democratic world. The entries are often only newspaper clippings, with his interpretation of them; lists of books read, with banal social-critical remarks; oracular utterances on Marxism; touching pen portraits of his faithful wife and her sufferings at the persecution of their family; "prophetic" forecasts of the future of France and Europe; a few reminiscences, one of them (as we shall see) important, on Lenin and the days of their joint tenancy of power.

To this varied and unequal assortment, the Harvard Editors have chosen to add a *Testament*, written five years later in Mexico, when Trotsky was suffering from high blood pressure and expected his life to end soon by a hæmorrhage of the brain. (The hæmorrhage came five months after the *Testament*, brought on by the alpine pick of an agent of the G.P.U.).

IN MORE SENSES THAN ONE, the year 1935 was a turning-point for Leon Trotsky. He was alone for the first time in years in a Western land which he might have begun to study at close range, reconsidering at the same time some of his certitudes. For all he really saw or understood of the world around him, he might as well have remained on Prinkipo or in Alma Ata. Hitler had just taken over power and crushed the mightiest Communist movement outside Russia. Trotsky sensed that this opened a new phase in history, but he totally misread it. France would go fascist "within the year." "Mosley, or someone like him," would make England fascist "the minute France went." After that "the Scandinavian countries would be unable to hold out." All this is noted with *Schadenfreude*: Engels "after forty years" was proving right about England; "parliamentary democracy is doomed"; the old order "will collapse with a stench.... The only question is, who will be its heir?"

He must speed up his own answer to this question. If he had already accepted Stalin's theory that the socialists were "the accomplices" of fascism, he was now prepared to add that the Stalinists were, too. He would give up his dreams of reconquering the Third International, and lay the foundations for a Fourth. This alone could save mankind. Whether the masses accepted his International and his formulæ before it was "too late," or whether "universal barbarism" would ensue, in either case "the correctness of the Marxist prognosis is bound to reveal itself." It was the fact that history might choose either one of these two correct Marxist prognoses which made his work now "more important than in 1917." Without his help, Lenin would probably have succeeded in making the October Revolution and winning the Civil War. "But now my work is 'indispensable' in the full sense of the word." The collapse of the Second and Third Internationals leaves "no one except me to carry out the mission of arming a new generation.... I need at least five years more of uninterrupted work to ensure a succession." (He was to have five years and five months more before the alpine pick crashed into his skull.)

THE YEAR 1935 WAS ALSO the year in which Stalin began to arrest first hundreds, then thousands

of Russian Communists for having "plotted with Trotsky and foreign intelligence agents the murder of Kirov." The saddest pages of the diary deal with the fate of those connected by ties of blood or allegiance to Trotsky, whom Stalin now persecuted as a means of atomising the party, disposing of potential successors, and taking vengeance on the opponent temporarily beyond his reach.

First had come the turn of Trotsky's one-time collaborators: "Glazman driven to suicide, Butov shot in a G.P.U. prison, Blumkin shot, Sermuks and Poznansky banished [they were later shot]."

Then his oldest daughter, Zinaida, broken in health, her husband in prison, had committed suicide in Berlin when Stalin revoked her citizenship along with that of all of Trotsky's family in exile. Now the diary records the exiling to Siberia of his first wife, Alexandra Lvovna, at the age of sixty, thirty-three years after she had ceased to be Trotsky's wife. His elder son, Lyova, is in danger from the brown-shirts in Berlin. (Natalia Ivanovna succeeded in getting a visa for him to come to Paris, by a personal appeal to Herriot; in Paris he died in a hospital under suspicious circumstances in 1937.) The younger son, Sergei, an engineer who has never been interested in politics, is the subject of anxious speculations. A number of entries deal with Natalia's efforts to learn of his fate. When the diary ends he is in Siberia, where a little over a year later he would be shot by the G.P.U. His only political act had been an attempt to exercise the right of silence in a régime that denies even that to the son of a man who must be denounced.

These are the most moving pages of the diary. But even as we grieve with the old man and his devoted helpmeet at the sufferings of their flesh and blood, our sympathy is suddenly chilled by reminiscences on the death of the Tsar and all his household. Trotsky remembers with pride that it was he who first proposed that Tsar Nicholas should be "tried for his crimes and executed." But Lenin, being "wiser," said "there might not be enough time for a trial." For the first time it is put clearly on record that Lenin and Sverdlov then ordered the execution of the Tsar and all his family. The Government—of "Lenin and Trotsky"—took the lives of the Tsar and his wife, his brother and the latter's wife, his four daughters and sickly son, an accompanying nun, the faithful servitors who had gone into exile with the Tsar, and several of his Ministers.

