

ern Eastern Europe will enjoy reading Mr. Lendvai's book and profit from the first-hand information he brings to the problems of this area.

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Nissan Oren. *Bulgarian Communism: The Road to Power 1934-1944*. ("East Central European Studies of Columbia University and Research Institute on Communist Affairs, Columbia University") New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1971. Pp. XIV+294.

Nissan Oren was born in Bulgaria, but educated in Israel and the United States. At present he is a member of the Departments of International Politics and Russian Studies at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Although he is a political scientist, *Bulgarian Communism* is a history book—a worthy successor to another Columbia Press history by a political scientist, Joseph Rothschild's *The Communist Party of Bulgaria*. Furthermore, because the author never uses obscure jargon, *Bulgarian Communism* is readily understandable to the non-specialist.

Oren's monograph is one of impressive research and at times even investigation worthy of a detective into a subject whose secrets are not always the easiest to discover. An excellent example of the author's forthright uncovering of hitherto "unsolved mysteries" of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP) is his explanation of Traicho Kostov's reprieve from a capital sentence by the Bulgarian government in 1942 (pp. 183-4). The party secretary was saved on the intervention of Stanislav Balan, the king's secretary, whose son went to school with Kostov. Furthermore, much of the book is not solely about the Bulgarian Communist Party *per se* but is as well a chronicle of the events in Bulgaria during the period (a similarity with Rothschild). This is essential with material that is so little known by the English reading scholarly community.

Using as his sources party-member memoirs, collected works, surveys of the communist periodical literature, important secondary works, and personal interviews, Oren discusses the re-emergence of Georgi Dimitrov in the party leadership, the purge of the sectarians, the attempt of the party to establish a popular front in Bulgaria, the party's leadership of the partisan movement during the war, and the success of the Fatherland Front in gaining control of the country in 1944. Al-

though there are important questions left unanswered, particularly concerning relations between the various party institutions and personalities, these obviously cannot at the present moment be brought to light. The Bulgarian Communist Party's own recent history (Ruben Avramov *et al*, eds. *Istoriia na Bulgarskata komunisticheska partiia*. Sofia: BKP, 1969), after all, does not refer to sources unused by Oren or shed more light on questions he does not deal with.

In the first chapters of his monograph Oren successfully relates the changes in Bulgarian Communist party leadership to the changes in Comintern policy. This relation is of essential importance because of the crucial role that Dimitrov played as General Secretary of the Comintern in the popular front movement. Oren's contention is that the left sectarians who controlled Bulgaria's communist party after 1923 wished Dimitrov to have as little to do with Bulgarian affairs as possible. Therefore, the support he received from the world-wide non-communist left at Leipzig had purely Bulgarian as well as world significance. Besides representing the united stand against fascism, Dimitrov had a personal stake in the popular front cause, since the left sectarians within his own party had advocated communist isolation. As the idea of the popular front became dominant in the world-wide communist movement, Dimitrov, Vasil Kolarov and their associates regained control over their own party. A ruthless purge, contemporaneous with the Soviet purges, was carried out against the left sectarians. Many of the Bulgarian Communist leaders, who were in exile in the Soviet Union, fell victim to the Stalinist terror of the thirties. However, the purge was not complete even up to the war period. Especially among the communists in Bulgarian prisons the left sectarians maintained their strength (p. 91). (Oren also writes that the purge was not always limited to Dimitrov's opponents. On several occasions the General-Secretary personally intervened to save some friends, e.g., his brother-in-law, Vulko Chervenkov [p. 90]).

The diverse factions within the party, the prestige of many Bulgarians —most prominently Dimitrov and Kolarov— in Soviet and Comintern affairs, and the strength of the Communists in Bulgaria created conditions for intense rivalries and power struggles. The party's bureau-in-exile, led by Dimitrov and Kolarov, now spoke for the Moscow position. In Bulgaria there was a dual central committee—that of the BKP and that of the Bulgarian Workers' Party, which before 1934 when all political parties became illegal, was a legal version of the outlawed BKP. The Communist trade unions, the youth organization, and other

institutions reflected the split between the "old guard" (Dimitrov and Kolarov) and the left sectarians. The strength of the "old guard" increased even if they did not monopolize Bulgarian affairs. In 1936, the sixth plenum of the Bulgarian central committee proclaimed a policy conforming to that of the Comintern. During the next years the BKP cooperated with other Bulgarian left parties in elections in 1937, 1938, and 1940. During the war the party formulated a Fatherland Front with other parties to actively oppose the government then in alliance with the Axis.

