

THE BOOK SHELF

Tito Won't Like This Book

By Rodney Gilbert

THE NEW CLASS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNIST SYSTEM. By Milovan Djilas. Frederick A. Praeger, New York. 214 pages, \$3.95.

MILOVAN DJILAS is a Montenegrin and therefore a congenital rebel. His revolutionary talents throughout most of his adult years were at the service of Yugoslavia's Communist Party. He fought the Germans as a Partisan; and then, in the post-war organization of a Communist dictatorship in Yugoslavia, he went almost as high in that set-up as a man could go without elbowing Tito off the podium. But four years ago he had a revulsion of feeling against Red totalitarianism and started publicly to champion what he now calls "democratic socialism." For this he was expelled from the party and from the vice-presidency early in 1954. Then last fall, when it became evident that the Hungarian students, intensively indoctrinated as they were, actually despised Marxism, Djilas was quoted the world over as saying: "This is the beginning of the end of Communism." An anti-Communist article published in a New York weekly magazine at about the same time was for Tito the last straw. Djilas was tossed into jail, sentenced to three years' hard labor. Then, with an

amazing display of moral courage he got the manuscript of this devastating book smuggled out of Yugoslavia.

"The new class" in supposedly classless society in the Soviet Union and all other Communist states is what Djilas calls the "political bureaucracy," with the core of the Communist Party at its topmost stratum, which not only controls government, industry, agriculture, communications, education et cetera, but actually owns all the means of production and all its products. All the products of human labor this new class distributes as it pleases—taking very good care of its own privileges, comforts and luxuries, indulging in all the extravagances of a new aristocracy, while the masses go shabby and not too well fed. I should say that the book's major thesis is that this cannot last, though Djilas may very possibly think that his most important message to the world outside the walls of the Mitrovica prison is to be found in the theorizing in his final chapters about the irresistible trend towards world unity. This will befuddle some and bore many more American readers. So will other passages in which the language is that of the Marxist intellectual. But there is no mistaking what he is saying in such a passage as the following, nor

will it be difficult to understand why it is painful to the members of a Red bureaucratic despotism in the U.S.S.R. or elsewhere:—

“This is a class whose power over men is the most complete known to history. For this reason it is a class with very limited views, views which are false and unsafe.

“Having achieved industrialization, the new class can now do nothing more than strengthen its brute force and pillage the people. It ceases to create. Its spiritual heritage is overtaken by darkness.

“While the new class accomplished one of its greatest successes in the revolution, its method of control is one of the most shameful pages in human history. Men will marvel at the grandiose ventures it accomplished, and will be ashamed of the means it used to accomplish them.”

Although Djilas goes to the Soviet Union for the overwhelming majority of his horrible examples of “the new class” in action, he gives a chapter to national communism (Titoism).

He says: “National Communism per se is contradictory. Its nature is

that of Soviet Communism, but it aspires to detach itself into something of its own. In reality national Communism is Communism in decline.”

As I have already said, the one feature of this book which is going to interest the anti-Communist American is its frequently repeated assurance that Communism is moribund—going down and out. I find satisfactory enough his very clear explanation of the character of the Red aristocracy. Unlike most aristocracies of the past, it is wide open at the bottom. Any proletarian who can, by an assiduous display of interest, get into the Communist Party, and who is then hard, tough, foxy and unscrupulous enough to gouge and elbow his way up the bureaucratic ladder, can, like the boisterous Khrushchev, reach the top and ride in the modern equivalent of chaises to his country villa, past the shabby trudging masses. I gather from the Djilas book that the best reason for feeling sure that this cannot go on for long is that the big shots aren't really big.

—RODNEY GILBERT

Asia Seen By Not Too Innocent Eyes

THE INNOCENT AMBASSADORS. By Philip Wylie. Rinehart and Company, New York. 384 pages, \$4.95.

PHILIP WYLIE is a cantankerous, infuriating old curmudgeon whose tart comments on American folkways and foibles have disturbed and delighted a generation of readers. He is

that rare best-seller—a novelist with a change of pace. Equally at home in the columns of the *Saturday Evening Post*, writing about a fisherman name Crunch, and in the think book field, Wylie is probably the nearest thing which we now have to the debunkers of the Twenties. When such a man writes about what is wrong with