

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Hoffman, G. W., and Fred W. Neal, *Yugoslavia and the New Communism*. New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1962, 546 pp.

Proponents of geographical determinism—of geopolitics—would ascribe Yugoslavia's particular political position in the world today to the *genius loci*, to the particular geographical location of Yugoslavia in relation to "the powers that be" in West and East. Yet it is to the complex interaction of the respective political wills exerted from these two great power centers as well as to the shrewd political will emanating from Belgrade that the present position of Yugoslavia in world politics can be ascribed. This particular position was rather crudely expressed in the agreement between Churchill and Stalin, reached in the Kremlin on October 9, 1944, when these two great statesmen agreed on a 50/50 arrangement of the vaguest of characters both as to nature and duration with regard to Yugoslavia. Although Tito and his partisan comrades strongly resented at the time the application of any spheres of influence agreement with regard to their country—as witness the Yugoslav leader's speech at Lubiana on May 28, 1945 ("We do not want to get involved in spheres of influence," Tito said on that occasion. "Never again will we be dependent on anybody")—yet the fact remains that Yugoslavia's position today can be roughly described as about 50/50 between East and West, with the scales tilting somewhat to the East—especially if Alexander Ranković, Tito's reputed heir apparent, should come into power after Tito's inevitable decease. In the above-mentioned quotation, Tito might have formulated the last sentence as: "Never again will we be dependent on anybody *exclusively*." For, within the almost two decades that elapsed since 1944, Yugoslavia successfully avoided membership in either NATO or the Warsaw Pact, and (although through the Balkan Pact of 1954 it came close to acquiring a link with NATO), the Yugoslav adaptation of Marxism-Leninism to Yugoslavia's "realities" has been very substantially promoted by Western aid—economic as well as military—to the tune of \$2.465 million between 1950 and 1959. The Yugoslav system is somewhere between totalitarianism of the Soviet type and Western political socialist democracy, and Yugoslav economics, as the authors of this book point out, partake of Keynesianism, not just of Marxism or Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism. What exactly this system is, and how it came about that the object of the Churchill-Stalin agreement of 1944 became a subject playing its own variation on their crude percentages scheme, this is the substance of the massive book under review.

Parts I, II, and III (pp. 3-151) of this study, respectively headed "The Land of the South Slavs," "Yugoslav Communism-Soviet

Style," and "The Emergence of Titoism," present the historical background of the still fluctuating Yugoslav form of communism, as it appeared before the adoption of the new Constitution of 1963 and the name-change from "Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia" to "Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia." A very detailed description of this evolving form of communism follows in Part IV (pp. 155-413), entitled "Titoism as a System." Parts V and VI (pp. 417-505), bring the book to a conclusion. Respective headings: "The Impact of Titoism" (with a section of disproportionate length on "effects" in Poland) and "Problems of Titoism." The whole opus concerning modern Yugoslavia, with which the twentieth Century Fund had not dealt in its monumental *Europe's Needs and Resources* (1961) is embellished by plenty of tables, maps, and graphs.

The introductory, historical, parts of this study, especially the treatment of the period before 1945, suffers somewhat not only from the inevitably shorthand character they possess, but also from certain avoidable shortcomings, some of which seem due to the authors' uncritical reliance on contemporary Yugoslav sources, while others stem from the somewhat artificial isolation of Yugoslav developments from the international setting. Here are a few of these shortcomings, in this reviewer's view:

1. The uncritical reproduction from a Prentice-Hall Atlas map, on pp. 70-71, showing the political divisions in the Balkans around 1350, in which Constantinople and Thrace are placed under the rubric "Latin Empire," whereas the "city" had been recovered by the Byzantines since 1261.

2. In part II, no mention is made either of the Big Three decision at the Tehran Conference (November 28-December 1, 1943) to give full support to Tito and his partisans—a move initiated by Roosevelt but approved of by Churchill—or of a turning point in Tito's relations with the West—from Britain, his principal material supporter—when he "levanted," as Churchill puts it, from island of Vis in September 1944 and, after a short stop at General Feodor Tolbukhin's headquarters at Krajova, flew to Moscow.

