

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Milovan Djilas, *The Unperfect Society, Beyond The New Class*. Translated by Dorian Cooke. Harcourt, Brace & World, New York, 1969. Pp. 267.

Nenad D. Popović, *Yugoslavia, The New Class in Crisis*. Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, 1968. Pp. 240.

Paul Shoup, *Communism and The Yugoslav National Question*. Columbia University Press, New York, 1968. Pp. 308.

Once again the attention of the scholarly world is focused on a variety of Yugoslav problems. Since Yugoslavia was expelled by Stalin from the Soviet fold, in 1948, scholars have never ceased to follow with great interest Yugoslav girations. Both the West and the East have followed with growing interest Yugoslav efforts to develop its own brand of Communism and scholars have contributed a number of meaningful interpretations of Yugoslav internal developments.

The early fear that Tito's break with Moscow would lead to Soviet intervention, gradually waned. Stalin's death in 1953 and the consequent changes in the Soviet leadership reinforced Tito's authority in Yugoslavia, and made him irreplaceable. At the present time, Yugoslavia's future seems to be more linked to Tito's own person than to the fortunes of the Yugoslav Communist Party. While younger leaders have been given greater responsibility as a result of the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party early in 1969, Tito despite his advanced age (he is 77) continues to exercise supreme power in Yugoslavia. However, this fact has not eliminated a number of grave problems that have afflicted Yugoslavia since its establishment more than fifty years ago. On the contrary, the basic problem of national unity remains unresolved and still awaits solution in one way or another.

The problems that endanger the very existence of Yugoslavia are not primarily of a structural but of national character. The basic aspect of the Yugoslav national crisis is not whether the Communist Party has succeeded through its interpretation of socialism to develop a new more equal society. The fundamental problem is that the Com-

munist leadership has failed to unite a multinational country through rational integration.

It seems that this complex problem still remains — fifty years after the creation of Yugoslavia — mostly unsolved. Though in historical perspective, Tito and his Party undertook to unite a badly divided country after a period of cruel civil war, they are now, after more than a quarter century of Communist rule, compelled to recognize that the national issue rather than the correct interpretation of Marxism, remains the Achilles heel of the Yugoslav state structure. The question of the proper Marxist structuralization of a Communist state seems a lesser and far easier problem to resolve than the crucial national issue. The failure of the Yugoslav Marxists to resolve through their own interpretations the national contradictions in a multinational state and establish peaceful coexistence between the nations and nationalities of Yugoslavia, has become their major admitted preoccupation.

While the prewar ruling classes sought to deny the existence of the problem, the present Communist leadership has from the very beginning conceded in theory and partly in practice as well the existence of national conflicts, but it argued that only Marxism could resolve the thorny national conflicts and contradictions not only in Yugoslavia but in South East Asia as a whole. Today, however, they find themselves face to face with an increasingly grave problem that they seem unable to either resolve or to make disappear.

Next to the issue of national conflicts, the gravest problem afflicting Communist Yugoslavia is that inherent to the inner nature of the "New Class," which Milovan Djilas first brought to world attention in the Fifties. The crisis of the New Class has now assumed critical proportions not only in Yugoslavia but everywhere in the Communist world, and what is even more surprising it appears that all Communist establishments have realized that in order to maintain their power they had to violate their dogmas and abuse power in relations with their own parties, which find themselves in growing crisis and disarray.

These general comments seemed necessary in order to place into proper perspective the three books under review. They are Milovan Djilas, *The Unperfect Society, Beyond The New Class* (New York, 1969), Nenad Popović's *Yugoslavia, The New Class in Crisis* (Syracuse, 1968), and Paul Shoup's *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question* (New York, 1968). All three deal with the crisis of Communism as an ideology and as a political and economic system, aggravated by an over-

whelming national question. These broader issues affecting all Communist societies to a greater or lesser extent are examined in the three books under review mainly in the Yugoslav context.

