

scene as possible, loses its effectiveness. Many of those stylistic elements, in fact, which contributed to the brilliance of the earlier Salinger stories become nuisances in "Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters." In such a story, for example, as "A Perfect Day for Bananafish," the reader was not informed of any of the characters' feelings; this technique, of course, contributed to the dramatic effect. But in the story under consideration, there is a narrator, Buddy Glass, who was involved in the events being related and from whom the reader can reasonably expect to discover some of his feelings. Salinger apparently recognized this problem, for at several points Buddy interrupts the narration to inform the reader that, although he did have definite feelings about various things, he'd rather not mention them—interjections which mar the narration. Another example is provided by the wealth of details which enrich the earlier works, which are, in fact, the basis of their beauty and power—and which are trivial and unnecessary when Buddy Glass introduces them without any context, as when he mentions the author of a book on birds given to him by a teacher in a study hall, whose full name he also gives. The particularization of everything—and every person—provides the essence of the dramatic impact of Salinger's previous works; it constitutes tediousness in his latest book.

In "Seymour—an Introduction," Salinger does not attempt to construct a dramatic framework. Buddy Glass begins by stating that he intends to offer some "undetailed prefatory remarks" about his deceased brother. It is, by now, no secret that Salinger terms Buddy Glass his *alter ego*. Buddy Glass, in fact, proudly tells the reader that he has previously published one novel, about a boy who leaves prep school, a short story about the suicide of his brother, Seymour, and another story about a mystically oriented lad who predicts his own gruesome death. These obviously refer, respectively, to Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, "A Perfect Day for Bananafish," and "Teddy." Buddy Glass claims that he is a writer, and doubtlessly many of Buddy's attitudes are in fact Salinger's. And we learn a great deal about Buddy Glass's attitudes, for interspersed among his comments on Seymour—comments which are neither interesting nor enlightening—Buddy airs his views, or more properly his complaints. Primarily he dislikes critics: "a peerage of tin ears" he terms them. Such condemnations appear so frequently in the story, that it is difficult not to infer that Salinger was

feebly attempting to protect his work from criticism before the story was published or even written. It is the general reader, too, with whom Buddy is concerned. He is continually informing the reader of his progress on the composition of the "undetailed prefatory remarks"; a paragraph may begin with the statement that there has been a lapse of so many days since the preceding sentence was written. At one particularly boring point Buddy Glass addresses the reader: "Am I being garrulous? Yes. Yes." Dostoevsky's Underground Man is constantly asking the reader such questions too; but the Underground Man's primary characteristic is that he is supremely self-conscious, and it is the self-consciousness of the Dostoevsky character that interests us. Buddy Glass, however, is not an especially interesting individual, nor a supremely self-conscious human being; furthermore, as the title indicates, the story should be concerned with Seymour. "Seymour—an Introduction" is not a story; or if it is, it is so diffused and unstructured that it cannot be a good story. Perhaps Salinger would prefer that it be termed a treatise, but Salinger's talent certainly does not lie here.

J. D. Salinger has already established himself as one of the outstanding writers of the twentieth century. It is to be hoped that the author's future work will prove *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters and Seymour—an Introduction* to be only a temporary aberration in the creative output of a superb writer.

Reviewed by HARVEY PLOTNICK

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### *Gomulka: Myth and Reality*

**Poland 1944-1962. The Sovietization of a Captive People**, by Richard F. Staar. *Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962. xxviii & 300 pp. \$7.50.*

THIS STUDY of contemporary Poland should dispel the illusions fostered by those who have persuaded themselves and are seeking to per-

suaude Americans in general that Gomulka is a Liberal Communist, that he is friendly to the United States, and that his anti-Western utterances are made only out of tactical necessity and therefore not to be taken seriously. Professor Staar has proved beyond any doubt that the sovietizing—or if one prefers, the bolshevizing—of Poland, which began in 1945, has been proceeding as steadily as ever since Gomulka's return to power.

Mr. Staar's approach is analytical rather than historical, although it necessarily includes some historical data, especially in his examination of electoral procedures. His principal concern, however, is with the methods and techniques whereby the sovietization of the Polish state and society has been accomplished. The chief instrument of course is the Communist party—called officially the Polish United Workers' party. The interrelationship of Party and Government is brilliantly analyzed and lucidly explained. The real power rests with the Party. Even though "it is not named in the Polish constitution as the locus of supreme authority," the Party is so in fact, since—to paraphrase a pregnant dictum by one of our own late Supreme Court Justices—the constitution means what the Party says it means, so that every article becomes an implement of Communist domination. This device of constitutional interpretation has been an important element in the sovietizing process.

The Polish constitution, then, is a semantic deception. So is the Polish Workers' party; for as Professor Staar shows, workers constitute less than a fifth of its members. The preponderant element in the Party, or 43.5 per cent of the membership, consists of "intellectuals," but even this term is deceptive, since less than a fourth of those classified as intellectuals have had the benefit of secondary or higher education. From Mr. Staar's analyses it is evident that the Party does not attract many university students and teachers and that its appeal is mainly to the remnant of a poorly educated middle class. There does, however, exist a hard stratum of convinced and dedicated Communists drawn from various elements of the population, and the official biographies of Politburo members show a diversity of social backgrounds.

