

At the same time, there is little doubt that should the Soviet regime decide to inject the same kind of vigor, energy, and resources into medical as it has into space research, Soviet medical scientists could yet make important qualitative contributions to world medicine. And from the propaganda standpoint alone, what would be more significant and impressive than a Soviet breakthrough in cancer or heart disease?

For the present, Soviet medicine's best medicine would be greater scientific intercourse with the West, expanded personal contacts between Soviet and Western

scientists and physicians, and removal of the barriers to the exchange of medical-scientific personnel. This would imply freedom for Westerners to visit and work in Soviet laboratories, clinics, and hospitals, and the same freedom for Soviet medical scientists to circulate in the West. There is evidence that some progress has been made in this direction since Stalin died, and it can only be hoped that the two-way traffic can be maintained and increased. There may even be a time when books on the achievement of Soviet as against American, Austrian, or Andorran medicine will become superfluous.

Hungarian October Revisited

*The Unexpected Revolution:
Social Forces in the Hungarian Uprising,*
by Paul Kecskemeti.
Stanford University Press, California, 1961.

*Rift and Revolt in Hungary:
Nationalism Versus Communism,*
by Ferenc A. Vali.
Harvard University Press, Cambridge;
University Press, London, 1961.

Reviewed by Paul Ignotus

IT MAY BE BORING to be reminded again and again of the Hungarian Revolution, yet how can one forget it? Indeed, formal reminders—the publication of the books under review coincided roughly with the fifth anniversary of the October revolt—are quite unnecessary since the unexpected uprising in 1956 and the international implications of its initial success and ultimate defeat continue to haunt the Communist rulers as well as those who watch for new “rifts and revolts” in the Communist world.

The Hungarian revolt was an event that was unique in some respects and typical in others; and Mr. Kecskemeti, in his analytical study, is careful to stress its

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distinctive features as well as those which it shared with all mass movements aimed at national independence. In a most enlightening chapter, he draws analogies between the sequence of events in East Germany, Poland, and Hungary during the period starting with Stalin's death and ending symbolically with Imre Nagy's execution. All three countries made noteworthy efforts in the course of those years to rid themselves both of Soviet domination and of Communist party oppression. Of the three attempts only the two which had been initiated by reformers within the Communist party itself (Poland and Hungary) succeeded temporarily. And only in Poland, where qualified Soviet tutelage and Communist party supremacy were eventually accepted by the people, did the insurgents' program escape total defeat.

While it would be mistaken to conclude that no liberation movement in the Communist orbit could ever bring about a change more radical than that envisaged and achieved by Gomulka, it does seem clear that, ruling out war, no significant reform can be accomplished unless it is sponsored by political elements which are close to the broad masses of the population as well as to what Mr. Kecskemeti calls the “elite”—in short, that a significant segment of the party leadership, and especially the Communist intellectuals, must spearhead the movement. In Hungary, says Mr. Kecskemeti,

There were two separate processes contributing to political instability before the revolution, one confined to strata

within, or close to, the center of the Communist power apparatus itself, the other spreading throughout the broad anonymous masses. . . . The elite process was a gradual one. It manifested itself in various ways ranging from personal and clique rivalries (found at all times in all Communist parties) to violent purges and their repercussions, and novel, exceptional forms of defiance from within the apparatus. . . . The mass process took a discontinuous, jerky course: a long period of incubation, during which popular bitterness found practically no overt, public expression and was subdued even in its private manifestations, gave way abruptly to a period of total insubordination.

This is why, in the author's words, "the Communist regime would have been eliminated for good if it had not been for Soviet military intervention."

The revolution could be defeated, but not lived down. It was an event unprecedented in Communist experience, and its triumph lay in the paradoxical nature of its origins: the protagonists of the revolt represented the moral elite of the ruling Communist party, while the most active mass support came from the industrial workers of equally Marxist (mainly Social Democratic) traditions who turned the classical proletarian weapon of class warfare, the general strike, against those who pretended to rule in the name of the working class. Hungary in 1956 revealed what deep contradictions there can be under Communist rule between the interests of the working class and Marxist intellectuals on the one hand, and the Communist Party, which purports to act as their *porte-parole*, on the other. Mr. Kecskemeti can indeed safely assume that "this discrepancy between the key symbols defining the party's mission and the available possibilities for practical developmental work is bound to lead to political frustrations and conflicts."

IN HIS BOOK *Rift and Revolt in Hungary*, Professor Vali makes a scholarly attempt to follow up the conflicts in that country step by step, from the establishment of Soviet power after the German defeat until its second consolidation after the Hungarian defeat. The volume of documentary evidence he uses is enormous, and a lifetime would not be enough to check on the accuracy of every statement he chooses to rely upon. In view of the recent flood of publications on Hungary, Mr. Vali's difficulty must have consisted in selecting his sources rather than in finding them, and his determination to be as thorough and impartial as possible cannot fail to disarm even a critical reader.

