

Is Russia Going Titoist?

By ERNST HALPERIN

Editors' Note: At this time, with the Communist world in the throes of a political and ideological crisis, with developments following each other in lightning succession, it is important not only to survey the past and the present, but also to cast a glance into the uncertain future, to discern trends both in their current configuration and from the standpoint of their impact on the further development of communism within and outside the Soviet orbit.

This is precisely what Mr. Halperin's article attempts to do. In concluding that the Soviet Union is likely to

adopt some essential features of Titoist Yugoslavia, he is not basing himself on irrefutable evidence (for obviously such evidence does not exist), but rather on a keen analysis of the implications of the recent Soviet-Yugoslav rapprochement. "Is Russia Going Titoist" is presented here as the first of a series of articles dealing with the future of communism, in the hope of initiating a wide discussion of what is undoubtedly one of the most challenging topics today.

TITOISM is a device for wrapping necessary reforms and concessions in an attractive ideological cloak. Six years ago, in 1950, Marshal Tito was compelled to undertake a "destalinization" of the economic, political and ideological affairs of his country. With the aid of "Titoist" doctrine he succeeded in converting this retreat into a powerful ideological offensive.

The leaders of the Soviet Union today find themselves in a dilemma similar to that which Tito faced in 1949-50. The visit to Belgrade by Khrushchev, Bulganin and Mikoyan in May 1955, the Belgrade declaration of June 2, 1955, Tito's 3-week visit to the Soviet Union in June 1956, and the agreement signed on that occasion providing for collaboration between the two governments and parties seem to indicate more than an attempt on Moscow's part to patch up differences in the interest of Communist solidarity. There are definite signs, in this author's opinion, that the Soviet leaders are toying with the idea of utilizing Titoist formulas and slogans in solving their own pressing domestic problems. An understanding of this view requires

a re-examination of the internal situation in Yugoslavia that gave impetus to Tito's dramatic reforms of 1950, through which "Titoism" has come to mean a positive concept of socialist economic development as well as a symbol of independence from Moscow.

The Crisis Period: 1948-50

PRIOR to 1950, the economy of Communist Yugoslavia was rigorously centralized and fully planned on the Stalinist pattern. A highly ambitious Five-Year Plan was underway. Among the main objectives of this plan were the laying of the foundations of New Belgrade, a city to be built for a population of 250,000 over an estimated 15-year period; the construction of a 400-kilometer super-highway between Belgrade and Zagreb; drainage of a portion of Lake Scutari; and construction of numerous dams, hydroelectric plants, and factories.

This forced-march industrialization led of necessity to collectivization of agriculture. Collectivization releases manpower for industry and, furthermore, enables the organs of party and state to exercise much more effective control over agricultural production than would be possible with even the most stringent supervision of independent farmers.

Visitors spending a few days or weeks in Yugoslavia got an impression of universal work fever and fantastic activity. But anyone staying longer soon became

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aware that this atmosphere was largely illusory. Construction achievements, for example, were incessantly touted, but while there were construction sites everywhere, no buildings seemed to go up; deterioration was evident everywhere in factory installations, housing and public transport. And as the production figures announced in the press rose higher and higher, the shortage of goods grew more severe.

Government revenues were far from sufficient to finance the construction program. The mint had to supply the money required, and the currency deteriorated rapidly. Whereas the official rate of exchange of the dinar remained at the fictitious ratio of 50 to the dollar, the free rate sometimes dropped as low as 700 to 800 to the dollar. Since prices of rationed consumer goods as well as wages and charges for public services were frozen at a low level, the devaluation of the currency exercised a tremendous impact on the free and black markets. A critically large proportion of rationed goods was hoarded for purposes of resale, or simply vanished on their way to the stores, to reappear later on the black market.

The shortage of goods was further aggravated by the breakdown of the government trading system. Distribution of essential rationed foods broke down. Time and again, all or part of the fat ration was not issued. Meat was available only once or twice a month. Items like cigarettes and matches were alternately unavailable for weeks at a time. The supply of bread was reasonably adequate in the two largest cities, Belgrade and Zagreb, but not elsewhere.

