The truth about Soviet Russia: ... with a preface on the Webbs by Bernard Shaw, and a summary of the constitution and working of 'Soviet communism: a new civilisation' by Beatrice Webb


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Abstract

CONTENTS: The Webbs / by Bernard Shaw. The New Civilisation / by Beatrice Webb. The text of the Soviet constitution or 1936 / translated by Mrs. Anna Louise Strong. Postscript on the rights and basic duties of man as laid down by the constitution of the USSR, 1936 / by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. PUBLISHERS' NOTE: This pamphlet is a summary of the conclusions reached by Sidney and Beatrice Webb as to the internal organisation of the Soviet Union (1941-1942). It is reprinted, with modifications and additions from the Introduction to the reissue (1941) of their book 'Soviet communism: a new civilisation'. -- The article on the Webbs by Bernard Shaw is reprinted from 'Picture post' by permission of the author.

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On the face of it, Shaw’s idolization of Stalin is a great puzzle. The man known around the world by his initials G.B.S. was not just a great playwright; he was arguably the single most influential public intellectual of the first half of the 20th century. But some of the same impulse is still at work: the tendency to fantasize about Russia as the vigorous counterweight to a supposedly decadent West. There is the same impatience with the messiness and inefficiency of democracy, and it leads to the same crush on the strongman leader who can cut through the irrelevant natterings of parliaments and parties. Shaw’s infatuation with Russia became a full-on love affair with a Soviet autocrat, whereas the Trump bromance with President Putin appears unconsummated. George Bernard Shaw, one of the most celebrated playwrights of modern times, did indeed write in many media. However, his own favorite medium, and his most popular, was the stage play. His plays have been converted to musicals, they have been adapted to fit the times, they have simply been performed as intended for the better part of a century. They were a method of showing the mind of one man and many at work. Some names of plays verily leap out when Bernard Shaw is mentioned. Bernard Shaw was also famed for work he did writing essays which could not afford to cover holes with dialogue. He wrote a large portion of the Fabian Essays on Socialism (Shaw, G. B. et al. Fabian Essays, ), as one of many authors writing tracts on the socialist viewpoint and action.