3. Also not mentioned are Tito's menacing moves toward Trieste in May 1945 which triggered President Truman's—and America's—first intervention in Balkan affairs.

4. Other omissions or shortcomings: no mention of Yugoslav claims to Greece ("Aegean") Macedonia, put forward in 1945 and then, at the Paris Peace Conference (by Mosa Pijade) in 1946. In this connection, the authors, like official Yugoslav writers, gloss over the Yugoslav role in fomenting and providing material and moral support to the communist led guerrillas active in Greece between 1946 and 1949. Moreover, on pp. 101-102 they write that in Greece "the monarchical government [was] re-established by the British"—which is nonsense, because everybody knows that the King was recalled to Greece by a plebiscite held on September 1, 1946. Somewhat of an

inaccuracy, too, is the authors' statement on p. 102 that Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria did not permit the UN Security Council's Commission to Investigate the Greek Frontier Incidents to work inside their border. Albeit for the briefest of sessions, this Commission did hold meetings in Belgrade and Sofia, not Tirana, early in 1947. Also not mentioned is the fact, revealed by Milovan Djilas in his *Conversations with Stalin* (p. 127) that Yugoslavia and the USSR were the only states in eastern Europe that opposed *ab initio* participation in the Marshall Plan—Yugoslavia largely out of dogmatism. Indeed, a glance at the index of the reviewed book reveals that no reference at all is made to the Marshall plan and only one to the "Truman Doctrine," both of which, whether Yugoslav officials wish to admit it or not, cannot but have exerted a tremendous influence in shaping Tito's attitude of independence *vis à vis* Stalin in 1948. In a sense, the granting of U.S. aid to Yugoslavia from 1950 on was an expansion of both the "Doctrine" of furnishing support to states wishing to maintain their independence (against the USSR) and of the Marshall plan, the "Doctrine's" offspring. And, this aid, or expectations thereof, brought about certain changes in Yugoslavia's political system, as it did in Turkey. Another omission, finally: no mention is made of the temporary resurgence of Pan-Slavism toward the end of World War II—an outstanding example of which was the Pan-Slavic Congress held in Belgrade in winter 1946.

In part IV of this book—its core—Titoism as a system is examined in nine separate chapters. Four of these deal respectively with the system's theoretical base, the League of Communists, the institutional—or governmental—framework, and the decentralized economic system. Four other chapters, cover Yugoslav agriculture, industry, foreign economic relations, and the standard of living. The ninth chapter in this part is entitled "Totalitarianism and Democracy."

Well depicted is the theoretical divergence of the Yugoslav from the Soviet theory—and practice. From the antihegemonial concept of "independent paths to socialism" other divergences followed, as well as devastating criticism of Soviet communist theory. In its extreme form, this criticism turned even against Yugoslav theory and practice, as witness Djilas's *New Class*. These divergences that led to Soviet and Chinese charges of "revisionism" include a new attitude concerning the nature of capitalism; the discovery of "contradictions" even in "socialism," not only in capitalism; the proposition that a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism is possible; the belief in the absence of a fundamental conflict between capitalism and socialism—which permits Yugoslav opposition both to NATO and the Warsaw Pact; the rejection of the Leninist theory of just and unjust wars; the view that a state is not really socialist unless it is in the process of "withering away"—in opposition to Stalin's dialectics to the effect that it is necessary for the state to become stronger, in order to be able to create the conditions under which it can ultimately "wither away;"

the concept of "socialist property" which dares oppose itself to Soviet state capitalism and to Soviet statism and finds its concrete expression in the workers' councils in the factories; the idea, finally, that even the Communist Party will eventually wither away, although in the interim—echoes here of the Stalinist dialectics?—it must become stronger.