In his chapters on the BKP during the war Oren deals with questions of the partisan movement, the formation and success of the Fatherland Front, aid to the partisans from the Soviet Union and England, and the decimation of the communist leadership through casualties and arrest. Oren gives an impressive survey of the available literature and comes to a convincing conclusion of 10,000 resistance fighters, (p. 218) not including the "yatatsi" (helpers).

There are a few places where minor discrepancies appear which, although they do not seriously damage an otherwise well-researched work, could have been synthesized by a collaboration with other historical data. For example on page 149 Oren states that ten Communists were elected to the Bulgarian parliament in 1940. This is not adequately documented as his only source is Dimitrina Petrova's 1970 monograph *BZNS v kraia na burzhoaznoto gospodstvo v Bulgariia 1939-1944*. The latter mentions the figure only in a brief sentence referring to a report by the leader of the Communist delegation in the parliament, Liuben Diugmedzhiev, not readily available for public inspection. Since both the Avramov history of the BKP and the Bulgarian Academy of Science's 1964 history of Bulgaria list only nine communist delegates, and since only the nine delegates who were expelled in July 1941 are readily identified (listed by Oren on p. 173), the reliability of Petrova's statement remains unproven.

Oren relies heavily on Dimo Kazasov's *Burni godini* (Sofia, 1949) for the basic course of Bulgarian history in the decade under consideration. While Kazasov's memoir is impressive and encompassing, it is not always accurate. One example of a Kazasov misstatement repeated by Oren (p. 238) is that Ivan Bagrianov assumed the ministry of agriculture after June 12, 1944, along with the premiership. In fact Bagrianov remained without portfolio after June 12, and Rusi Rusev of Kotel became the minister of agriculture.

On another point, on page 145 the author states that in 1939 "with Nazi assistance, the IMRO [Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization] . . . came to life." This is based on an article by Stoyan Christowe, a popular journalist conversant with the affairs of IMRO. While Nazi institutions may in fact have aided the organization in general this could only have been incidental to German policy in the Balkans. The German documents are silent on the matter and the main course of the Reich's diplomacy at that time did not include plans for IMRO. In the same manner Oren's implication on page 150 that Georgi Kioseivanov lost the premiership in February 1940 in part because the king wished to launch a revisionist campaign against Yugoslavia ignores the fact that throughout 1940 the government's thrust on revision was directed against Rumania and Greece, while Macedonian irredentist claims were not put forward.

Oren's final conclusion that "three-fourths" of the force behind a triumphant revolution in Bulgaria had indeed come "from the outside" (p. 262) certainly appears accurate on the surface. As he correctly indicates, unlike the communist parties of Yugoslavia and Greece the BKP was not in a position to capitalize on its leadership of the anti-German resistance movement. Yet, while acknowledging this, we have also to consider that in the context of the times Great Power influence and out-right interference in the affairs of the countries of Eastern Europe was the norm rather than the exception; furthermore, the BKP still had great residual support in Bulgaria from its years of strength in the twenties and thirties.

Finally, we must consider one more point of great interest which the author raises. In the course of his narrative Oren comes to grips with an important if somewhat confusing matter —the political orientation of the group *Zveno*. *Zveno* was a small political circle with support among the Bulgarian intelligentsia and military. Its relationships to the BKP and to Bulgarian history in general between the wars have never been adequately analyzed. *Zveno* in conjunction with its supporters in the powerful Military League were responsible for the Bulgarian *coup d'état* of May 19, 1934. Furthermore, a majority of the members at some time or another sympathized with the Bulgarian fascist, Aleksandur Tsankov. Now because of this sympathy as well as the authoritarian, military, and elitist aspects of *Zveno's* ideas and activity, the group has frequently been labelled a form of Balkan fascism. Oren scrupulously avoids the term fascist in describing the group. In fact, on page 73 he

writes: "To them [the left sectarians of the BKP] the coup was nothing more than a change of government. The new regime was merely 'an overt organ' of the 'middle-class fascist' dictatorship, no different from all the governments since June, 1923," thus implying that he does not go along with this terminology.