In the villages and smaller towns, stringent enforcement of compulsory deliveries and a production strike of the farmers resulted in an even greater scarcity of foodstuffs. Farmers frequently had to go to the cities to buy fat and bread at high prices from ration card holders of privileged category. This situation led to a number of uprisings in May 1950 in western Bosnia and eastern Croatia, regions which had been strongholds of the Communist partisan movement during the war.

The whole drive for industrialization was carried on during the time when the Cominform countries maintained an unrelenting economic blockade against Yugoslavia and normal trade relations were not yet established with the West. Tito and his government probably realized as early as 1948 that the Five-Year Plan could not be carried out and would have to be called off sooner or later. However, after the break with Moscow the regime apparently felt it had to go on with the industrialization campaign to keep up morale among the party cadres while they got over the shock of expulsion from the Cominform.

A Plan For Reform

BY the end of 1949 at the latest, it apparently became plain to the party leaders that the situation could not continue and that drastic measures had to be taken to avert the collapse of the Yugoslav economy. The first step toward reform was the adoption in January 1950 of measures for administrative decentralization. Constitutionally, Yugoslavia, like the Soviet Union, is a federal union of several republics. Under the new decrees, a number of federal ministries were disbanded and their functions transferred to the corresponding ministries in the republics, much like what now, in August 1956, has happened in the Soviet Union.

The actual beginning of the great reform and with it the birthday of the Titoist ideology must, however, be dated from June 26, 1950. On this day the Yugoslav federal parliament enacted with its customary unanimity the Basic Law on Management of State Economic Enterprises and Higher Economic Associations by the Workers' Collectives.

This law provided that plant directors, who for the present were still to be appointed by the state, would be assisted by managing boards staffed by members of workers' councils, which were to be elected by the entire work force. The functions of a managing board were to include drawing up the annual plan and monthly production schedules of an enterprise, establishing operating regulations, generally supervising the management, making final decisions on executive appointments in the enterprise and on workers' grievances, *etc.* The workers' council was empowered to pass on plans, operating regulations, the budget, the balance sheet, and other miscellaneous measures taken by the managing boards. The powers of these bodies were further extended later on. Specifically, the workers' council or the general meeting of plant employees was given the right to award bonuses and to decide upon the use of operating surpluses.

Under a fully planned economy, such as the Yugoslav Communists had organized on the Soviet pattern, most of the powers of workers' committees and workers' councils would, of course, have remained a dead letter, since all functions of economic enterprise in such a system, including planning, allocation of raw materials, and operating regulations, are prescribed in minutest detail from above, by the ministry. This kind of planned economy, however, was being gradually liquidated in Yugoslavia.

The individual plant became the "operating unit" of the national economy; it not only had to set up its own production programs but to arrange for its

supply of raw materials and its sales. Theoretically, the government retained only the right to fix the ratio of investment in the various branches of the economy, though in practice it continued to disrupt the natural process of economic life by arbitrary interference in countless instances.

Nevertheless, the Titoist economic system has implicit in it the concept of a free market economy. To be sure, it is a market economy without private enterprise. The functions of the entrepreneur are taken over by the collective of workers and employers acting through its organs, the workers' council and the managing board. Thus, in principle, it is the members of the labor force themselves who decide on the nature and scale of production and the proportion of investment. It is up to them to obtain orders and in general to assure themselves of a market for their products. They share in the profits and are liable for operating losses with a portion of their wages; they bear the responsibility for layoffs and other economy measures; and if the enterprise operates continuously at a loss and the government does not regard it as important enough to warrant subsidies, they face the possibility of bankruptcy and the loss of their jobs.

This system has not yet fully matured, and some important questions—e.g., how to prevent undesirable monopolistic developments—are still awaiting clarification. But this much can already be said: the system has proved itself vastly superior to the Stalinist system of a fully planned economy. It has the great advantages of every market economy, namely flexibility and adaptability; above all, it eliminates the chief defect of all socialist economic systems in existence—the separation of production and distribution. The employees of a plant are not simply concerned, as in the Soviet system, with achieving the greatest possible output regardless of cost, quality or marketability; they have the utmost interest in putting good and salable products on the market, and doing it in a manner assuring the greatest possible returns.