Whereas in the Soviet totalitarian and hierarchical system it is the Soviets—emasculated relics of the February Revolution of 1917—which are utilized to radiate throughout the politicized society the all-prevailing power of the communist core, in the Yugoslav system, after the Stalin-Tito break, this auxiliary radiating function is performed by the organization called the Socialist Alliance, the membership of which is larger than that of the Communist League and which is dominated by the League for all practical purposes and works according to policies laid down by the League. The chapter devoted to the League of Communists describes this rather "muddy" relationship. It also recounts the fluctuations between relaxation and tightening within the ranks of the communist ruling class and the corresponding organizational measures, such as the setting up in 1956—after the episode of Djilas who went as far as to advocate in print the abolition of the Communist League—of party aktivs reminiscent of the Soviet model in all government departments and bodies, at all levels, as well as in commercial offices, professional groups and even organizations with an already existing Socialist Alliance organization, or the measures taken in 1958 by the Seventh Congress of the Communist League (whose program was assailed by the USSR communists).

The divergences from the Soviet model are far more striking, of course, in other institutional aspects of the Yugoslav system which are described in subsequent chapters. Yugoslav federalism, unlike the Soviet prototype, has rejected the purely theoretical and propagandistic Soviet concept of freedom of the constituent republics to secede—perhaps in an effort to strengthen the cohesion of the multinational Yugoslav state. Moreover, in an institutionalization of what in the West are termed pressure groups, workers' representation has been introduced in government through the Council of Producers which, together with the Federal Council, makes up the bicameral Skupstina or Federal Assembly. Furthermore, a decentralized system of government has been established, the basic feature and real strength of which resides in the fact that the local government units—the communes and districts—enjoy a degree of autonomy that includes even the power of taxation for dealing (in co-operation with citizens' councils) with local matters, somewhat along the lines followed in the United States, albeit within certain limits set down by laws issued from the center. This measure of self-government, which contrasts sharply with the fiscal impotence of the Soviet Union's soviets and territorial units, is theoretically justified on the basis of the Marxist concept of the eventual "withering away" of the state, even though in practice it occasionally gives rise to manifestations of localism which the center seeks to keep in check.

The chapters analysing economic affairs give due emphasis to two outstanding features of the Yugoslav system: the non-collectivization of agriculture, and workers' control of enterprises. In theory at least, economic enterprises are free and autonomous units subject only to supervision by local government and to indirect federal and republic controls. They are operated by the workers' councils—which Khrushchev in his recent visit to Yugoslavia suddenly decided to praise. Recentralizing and totalitarian counterweights: self-governing industrial associations and chambers—set up in 1954—and, especially, the party-controlled trade unions which, as in the USSR, serve less the interests of the workers than the "national interest," i. e. the interest of the Communist League.

These chapters, naturally, abound in statistics, most of which, as the authors note in their preface, are taken from Yugoslav sources—which frequently conflict. These difficulties inhere in the subject and the authors are hardly to blame. They might have emphasized, however, in the text, not just in notes, the important fact that the Yugoslav method of estimating Gross National Product and national income differs from western practice and follows the Soviet model—thus placing certain obstacles in the way of comparing these figures with those of other countries. Their book, in this connection, might have gained in meaningfulness had statistics from neighboring countries, such as Hungary and Bulgaria (which use similar statistical methods) been presented for purposes of comparison, and had an effort been made to present similar statistics from non-Soviet bloc countries, such as Italy and Greece, for similar purposes, especially in matters such as GNP growth and standards of living.

The criterion chosen by the authors in their appraisal of the Yugoslav system clearly emerges from their chapter on "Totalitarianism and Democracy," in which they analyse "socialist legality" and human rights in Titoism. Neither absolute nor Western standards are used here for evaluating and judging developments—liberalizing phenomena—in these sectors, but comparisons are made with the situation in Yugoslavia itself prior to its expulsion and detachment from the Soviet bloc as well as with conditions in other communist countries. This makes possible and immanent and sympathetic critique, the maintenance of a scholarly tone, and the avoidance of polemics. On occasion, however, the tone reaches perilously the point of an apologia, at least in the view of this reader. But scholars, too, when writing about the contemporary scene, having as they do a vested interest in the subject of their study, may be reluctant, like journalists, to alienate themselves from their sources of information. Theirs is a delicate task of maintaining a balance between their own values and those of their own society, and the values of the society which is the object of their study.

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