In *The Unperfect Society—Beyond the New Class*, Milovan Djilas, who broke with the Communist leadership in 1953, continues his earlier analysis (in *The New Class*) of Marxism, Leninism and Stalinism, and has now included comments on Maoism as well. Djilas has had opportunity to subject his experience as a top Communist leader to intensive rethinking during his more than nine years of imprisonment, some of them in solitary confinement. Djilas asserts that the perfect society that Marxist theory claimed would be produced through total revolution has vanished in thought and in practice. "The society that has arisen as the result of Communist revolutions, or as a result of the military actions of the Soviet Union, is torn by the same sort of contradictions as are other societies." "Human brotherhood and equality," that Marxists believe can only be realized in a Communist society is denied by the party bureaucracy, that "arises as a privileged social stratum," which Djilas "in accord with Marxist thinking," calls the New Class. Djilas says that when he wrote *The New Class* he was not aware that the term had already been used by N. J. Bukharin, Bertrand Russell and N.A. Berdyaev. Djilas could have also added the anarchist Michael Bakunin who in his polemics prophesized that the New Class would arise from Marx's concepts of the new society.

The first and most substantial part of Djilas' new book, titled "The Twilight of the Ideologies" examines the Communist thesis that Marxist ideology has to a large extent been realized in existing Communist societies. Stalinism, according to Djilas, is only the last phase in the process of degeneration of the Marxist ideology; but Leninism and Marxism are tainted by the same original weakness, that of alienating the human person from his substance. Communism as it has been realized in the Soviet Union and later in other Communist states has shown itself unable to realize man's principal objective which is the establishment of Heaven on earth. In addition, "Marxism as a comprehensive view of the world, as an ideology, has proved incapable of and unnameable to engaging in open and free coexistence with other ideologies and systems." Going further in his analysis, Djilas points out that Marxist ideology finds itself increasingly in conflict with advances in modern science, such as Einstein's theory of relativity, and other developments. This shows that Marxism is an outdated doctrine that has been out-

paced by contemporary scientific and social developments. In short, Djilas puts it, historical materialism and the dialectic have become "symbols of faith, not philosophical or scientific truths."

Djilas considers the Marxist dogma that economic forces determine the political and social forms of society as unscientific and contrary to reality. He has now become convinced that private property and individual ownership are basic ingredients of man's individual freedom and creative expansion.

In Djilas' view, "Communism" as a unified body of belief and a coherent approach towards objective reality "no longer exists." What does exist is "only national Communism" or Communist theory and practice within a national context. The difference between, for example, Soviet and Yugoslav Communism lies in this: "Soviet Communism has become the mainstay of conservative Communist forces at home and abroad, while Yugoslav Communism is a model of the weakness and disintegration of Communism, both in theory and practice, and at the same time is a model for national Communism and a hope for democratic transformation."

The merit of *Yugoslavia: The New Class in Crisis* by Nenad D. Popović, a former official of the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, who is currently a visiting professor of the Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, lies in the fact that it contributes to a fuller understanding of the Communist New Class. The author was himself a Communist and a member of the New Class and so is able to draw on his personal experiences in the Communist Party and Government apparatus to corroborate Djilas' general thesis with specific facts and examples. Though Djilas has gone beyond the analysis of the New Class in his new book, and has now reached the general conclusion that Marxism cannot develop a perfect society, Popović's work has considerable value in itself. The author gives a detailed study of the metamorphosis of the Communist dogma which cannot be changed or liberalized as it is so often repeated by various authors on the subject. The New Class is determined to retain power indefinitely; as a result, the permanent dictatorship transforms the ideal of a permanent revolution into an unlimited and all pervading tyranny to which the members of the New Class yield in their own interest.

Mr. Popović stresses the role that mainly Marxist pre-war Yugoslav intelligentsia played in bringing about the triumph of Communism in their own country. Yugoslavia was an underdeveloped, backward and

predominantly agricultural society. It was ravaged by war. These circumstances gave the Marxist intelligentsia the opportunity to experiment with abstract Marxist theories in trying to solve the complex economic, social and national problems in a greater variety of different, and indeed contradictory ways. In the end they have failed, but in the process of constant experimentation that have totally disillusioned the masses of the people, and have rendered a great number completely apathetic.

Thus, while the Communists have industrialized Yugoslavia a large segment of the population has not participated in the promised material betterment. About half a million Yugoslavs have been compelled to emigrate abroad, mostly to the capitalist countries of Western Europe, to find employment which the perennial internal Yugoslav crisis has denied them. The process of modernization has created a vast *lumpenproletariat* to which the New Class cannot offer jobs. On the other hand Communist state capitalism has enriched the New Class beyond the fondest dreams of any pre-war ruling class.

