

Unlikely enough, they found it, with John Reed and Lincoln Steffens and the Alger Hisses of a later date, in the Bolshevik revolution and the Soviet tyranny.

Reviewed by GEORGE MORGENSTERN

Czechoslovakia in Chains

Communism in Czechoslovakia 1948-1960, by Edward Taborsky. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961. xii & 628 pp. \$12.50.

PROFESSOR TABORSKY's comprehensive study is a welcome and significant addition to our steadily mushrooming professional literature of recent Eastern European politics. Few authors could be more qualified or have a more distinguished background. Having served for years as former President Benes's private secretary, Taborsky was also active in the diverse operations of the wartime Czech government in exile in London, while in more recent years he has been first the Czechoslovak Envoy to Sweden and then a professor of government at the University of Texas. He is a prolific author of articles dealing with the constitutional and political development of his native country, a Soviet satellite since 1948.

Communism in Czechoslovakia has a truly impressive scope. Divided into four parts, its principal sections deal with the Czech Communist Party (as a weapon of revolution), the "transmission belts of formal government" (the constitution, legislature and executive), the economic aspects of development (industry and agriculture) and—last but not least—the manipulation of the "educational weapon," mass-indoctrination aimed at molding a new Communist man in Czechoslo-

vakia. All four parts of the book are fascinating variations on the author's main theme which he spells out clearly in the preface, namely, his intention to illustrate "the tragic clash between the enticing promises of a Marxian utopia and the harsh reality of Soviet-guided totalitarianism." (p. ix) The very phrasing of this *leitmotiv* presages Professor Taborsky's gloomy, but inevitable, final conclusions concerning the presumably hopeless and exceedingly long tenure of Czech neo-Stalinism.

The coverage of the crucial dozen years is painstaking and is meticulously based on first-hand Czech Communist sources.¹ Taborsky's own scholarly background as a lawyer and constitutional expert particularly qualifies him to dissect the elaborate juridical framework of the Czech People's Republic. Of special significance is the discussion of two Czech deviations from the Soviet pattern. One of these concerns the perpetuation, even through the succession of three "worker"-presidents, of the traditionally eminent institution of the single-head presidency while the other revolves around the *formal* and mostly *procedural* maintenance of the trappings of a parliamentary system, including the shadow-existence of several National Front "partner"-parties. These institutions are interesting not only as tactical deviations, but as political peculiarities in the satellite system of Communist Czechoslovakia, displaying both an amazing durability and surviving "all

¹Indeed one of the few points of minor criticism might be the surprising omission of some outstanding secondary sources, products of recent Anglo-American scholarship, which have also been able to analyze with sophistication the problem of Czechoslovak Communism. This reviewer, for one, has sorely missed the names of Zbigniew Brzezinski, Ivo Duchacek and Hugh Seton-Watson, conspicuously absent among several others, from an obviously all-too selective bibliography.

the persistent rumors predicting [its] impending doom." (p. 170)

In the same vein, Professor Taborsky's thoughtful essay on "Socialist Legality" also deserves the careful attention of students of European forms of totalitarianism. Here the constitutional document of May 9, 1948 stands as the watershed between democratic legality and Communist illegality. In two important new provisions a layman or "people's court" spirit has been fused into the system of judicial interpretation directing the judges to interpret all statutes and ordinances "in the light of the principles of the people's democratic order." Since 1948, the year of the successful Prague revolution, judges must apply the laws as required by Party leaders, "for the people's democratic order is what the Communist rulers say it is." (p. 274)

Taborsky's *magnum opus* does not neglect the economic perspectives of Czech neo-Stalinism. The picture presented here is an intricate one of lights and shadows: on the one hand an enormous industrial challenge often successfully met by the country's well-developed industry and highly specialized skilled workers, while on the other a hastily collectivized agriculture whose not unexpected demise is now increasingly acknowledged by the Czech regime. Taborsky's realistic portrayal of this complex economic dilemma can well be brought up to date from official Czech sources. *Rude Pravo*, mouthpiece of the Czech Communist Party, has recently become a veritable storehouse of governmentally induced and peddled doom and gloom. In a lead editorial of August 14, 1962, *Rude Pravo* stressed exceptionally poor planning and uncoordinated industrial efforts as the sources of economic trouble resulting in the non-fulfillment of planned development. Later in August the Central Committee of the Party termin-