The decision [the Diary records] was not only expedient but necessary. The execution of the Tsar's family was needed not only to frighten, horrify, and dishearten the enemy, but also to

shake up our own ranks, to show them that there was no turning back, that ahead lay either complete victory or complete ruin. . . . The severity of this summary justice . . . showed the world that we would continue to fight on mercilessly, stopping at nothing.

Stopping at nothing—is not this but a paraphrase of the nihilist slogan, “*Everything is permitted*”? But where, one pauses to wonder, is the idealism of the dedicated terrorists of 1905?—Kalyaev, telling his comrades, “I could not throw the bomb when I saw the Grand Duke’s children riding with him in the carriage”—Voinarsky saying to approving co-conspirators, “If Dubassov is accompanied by his wife, I will not throw the bomb”—Savinkov holding back his bomb when he saw that ‘innocent strangers’ might be killed on Admiral Dubassov’s train—the same Savinkov escaping from prison revolver in hand, resolved to shoot any officer that bars his path, but to turn it on himself rather than shoot an ordinary soldier? How many words of Trotsky’s “explanation” would Stalin have to change in applying them to the extermination of Leon Trotsky, all his family, and his “faithful servitors”?

THOUGH TRAGEDY PERSONAL AND POLITICAL are in the pages of the diary, not a line of it suggests that Trotsky has re-thought anything, learned anything from his own fall and exile by a régime to which everything is permitted and which “stops at nothing.” Nowhere is there any new-found wisdom, any trace of humility or even a momentary doubt. Every line scornful, omniscient, cocksure, full of self-importance and certitude—and all the dogmatic pronouncements and judgments so wide of the mark!

Blum is a “has-been,” his whole concern being to prevent the working class from struggling against fascism. Blum and Cachin in their “united” opposition to Trotskyism are ineptly compared to Kerensky and Tseretelli opposing Lenin in 1917. Engels’ relation to Marx is absurdly and humourlessly compared to Christ’s relation to Jehovah. Trotsky feels a closer kinship with Roehm than he does with Leon Blum. Macdonald is “more contemptible than Mussolini”; the Webbs are closer to Stanley Baldwin, and Baldwin “closer to the Celtic Druids as intellectual types” than to Lenin and the author of the Diary. Spaak is “a shoddy little man . . . an honest ‘friend of the people’ . . . no more than that.” (One is reminded of Trotsky’s last word on Stalin: “a plebeian democrat of the provincial type . . . such in essence he remained to the end.”) Trotsky believed such epithets were the most devastating at his command, for he hated “plebeian democracy” more than the Barbarism with which he believed he would con-

tend when “parliamentary democracy collapsed now with a stench.”

THERE IS YET another sad note, subdued but persistent, running through the pages of the Diary. The Diarist feels that his powers are beginning to decline. “Old age is the most unexpected of the things that happen to a man.” “The worst vice is to be more than fifty-five years old” (before the Diary opened, Trotsky turned 55). “Contemporary history is running in high gear. . . . The only pity is that the organism-destroying microbes work even faster.”

Deep down within him Trotsky senses that he will not return in triumph to Russia in five years, or ever, nor preside over the re-making of the world and of man in the image of his blueprint. Indeed, five years later there is his *Testament*, bearing witness once more that neither the years of unending purge, nor the Stalin-Hitler Pact, nor the Second World War, has brought a shadow of a doubt. The *Testament* stipulates no errors, revises no positions, only reaffirms “my Marxist, dialectical materialist, irreconcilable atheist . . . faith in the Communist future.”

“Life is beautiful,” it assures those whom he expects to gather to hear the reading of the will. To “future generations” he leaves the task so ill begun “to cleanse it of all evil, oppression and violence, and enjoy it to the full. . . .”

Bertram D. Wolfe

Russian Painting in London

THIS year’s Winter Exhibition at the Royal Academy is a sad disappointment. Its aim is praiseworthy—to present the West for the first time with a more or less complete picture of the development of painting in Russia from the 13th century to the 20th. But the picture that has emerged is a dull one, and it is only too easy to sympathise with those critics who have been eagerly contrasting what the Russians have produced in the fields of music and letters with their lack of aptitude for the plastic arts. In fact, the failure of the exhibition is due not so much to the force of circumstances as to a bad choice of exhibits. The selection is at once tendentious and incompetent: not only is it dictated by the official ideology current in the Soviet Union, but even within this frame of reference reveals a curious deficiency in qualitative judgment.

Certainly, Russian painting, while richer than that of the other Slav or the Scandinavian countries put together, could never produce an