

SHORT GUIDE TO SELECTED SOURCES

We have drawn up specific bibliographies for each of the various reports included in this book. These can be found at the end of each report. In addition we would like to list and comment on some of the sources we used. We will include in particular those which are useful for gaining an overview of periods and main questions of political line.

General

Although many of Lenin's works are available in inexpensive paperback editions, the best source is the 45 volume set of Lenin's Collected Works published by Progress Publishers, Moscow. Another vital source is Stalin's Works in 13 volumes, readily available in an inexpensive reprint set done by Red Star Press. A third important source is Mao Tse-tung's Selected Writings, published by Foreign Languages Press, Peking, in 5 volumes. Earlier editions are more inclusive.

Comintern and the International Situation

Among the primary materials, the most readily available substantial collection of Comintern documents is Jane Degras' The Communist International: Documents (London: F. Cass, 1971) in 3 volumes. This collection also includes factually accurate introductory material.

For the critical VII Congress of the Comintern, the best single primary source is VII Congress of the Communist International: Abridged Stenographic Report of Proceedings (Moscow: Foreign Languages Printing House, 1939), but this is not readily available. There are several reprints of Dimitrov's report to the Congress, for example the editions by Proletarian Publishers and Gamma Publishing Company under the title The United Front.

While there are many books on the Comintern, both bourgeois and supposedly "Marxist" analyses, none that we have seen can be relied on to any significant degree for their analyses. To some extent they are useful on matters of fact and occasionally for their interpretations.

Within these limitations the two most useful sources for gaining an overview of the Comintern are the Soviet revisionists' Outline History of the Comintern (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971) and the bourgeois scholar Kermit McKenzie's The Comintern and World Revolution: 1928-1943 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964). McKenzie surveys periods in the development of the Comintern from 1928 and outlines some of the main issues and lines. The Outline History contains more detail than McKenzie but is equally unreliable in its explanations of political developments and line struggles. Most absurdly, for example, the Outline History hardly ever even mentions Stalin. The same with Trotsky. This is history with blinders on.

Less useful works include books like F. Borkenau, The Communist International (1938), G. Nollau, International Communism and World Revolution (1961), and William Z. Foster, History of the Three Internationals (1955). Another work

that should be mentioned, because it has undeservedly become popular, is F. Claudin, The Communist Movement: From Comintern to Cominform (1975). This work, which purports to be a Marxist analysis of the Comintern and Cominform by a former leader of the Spanish Communist Party, is quite inconsistent and unreliable. While making some correct criticisms of the Comintern--or rather, taking a stab at them--Claudin does a real hatchet job on Lenin, for example, by conveniently forgetting what Lenin said on a certain question when it suits Claudin's polemic. By this method he arrives at the view that Lenin had a "metaphysical conception of the readiness of the proletariat for revolution" ("Part One," p. 62) and misunderstood imperialism. Claudin sometimes "forgets" and sometimes belittles Lenin's self-criticism of certain views he (and other Bolsheviks) held prior to the revolutionary upheavals of 1917-1921. Virtually the entire fabric of the book is woven out of such shoddy material. We recommend extreme caution for those who plan to check out this "contribution."

Of the works on the Soviet Union, the first source to consult is the generally reliable History of the CPSU (Bolsheviks), Short Course, 1939, reprinted by Proletarian Publishers. There is a tremendous amount of literature on the Soviet Union, of course. The main sources we have relied on are listed in the separate bibliographies.

Of the works on fascism which were used, R. Palme Dutt's Fascism and Social Revolution is probably the most important. Originally written in 1934, revised in 1935, and recently re-issued by Proletarian Publishers, it was, and still may be, the most comprehensive Marxist theoretical treatment of fascism.

Dutt was the foremost theoretician of the Communist Party of Great Britain, so it is not surprising that he should claim, as the Communist movement did at that time, that the Communist Party in Germany had always been willing to unite with the Social Democrats against the Nazis. This, as we demonstrate in this book, is simply not true. Also, as late as May 1935, Dutt stated in an article that "up to the very end the German Social-Democratic leadership sought to carry through the role of social-fascism to its logical conclusion, and openly offered their services to the Hitler fascist dictatorship." (Degras, V. 3, p. 357) This too is not true.

While the book distorts the nature of social-democracy in relation to fascism, neglects fascism in Japan, and fails to recognize the ideological and programmatic antecedents of fascism before 1919, it is still valuable for a Marxist understanding of the development and nature of fascism.

Communist Party U.S.A.

Labor and Communism by Bert Cochran, a former Trotskyite of the Socialist Workers Party (a fact which he neglects to mention in his book), who was active in the United Auto Workers, is a detailed book about the relation of the CPUSA to the CIO from 1934 through 1950. It includes a brief description of the CP's trade union policies and activities prior to the advent of the CIO. It has the same cynicism and anti-Communism of so many other histories of Communist Parties. Nevertheless, the information in the book regarding the CP-CIO relationship is contained in no other single source we know of, and for that reason, this is a valuable book. William Z. Foster's History of the Communist Party of the United States, written in 1952, is the Party's "official history." It is a fairly

comprehensive and easy-to-read narrative of the Party and its antecedents. Unfortunately, its accuracy and integrity do not match its readability. A comparison of its chapters regarding the 1934-1945 period with our article "The Roots of Browderism" will demonstrate this to the reader.

Several people who left the CPUSA because their views were to the right of the Party's have written histories or autobiographies. Two used in this work are Joseph Starobin's American Communism in Crisis, 1943-1957 and Al Richmond's Long View from the Left. Starobin's book was particularly valuable to our study because he had access to the transcripts of National Committee and other meetings of Party leaders immediately following the Duclos letter of April 1945. Starobin's thesis is that the Party, by foolishly adhering to an internationalist, anti-US imperialist line, assured its doom as an effective organization. Richmond, whose book relates the "atmosphere" of the Party from the 30's through the 50's, also holds a revisionist position, although he does defend some past CP positions that were principled. He upholds Dubcek's Czechoslovakia as a model of "socialism."

Theodore Draper's American Communism and Soviet Russia and The Roots of American Communism are useful sources for anyone interested in the early decades of the CPUSA. They contain much more detail than Foster's history and reflect meticulous research based largely on the press and official documents of the CPUSA and Comintern, government documents, and personal interviews. (Draper himself was once a member of the Party.) Interesting as much of his material is, the reader must beware Draper's anti-communist interpretation of events. For instance, his failure to understand democratic centralism results in a distorted interpretation of the relations between the Comintern and the CPUSA. His hostility to communism is snide and insidious rather than overt but is, nevertheless, clearly discernible.

There is one book which we feel we should mention, even though it was not available when we were doing most of this study. That is Harry Haywood's Black Bolshevik, an autobiography. Haywood left the CPUSA in 1958 because of the Party's growing revisionism, particularly its rejection of the concept of the Black Nation and its right to self-determination. As a history, we found it corroborated much information we had attained and conclusions we had reached. However, we find it strange that Haywood does not mention the fact that he is now part of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), formerly the October League. He may have believed his credibility would have been damaged if that identification were known. Still, this is a valuable book, particularly in regard to understanding the CP's various lines on the struggle of Black people in the U.S. It is one of the few we have seen written by former Communists which is without cynicism and blatant anti-communism.