Mr. Popović describes in detail the strange ways in which the New Class lives, how it acts and monopolizes power without giving an opportunity to the masses to participate in the benefits of the new society. The party establishment which controls all the levers of power, has become increasingly inflexible and stubbornly refuses to establish any meaningful dialogue with the broad strata of the population.

In this respect, the Yugoslav Communist establishment is no different from the Soviet and other power-holding establishments. The bureaucratic class and the technocrats continue to keep all power highly concentrated at the center and do not permit even a mild opposition to exist. One learns from Djilas that when in 1953 he began advocating the curtailment of the Party's absolute power he was compelled to recant. Eventually, to save his conscience, he suffered imprisonment. This in turn led to his final intellectual break with the Party which he now considers as a force noxious to society.

The author of *The New Class in Crisis* confirms the present Djilas' assertion that the Party has lost its appeal for the younger generation, who has different visions and aspirations for the future. The crisis of Communist society has become a permanent one. The profound political and national crisis is kept in check only by Tito's unique political genius, without which the entire edifice would fall apart. All the reforms—including the 1965 economic reform—and the workers coun-

cils have not succeeded in creating a prosperous society based on equality. Though Tito has reduced the power of the "conservatives" he has not permitted the "liberals" a free hand in pushing ahead with genuine changes of the system.

Mr. Popović believes, however, that in time the Yugoslav intelligentsia will find a way out of the permanent crisis, short of plunging the country into a new civil war or a fratricidal holocaust, already seen once. "In the same way" he writes, "that Djilas rose against Communism, Ranković against the new class, and Tito against the classical Party, so can the new class supply the revolt against itself with capable and passionate leaders." Significantly Mr. Popović believes that such leaders of dissent would be found primarily in Serbia and among the Serbs, forgetting, however, that the major attempts to reform the monolithic center of power have come from Croatia. The ideological revisionism around the magazine "Praxis," the violent push toward the reform and ultimately the most dynamic national revival have all come from Croatia and Slovenia.

The most critical issue, the deep historical conflict between various nationalities, is the subject of another book, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question*. The author, Paul Shoup, is an Associate Professor of Government and Foreign Affairs at the University of Virginia. This book has all the appearance of a serious and responsible study of the national problem. As it is always the case with American political scientists, the mechanics of political science are carefully used and applied. The author spent some time in Yugoslavia, principally at Belgrade University, where he studied the nationalities problem. He expresses gratitude to Professor Philip E. Mosely of Columbia University "who introduced the author to Eastern Europe and who has worked untiringly to promote cooperation between Yugoslav and American peoples." Regrettably, Dr. Shoup does not possess Mosely's genuine understanding of the fundamental Yugoslav issues.

In his honest effort to be objective and scientific Shoup has studied a great deal of material, facts and statistics that were available to him. In the end, however, he seldom touches the core of the problem of the national rivalries and animosities that have kept Yugoslavia in a permanent state of a dramatic often tragic crisis, the crisis that has persisted for fifty years, and that has absorbed the existences of at least three generations. It began with the formation of Yugoslavia and the establishment of a highly inefficient centralized system of govern-

ment that instead of considering the contrasting historical developments of each one of the composing nations it believed to brush them off over night.

The conflict began with a misunderstanding or disagreement between the Croats and the Serbs about the constitutional organization of the new state. While the Croats demanded a federation, the dominant Serbs established a centralistic state under the Serbian hegemony. The dictatorship of king Alexander, proclaimed in 1929, swept away parliamentary institutions and sought to achieve at least in theory the integration of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes into one nation. The experiment suffered a complete failure. After the assassination of the king, in 1933, the relations between the Croats and the Serbs continued to deteriorate, until World War II brought the collapse of Yugoslavia, its territorial dismemberment and led to a fratricidal civil war.

This tragic situation offered the Communists the opportunity to rally the peoples of Yugoslavia around a new, federalist conception of Yugoslav union, that would recognize to all the nationalities their individualism within the framework of separate federal republics. Thus Yugoslavia became a union of six autonomous republics: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and "Macedonia."

But, in reality, the state power continued to be concentrated in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia and of Yugoslavia. This centralistic tendency was reinforced by the centralistic structure of the Communist party itself, within which all authority was held at the center—again in Belgrade. The upshot was that the new Communist Yugoslavia was not a union of equal national republics but a centralistic state within which Belgrade and the centralistically minded officials played the dominant role.