The book is full of evidence that the notion of "a Polish way to communism" distinct from "the Russian way" is a mischievous delusion. In almost every question of importance the

Soviet influence is overriding; but this is especially true in matters of foreign policy where the Gomulka regime can do nothing without Soviet support, as for example in the Oder-Neisse boundary dispute.

The liberalizing reforms that are supposed to have followed the events of 1956 are mostly imaginary. The collective farms may have disappeared but "agricultural circles" have come to replace them. Poland may accept aid from the United States but Gomulka continues to attack American institutions and American leaders. Professor Staar suggests that the reappearance of former Stalinists in Polish political life should be enough to destroy, once and for all, "the myth of Gomulka as a Polish nationalist first and an international Communist second."

Mr. Staar's method has obvious limitations. The whole field of Communist ideology has been more or less ignored. The difficulties of deviation from the official line might have been illustrated by the cases of Kolakowski and others. One would also like to have found in the book more details about the anti-Church movement, about the relation of the two other licensed parties—Peasant and Democratic—to the Communist party, and about the role of Catholic and other non-Communist deputies in the legislature. And certainly the position of the non-Catholic churches of Poland deserves more than a single sentence of consideration.

Even though Professor Staar has demonstrated that the Communist party, by interpreting the constitution to suit itself, can overcome any obstacle to its aims, his own emphasis throughout is legalistic. In one of his earlier pages he greatly oversimplifies the problem of Poland at the end of the Second World War by asserting that "some Poles fought for the restoration of capitalism." This is hardly correct. What they fought for was not capitalism—a term seldom or never heard during the war—but freedom.

Nevertheless, the book is of exceptional educational value. At a time when so many are looking wistfully for evidences of changed spirit in Soviet communism, or at least for such evidences in Soviet satellite countries, Professor Staar marshals fact after fact to show that the work of reshaping Poland in the Soviet image has not ceased. If these facts can obtain the attention they deserve, we shall have gained a much better understanding of the Soviet Union and its techniques of domination.

Reviewed by JERZEY HAUPTMANN

## *Embattled Establishment*

***The Miseducation of American Teachers***, by James D. Koerner. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963. 360 pp. \$4.95.

AS THE AGENCY for International Development acquires steam its truly extraordinary operations simultaneously become more varied and more specialized.

In Communist Poland, for instance, AID concentrates on the delivery of grain. In regard to India major emphasis has been placed on the provision of facilities for steel production. In the case of Peru it is the promotion and direction of education which is coming to the fore.

Each instance, one must assume, has an underlying if unadmitted reason. Communism has so thoroughly ruined Polish agriculture that Gomulka might be replaced by somebody even worse if we failed to provide him with food-stuffs. But since Communism in general is strengthened by our aid to satellite Poland it becomes logical for us to beef up India's defense potential. The educational direction of Peru, however, would seem to have a more subtle background.

In several other Latin-American countries AID has now for some time been building schools and providing free lunches at the expense of the U.S. taxpayer. But only in Peru, so far, have we openly undertaken to revamp the entire educational system. To accomplish this, AID, in May, awarded a \$1,187,500 contract to Teachers College of Columbia University. This school will provide "advisors" whose function in Peru, according to the official announcement, is to "scrutinize educational content at all levels, starting with teacher education in order to provide more useful preparation for teachers who will fill positions in both rural and urban schools."

For obvious reasons our aid to Poland is not

denounced by wheat farmers, nor that to India by manufacturers of the equipment sent there. Similarly, this novel form of assistance to Peru is not likely to be criticized by any part of that far-flung educational establishment in which Teachers College has always played a significant role. This, in turn, gives additional importance to Dr. James D. Koerner's timely study on *The Miseducation of American Teachers*. For the major target of his criticism is that same "Educational Establishment" now proliferating under the spreading cloak of the Alliance for Progress.

By the "Establishment" Dr. Koerner means the "hierarchy of controls" in our public education, all the ramifications of which tend to support and supplement each other. The U.S. Office of Education, he says, "has acted like an arm of the Establishment within the Federal Government." It is noteworthy that Dr. Sterling M. McMurrin, until recently the head of this office, does not deny the charge in the favorable introduction which he contributes to the Koerner book.

The Establishment is described as knit together and given political effectiveness by the National Education Association, called by Dr. Koerner "one of the largest, if not most effective, lobbies in Washington." More than half of the nation's 1,500,000 public school teachers are NEA members, partly because of the strong pressure to join which is exerted on them. NEA associates are usually to the fore in repudiating any adverse comment made on text books, approved curricula, teaching methods or disciplinary practices.

If a mother plaintively asks "Why Johnny Can't Read" she will probably be told politely by his teacher that this is natural; he has not yet acquired "reading readiness." But if the inquiry is pressed the reaction is also likely to become stiffer and the baffled parent may end up by being thrown into outer darkness as "an enemy of the public schools."

Dr. Koerner's main point, however, is not so much the power of the Establishment but rather the stultifying effect it has exerted on the noble profession of teaching. He examines the deterioration in the teaching of subject matter in favor of "life adjustment" courses and other attempts to give "methodology" a substantial content which it does not and cannot possess. The net result of this "progressive" downgrading of subject matter is a plethora of high school graduates, let alone bored drop-outs, who can