Yet the overabundance of materials did not help him to elucidate the factual background of all relevant events. The Stalinist "liquidations," in particular, are still as unexplained in their details as they are clear in

their tendencies, methods, and results. We know that Rakosi, the Hungarian "Stalin," assisted by Gabor Peter, the Hungarian "Beria," liquidated Rajk as the Hungarian "Tito," and later Kadar, known today as the Hungarian "Khrushchev"; we also know that as late as 1952, still in Stalin's lifetime, Rakosi reorganized his own set of "Berias" and liquidated "Gabor Peter and his gang." All this fitted in perfectly with the style of those years, and with Rakosi's character. But as to the reason why he picked on one comrade rather than another at any particular moment, we still depend on conjecture and hearsay for an explanation. Not all statements in every eye-witness report can be equally true. (As to facts that can be checked, incidentally, Professor Vali errs when he states that prison sentences of "between two and four years" were passed on writers after the revolution [p. 441]. Actually, Tibor Dery was sentenced to nine years, and Gyula Hay to six.)

Rift and Revolt in Hungary, detailed as it is, is not meant to be a comprehensive account of postwar Hungarian history (though a chronological table would have been helpful). The author deliberately concentrates on what he judges to be the main areas of conflict, and he quite rightly devotes much space to a discussion of what Mr. Kecskemeti has called the "elite process." In particular, Professor Vali stresses the difficulties of the revisionists who sought to lead a reform movement without breaking openly with the party:

This fighting the party "from within" had its disadvantages. . . . It was not easy to convey to out-and-out opponents of the system the expediency of resorting to the devious tactics of concealed opposition cloaked in Communist ideological terms. Unsophisticated elements—out-right enemies of the Communist system—were often reluctant to join writers and students who, compelled to fight on ideological ground, were outwardly professing loyalty to the regime itself.

Here it might be added that not all the revisionists who expressed themselves in the Communist idiom did so disingenuously. Some truly did believe in the political establishment of "pure" Marxism-Leninism; others, however, had clearly come to the conclusion that their whole ideological edifice would have to be pulled down together with the Stalin statue; and most of them avoided the problem by demanding first of all democratization and national independence, and leaving further decisions to the future. Indeed, it was this order of priorities that united, at the peak of the Hungarian drama, the revolutionary Communists and the non-Communist bulk of the nation.

Only a massive outside intervention could defeat a people thus united in revolution, and Professor Vali,

without national self-pity and overdramatization, goes on to show how Western indecision helped the Kremlin to overcome its own early hesitation, reenter Hungary with superior force, and crush the revolt.

THE MOST DEBATABLE part of the book is the final chapter, entitled "Nationalism *versus* Communism," where Professor Vali propounds the view that the Hungarian uprising of 1956 was a nationalist revolution *par excellence*. This conclusion is not borne out either by the rich factual material included in the work itself or by other available evidence. The author may indeed be right in saying that "the most powerful motivation leading to a rift within the Communist Party of Hungary was a conscious or unconscious national sentiment . . . [which] hopelessly divided a narrow Communist leadership from the rest of the population." But national sentiment is one thing, and nationalism as an ideology another.

To some extent Professor Vali appears to be aware of the importance of this distinction. "The global competing ideologies, communism and nationalism," he writes, "differ so basically that we might well consider it

nothing more than a convenience to use the same term—'ideology'—for both of them. If so, it would seem rather misleading to accept the convenience. Nationalist ideologies do, of course, have an existence in history, and they played a decisive part in the moulding of the political, economic and intellectual life of pre-1945 Hungary. But as can be seen from Professor Vali's narrative, they had virtually no role either in bringing about the 1956 revolution or in nourishing its spirit for months after the Soviet reoccupation. National sentiment, on the other hand—or patriotism, as I should prefer to call it—was one of its dominant features all along.

This is why the difference between national sentiment and nationalism as an ideology must be of more than academic interest to anyone reexamining the Hungarian October. It should be kept equally firmly in view by those who study nationalist trends in the underdeveloped countries, to which Professor Vali also devotes a subchapter. While this again is a phenomenon of a somewhat different character, the similarities are sufficiently important to justify Mr. Vali's emphasis on the real kinship between the newly-emerging countries of Asia and Africa and the peoples of East Central Europe.

French Studies of the USSR

Le Gouvernement de l'U.R.S.S.,
by Michel Mouskhely and Zygmunt Jedryka.
Presses Universitaires de France,
Paris, 1961.

Les Paysans soviétiques,
by Jean Chombart de Lauwe.
Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1961.

Reviewed by Henri Chambre

IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, the body of French-language studies devoted to the examination and analysis of the Soviet system has been enriched by several works of value.

Among them is the study of Soviet government written by Michel Mouskhely, Professor of Law and

*La Nouvelle Orientation du commerce
extérieure soviétique,*
by Louis Kawan.
National Center for Research on Communist Countries,
Brussels, 1958.

*Aspects juridiques du commerce
avec les pays d'économie planifiée,*
compiled by René David.
Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence,
Paris, 1961.

Director of the Center for Research on the USSR at the University of Strasbourg, in collaboration with Zygmunt Jedryka, Research Associate at the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris. Its appearance last year was an important event for French readers interested in Soviet affairs since there had hitherto been