Nevertheless, Oren does emphasize the "right-wing" aspects of *Zveno*, particularly its associations with the Tsankov movement (p. 11-13) and the anti-Communist attitudes it held in the early thirties (p. 15). One of its ideological spokesmen, Ivan Kharizanov, was president at one time of the Anti-Comintern League in Bulgaria, (p. 132). However, there is another side of *Zveno* which could also be emphasized. Kazasov, one of the group's most prominent leaders, said it was composed of the "left elements of the right parties" —Nationalists, Democrats, Social Democrats, and Radicals. On the Macedonian question, perhaps the only issue on which a Bulgarian fascist movement could have been created, *Zveno* advocated a policy opposed to IMRO and for cooperation with Yugoslavia. The group was definitely republican rather than monarchist in outlook. In the late thirties, during the war, and after the war *Zveno* resolutely opposed fascism and the Axis powers. They actively cooperated with the BKP in the popular front movement and the Fatherland Front. They were part of the coalition government after September 9, 1944. Kimon Gerogiev was a member of the Bulgarian government until 1962. Oren sees this Communist-Zveno alliance as a shift in ideology determined by practical politics (p. 132), but the reversal is not in fact a one hundred and eighty degree turn. The policy of cooperation with the BKP was not limited only to specific individuals in the *Zveno* group but really involved, as Oren also seems to indicate, an outgrowth of the group's aims.

The difficulty in determining whether *Zveno* is "right" or "left" is one of categorization. The nature of fascism has certainly proved to be extremely difficult to define. If in the present categorical definition of the term, the fundamental aspects of Hitler's Nazism must be included, then *Zveno* certainly can not be classified as fascist. For the early thirties when fascism was still evolving and in Bulgaria when the Tsankovite movement was also evolving, the question is more perplexing but it is still not possible to place *Zveno* categorically within the fascist movement. The appeal of Tsankov to the members of *Zveno* was determined by Bulgarian conditions. In the end Bulgarian conditions also directed

them to an opposite path from the Tsankovites. The categorical definitions by which scholars impose pan-European ideologies on individual societies are in the final analysis cognitive devices and cannot be assumed without qualification to be applicable in every aspect.

In summation, while there is room for discussion and disagreement with some of Oren's conclusions, analyses, and interpretations of the documents, there is no doubt that *Bulgarian Communism* will take its rightful place as a standard treatise on the subject matter.

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Alan Cassels, *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970. Pp. 425.

In the past, students of European diplomacy have usually examined the question of Fascist foreign policy within the context of the tumultuous events of the thirties. The subjugation of Ethiopia, the intervention in the Spanish Civil War, and the formalization of the Rome-Berlin axis seemed to have identified the nature of Italian policy. The earlier era of Fascist diplomacy remained a neglected period of uncertain research. Now Alan Cassels has sought to illuminate this relatively unknown chapter of diplomatic history and the result is a fine analysis of Italian diplomacy as well as an insightful commentary on the hopes and frustrations of the post-Versailles diplomatic scene.

Cassels divides the early years of Fascist foreign policy into four phases. In the first period, from Mussolini's ascension to power until the spring of 1923, diplomatic interest focused on the issues stemming from the termination of the First World War, especially the negotiation of a peace treaty with Turkey and the amelioration of the Franco-German reparations question. During this period the career diplomats of the Palazzo della Consulta exerted an important influence over Mussolini who was still a neophyte in world affairs. In the second period beginning in the summer of 1923 and lasting about a year, Il Duce began to assert his personal control over Italian foreign policy. This short period witnessed the deliberate instigation of crises over Corfu and Fiume and the elaboration of schemes for Italian penetration of Asia Minor. The assass-