Centralism began to be challenged from within the Party in the late 1950s, as the various republican bureaucracies sought to enlarge the sphere of their own power and competence as against Belgrade. The leaderships of the Socialist Republics of Croatia and Slovenia charged that their republics were being exploited economically to the advantage of Belgrade. In the early 1960s, there developed a growing revalorization of the national cultures, histories, values and traditions of the individual Yugoslav peoples, which forced the abandonment of the romantic dream that there existed one Yugoslav nation, a single Serbo-Croatian language, and that the Serbs and Croats were "one people with two names." At present the various republics are pres-

sing hard toward the formation of a confederation of states.

Though he tries his best, Dr. Shoup had to admit in his conclusion that despite the efforts of the Yugoslav Communists, "to overcome deeply entrenched national attitudes and break out of the vicious cycle of national rivalries and controversies which have plagued Yugoslavia since her creation," the future of Yugoslavia remains in doubt. Djilas came to an even more radical conclusion in his new book when he states: "It should be remembered that the kingdom of Yugoslavia was smashed in a few days of war in large part owing to the dissensions among the nationalities. While the Communists got their new lease on life in uprisings against the occupying forces—drawing all Yugoslav peoples—yet in their solution to the nationalities question they have not, for all their fine words gone very far beyond recognizing cultural and administrative autonomy. The old Yugoslavia survived as a thoroughly Serbian centralist monarchy, as military-cum-police machine dominated by the Serbs. And a new, Communist Yugoslavia, has, in a different way, remained centralist through its single, monolithic political party, which is also propped up by an army and a secret police."

Contrary to Shoup, Djilas going deep into the heart of the matter, finds out that the weakening of the concept of Yugoslav union is due to the "weakening and the destruction of the Communist Party"—a Party that has been absorbed by the New Class. While Djilas laments that "the idea of Yugoslavism is now evaporating before our eyes in spite of its having been the liveliest and most intense reality for many generations, it is no longer imperative for the life of Yugoslavia." And Djilas to emphasize: "As things are, the present Yugoslav regime is not, I am convinced, capable of surviving any major crisis, any more than the previous regime was." The reasons as Djilas sees them are: "There is no equality among nationalities without human freedom, or without the genuine right of each national community to secession, the right to a self-contained economy and independent political organizations and its armed forces."

What then would be the answer that Djilas gives to the major problem? "Only the vision of a new Yugoslavia", he concludes, "within which national communities are associated by agreements as between sovereign states, and in which all citizens have political freedoms, offers any prospects for a more stable state community." The "intel-

lectual and social polarizing" shows "the desire of the Yugoslav peoples for greater administrative and economic autonomy. Analysing this trend Djilas sums up the diverse aspirations of the Yugoslav peoples in this way: "For the Slovenes, their ambitions lie mainly in the development of the economy; for the Croats, in state rights; for the Macedonians, in intellectual opportunities; for the Serbs, in two extremes — the preservation of the united country more or less as it is, and the desire for complete secession."

All three books under review point out the critical situation in which Yugoslavia finds itself today for two principal reasons: 1) the disintegration of the Communist Party, and 2) the polarization of the various nationalities and their tendency to demand a greater autonomy and perhaps even complete state independence. Under these circumstances the entire destiny of Yugoslavia rests with one man, Tito, who at 77 still dominates the country and holds much of the power in his own hands.

Both Djilas and Popović seem to agree that the post-Tito period will expose Yugoslavia to sever stresses, which may place the very existence of the state in doubt. In such a crisis the leadership in finding new solutions will devolve on the party leadership in Belgrade and the centres of the Republics. It remains to be seen whether they will prove equal to the task, and will be able to rally once again the peoples of Yugoslavia whose divisions have grown deeper in recent years.

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Vera St. Erlich, *Family in Transition. A Study of 300 Yugoslav Villages*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966. Pp. xv + 469. Maps, photos, appendices.

Jack C. Fisher, *Yugoslavia — A Multinational State: Regional Difference and Administrative Response*. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1966. Pp. xxiii + 244. Tables, Figures, appendices.

David Tornquist, *Look East, Look West: The Socialist Adventure in Yugoslavia*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966. Pp. 310.

Since the war Yugoslavia has changed from a predominantly peasant state to one whose per capita industrial production exceeds that