

A Movement in Transition

WILLIAM E. GRIFFITH, ED: *Communism in Europe: Continuity, Change, and the Sino-Soviet Dispute*. Vol. II.
Cambridge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1966.
FRANK O'BRIEN: *Crisis in World Communism*.
New York, Free Press, 1965.

Reviewed by Bernard S. Morris

THE MASSACHUSETTS Institute of Technology has published the second in a series of at least four projected volumes on European communism. The first volume included studies of the Yugoslav, Polish, Hungarian and Italian Communist Parties: roughly speaking, the "revisionists." This was to be followed by a second volume on the "dogmatist" parties. However, the scheme has been abandoned because the progressive differentiation in European communism has rendered the categories "increasingly unuseful." Instead, Volume II is made up essentially of three monographs: the first on East Germany, by Carola Stern, Ulbricht's biographer; the second on Czechoslovakia, by Zdenek Elias and Jaromir Netik; and the third on the Nordic countries—Sweden, Norway and Finland—by Åke Sparring, Jahn Otto Johanson, and Bengt Matti, respectively. All the contributors to both volumes are European authorities on their respective subjects, and were chosen, perhaps, to counteract what Professor Griffith deems the "overly bland" American scholarship on communism. With certain variations, the country-by-country studies follow a similar pattern: developments that have taken place in the wake of destalinization and the Sino-Soviet conflict are set forth against the background of the history and political development of the parties. The studies concentrate on internal

party developments which illustrate the idiosyncratic behavior of the respective parties—truly different roads to or away from socialism.

I shall forego comment on the studies of the Nordic parties translated from the Norwegian *Kommunismen i Norden og krisen i den kommunistiske bevegelse* (Oslo: Dreyers Forlag, 1965) and reviewed by Professor Robert V. Daniels in *Problems of Communism* (July-August 1966, pp. 64-65). I would only like to add that it is a pity that the Danish Communist Party could not have been included for purposes of comparison since it was the first of the Scandinavian parties to show its independence from Moscow. The Danish party chairman, Axel Larsen, it will be recalled, rebelled against Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolution and was expelled from the party in 1958; he went on to found a new Socialist People's Party which, as Professor Daniels points out, ran away with most of the Communists' share of the vote in the 1960 parliamentary elections. Although the pace of destalinization in the Scandinavian countries has differed, with the Norwegian party lagging behind, the authors of these chapters seem to feel that the Communist parties are in the process of transformation. Thus, Mr. Sparring writes that while the Swedish party has not officially retracted its Communist ideology, it is "... obviously mov-

ing toward an acceptance of parliamentary democracy and an assertion of its independence from Moscow" (p. 319).

IN THE DETAILED discussion of the East German and Czechoslovak parties, one of the most interesting hypotheses is Miss Stern's contention that the tardy onset of destalinization in East Germany in mid-1962 was due to Ulbricht's insistence that destalinization in East Germany was possible only under two conditions: the completion of socialization and the solution of the escapee problem. Singling out the significant developments in the Czechoslovak party, the two authors assert that the "new economic model" is ". . . perhaps the first real contribution of Czechoslovak communism to the annals of the era," containing a ". . . number of elements that are a far cry from traditional Marxist-Leninist economic doctrine" (p. 271). The idea of a market economy, the newly-found respect for the laws of supply and demand, the relative downgrading of central planning, and other developments are cited as clear signs of a radical break with the dogmatist past.

The least satisfactory aspect of these volumes is the introduction. Professor Griffith himself stated that the analytical categories he used in his introductory chapter in Volume I have not been used in Volume II and, in fact, have been discarded because of developments in European communism. The original attempt was to characterize parties by domestic policies and their attitudes toward the West and the Sino-Soviet rift (Vol. I, p. 3). The disparate nature of the parties under study in Volume II makes it difficult to generalize, and I suspect that Professor Griffith's *tour d'horizon* of European communism beyond the parties studied will again be outstripped by events. The introductory chapters are too ephemeral for what is turning into, if it was not planned to be, a substantial multivolume reference. Nonetheless, *Communism in Europe* is valuable background for students and deserves the attention of those involved in the study of international communism.