ated the current (1961-1965) Five Year Plan and instituted instead a one-year "Transition Plan for 1963," to be followed by a Seven Year Plan for the period of 1964-1970. Simultaneously, to underline further Taborsky's strong emphasis on the inflationary Parkinson's Law of Communist bureaucracy, new Commissions of Popular Control were announced and established to check and supervise the entire area of economic development, but particularly the arrangement of industrial plants and "economic bureaus." The autocratic, belt-tightening nature of these Commissions was—according to customary satellite practice—neatly camouflaged by high-flowing promises and friendly exhortations. "The popularization of control [through the Commissions]," wrote a party official, "is part of a process aiming at a further democratization of public life; organs elected by the people are to take over more of the functions thus far carried out by the professional administration."²

The last major area examined is that of multiple use, and abuse, of the "educational weapon," designed to produce (or at least hasten the long-term molding process of) the new "satellite man," Czechoslovak variety. Only one mildly critical remark could be voiced in connection with these interesting chapters. While Professor Taborsky succeeds in meticulously covering the advent of neo-Stalinism in 1957-1958 (a tremendous tightening of the entire educational system and a consequent literary *Gleichschaltung*), he tends to ignore the brief, but significant artistic thaw (the "Prague Germinal," so aptly named by Andreas Theimer) of the immediately preceding period. The dreariness and foolishness of

²Cf. F. Zdobina, "Additional Rights of the Working People," *Rude Pravo*, January 10, 1963.

Czech propaganda is explored and explained here *ad nauseam*,³ but little is said about the scattered, and yet definitely existing, small forces of intellectual resistance to Czech super-Stalinism. One would agree with the criticism of a reviewer who recently pointed out that the "author tends to belabor to excess the well known fact of Czechoslovak domination by the Soviet Union,"⁴ while possibly de-emphasizing the various currents of actual or potential resistance and the underground tremors occasionally capable of shaking the Communist state—and party super-structure.

Dr. Taborsky would in effect deny even the most remote possibility of active resistance, revisionism or even theoretical deviation in the ranks of his silent and down-trodden ex-countrymen. His conclusions are firm but negative, well-formulated but gloomy. His principal findings can be summarized under the following two headings:

1. Revisionism, as an ideological challenge to orthodox Marxism-Leninism from within the doctrine's confines, poses less of a danger to the Czech hierarchy than to any other Communist leadership behind the Iron Curtain (pp. 599-600).

2. Since Communism is not likely to collapse in Russia, nor is the Soviet Union likely to refrain from the use of military power in Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia will most probably remain under the rule of totalitarian Communism, with-

³See for example, the fantastic Radio Plzen broadcast of May 1958: "The Nazis have murdered and leveled Lidice and Lezaky to the ground. Aren't those who come to us from the West in the name of 'liberation and humanity' just like them? It is not accidental similarity; it is an innate kinship of the swastika and the dollar." *Communism in Czechoslovakia*, p. 494. (Italics mine)

⁴See Joseph Rothschild, *A Review of Communism in Czechoslovakia, 1948-1960*, in *The Political Science Quarterly*, 1962.

out any meaningful relaxation, for quite some time. (p. 607).

While the reviewer does not necessarily share the author's deep-seated and unshakeable pessimism, he must admit that such conclusions do seem to flow logically from the historic and political premises formulated throughout the first five hundred pages of this monumental study.

Reviewed by ANDREW GYORGY

A Prisoner of Starvation

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Translated by Max Hayward and Ronald Hingley, Introduction by Max Hayward and Leopold Labedz. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963. xxiv & 210 pp. \$3.95.

THE PUBLICATION OF *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, in the November 1962 issue of *Novyi Mir*, was a new and dramatic highlight in post-Stalin literature. For the first time, a Soviet novel took as its sole theme the life of a prison camp. Because its author, previously unknown to Soviet literature, is a former inmate of a forced-labor camp, and because he has a genuine talent which is deeply rooted in the tradition of Russian realism, his short novel has had a powerful impact, both in the Soviet Union and abroad.

The Solzhenitsyn novel describes an average day in the struggle of a single prisoner to survive that day and each successive one. The hero, Ivan Shukhov, tries to wangle that little extra nourishment that will keep him fit for work. Failure to do so would thrust him down into the ranks