THE TITLE OF Mr. Frank O'Brien's book, *Crisis in World Communism*, may be misleading. The book, which was written for the Committee for Economic Development, is not concerned with the

Sino-Soviet dispute or other evidence of fragmentation in the international Communist movement. Rather, it has to do with how Khrushchev's successors are seeking to make a "Marxist" society efficient; hence the subtitle, "Marxism in Search of Efficiency." The successors are experiencing a crisis because ". . . Soviet Russia is in fact engaged in an attempt to gain world primacy by substituting Russian Marxism for competitive self-government and for the competitive, free-enterprise economic system" (p. 13), and is having trouble accomplishing this.

In positioning this Soviet goal, Mr. O'Brien takes seriously Soviet official pronouncements, plans and programs, with the assertion that it is only reasonable and prudent to do so. Peaceful coexistence to him, then, is merely a Soviet tactic to promote class struggle and eventually to draw the people of the world over to the side of socialism. However, after examining Soviet internal and external economic policy, the author concludes that Russia does not have much chance of achieving its goals provided the United States and others in the free world remain reasonably well united and conduct themselves with reasonable care:

. . . Russia does not have much practical chance of converting her high-flown intention into fact, now or in the future. But it is assumed that Russia would carry out her I-will-bury-you aims if she could, and that she will at any time go as far toward carrying them out as she can with safety (p. 17).

To this reviewer, who does not share Mr. O'Brien's assumptions, this book is pointless except as an exercise in unenlightened anti-communism. Despite the author's intention to exhort us to "Keep up our guard," the evidence produced shows that the Russians are no match for the United States economically, and that the danger of being "buried" simply does not exist. To argue that the USSR would-if-it-could-but-it-can't is paradoxically reassuring: the Russians must know as well as Mr. O'Brien that they can't. In fact they know this so well that they have for years been seeking certain limited accommodations with the United States. This, not the promotion of class struggle, has been a most visible aspect of Soviet policy. If I were in business, I would be encouraged by Mr. O'Brien's book to trade with the Communists, having been assured that no harm would come to my country while I made a few dollars, and that I might even be undermining their "Marxist" system.

From Marx to Mao

- DONALD G. GILLIN: *Warlord. Yen Hsi-shan in Shansi Province, 1911-1949.*
Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966.
- MAURICE MEISNER: *Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism.*
Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1967.
- SHANTI SWARUP: *A Study of the Chinese Communist Movement, 1927-1934.*
London, Oxford University Press, 1966.
- JOHN E. RUE: *Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 1927-1935.*
Stanford, Hoover Institution, 1966.

Reviewed by G. F. Hudson

IT MAY SEEM STRANGE to include in a list of four books, three of which deal with Chinese communism, a biography of an army general who was "warlord" of Shansi Province from 1911 to 1949. Nevertheless, Mr. Gillin's excellent study of the career of Yen Hsi-shan provides us not merely with an interesting case history of a prominent figure of the society within which the Communist revolution took place, but also with some remarkable anticipations of certain features of the Communist regime itself.

It is a mistake to imagine the "warlords" to have been all of one type. What they all had in common was that they were military men who broke up the unity of the Chinese state with their provincial armed forces, but they differed widely in temperament and ambition. While some of them had no purpose beyond enjoying the fortunes which their power enabled them to accumulate, there were others who, without qualifying for the title of revolutionaries, were strongly affected by the spirit of Chinese nationalism and felt themselves sincerely devoted to the regeneration of their much-afflicted country. One of the latter kind was Yen Hsi-shan, who believed that he had a mission to strengthen China by building up modern state-owned industries in his own province of

Shansi, and who, though not a Communist, regarded the Soviet Union, with its planned economy, as the model for China to follow on the path to industrialization.

Born into a minor mercantile family in a village of northeastern Shansi in 1883, Yen was sent to the National Military College in Taiyuan to be trained for an army career, and he later completed his military education in Japan. There he was overcome with envious admiration for Japanese power and modernity as compared with the weakness and backwardness of his own country in the last years of the Ch'ing dynasty, and he attributed Japan's success to the power of the Japanese army and the popular support it had had in building national strength. A visit to Korea, on the other hand, convinced him that "nothing is more terrible than the loss of one's country." His political creed was summed up in the formula: "To protect the nation, the army is needed; to prepare to fight, wealth is needed." After the collapse of the dictatorship of Yuan Shih-k'ai in 1916, Yen became the virtually independent ruler of Shansi and thus had the chance to put his ideas into practice. He achieved considerable success in the creation of "wealth" in the province, not through the encouragement of private enterprise but through the introduction of