Emergence of a New Ideology

THE immediate impulse for Tito's sweeping economic reform was, as mentioned, the immense practical difficulties confronting the Yugoslav economy in 1950. Inflation had to be halted and national bankruptcy averted. This called for drastic economy measures, suspension of work on numerous construction projects of the Five-Year Plan, and reduction of the vastly inflated government bureaucracy, which could only be achieved by a drastic program of decentralization.

The linking of these measures with a large-scale ideological offensive was aimed at avoiding any impression of a retreat, which might have demoralized the party cadres and perhaps driven them into the Cominform camp. The regime's unpalatable and harsh program was convincingly represented as a significant and desirable forward step toward socialism. This does not mean, of course, that the entire ideological offensive, the whole transition to the new Titoist ideology, was merely a clever trick to camouflage troublesome measures of monetary policy. It was actually a move to replace one economic system, which had broken down, with another and better one. The substitution was reflected ideologically in the change to "Titoist" doctrine.

The ideological offensive was opened by Marshal Tito himself in a speech to parliament on June 26, 1950, proposing adoption of the Basic Law on Management of State Enterprises by Workers' Collectives. In this speech Tito described the Basic Law as a practical application of the action slogan of the working-class movement: "The factories for the workers." He also hailed it as a return to the Leninist doctrine of the *withering away of the state*, which Stalin had drastically revised.

To explain this, a digression into theory is necessary.

ACCORDING to Marx and Engels, the state is the product of class antagonisms, the device of the ruling class to suppress and hold down the exploited classes. From this it follows logically that once a classless society has been established—that is, after elimination of class conflicts—the state loses its purpose and must disappear. On the basis of this theory, Lenin in his *State and Revolution* set up a timetable for the disappearance of the state after the revolution:

Phase One is the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is still need for the state to suppress the overthrown class enemies, but since the working class constitutes the great majority of the population, this task is relatively easy: "The people . . . can suppress the exploiters . . . with a very simple machine, almost without a machine, by the simple organization of armed masses . . ."¹ *Phase Two* is socialism. The new society still bears the stamp of the old society; the state, i.e., that simple machine which under the dictatorship of the proletariat takes the place of the complex machinery of the bourgeois state does begin to wither away, but this process can only be completed in the *third or higher phase, communism*.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "State and Revolution," *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1952, Part I, Vol. II, p. 293.

State and Revolution was written in the summer of 1917, that is, a few months before the October Revolution, and as Lenin explicitly states in the preface the pamphlet was conceived as an action program for the immediate future. Lenin's "withering state," however, never materialized—or rather dematerialized. The new masters of Russia during the first phase of their rule could not, any more than the Tsar in his day, get along with a simple machine of suppression—or "almost without a machine." And after Stalin had announced the transition to Phase Two, that of socialism, the state apparatus still gave no sign of withering away; on the contrary, it mushroomed to tremendous proportions.

It was inevitable, especially after the great purges, that doubts should arise in the minds of the party cadres, who knew their *State and Revolution* by heart. Was it in any way possible to reconcile what was happening with the teachings of Lenin? Could there still be any talk of a "withering away" of the state under such circumstances? It is doubtful, of course, whether anyone in the atmosphere of terror then raging had the courage to utter this question; but even unasked, it was in the air and Stalin had to provide an answer. This he attempted to do in a speech to the Eighteenth Party Congress on March 10, 1939.

In great detail he tried to show that the doctrine of Marx and Engels could not be applied to the Soviet state because the fathers of Marxism and Leninism had given no thought to the special circumstances of a country subsisting under "capitalist encirclement." He then developed the following conclusion with reference to Phase Two, the phase of socialism in the post-revolutionary Soviet state:

In place of this function of suppression, the state acquired the function of protecting socialist property from thieves and pilferers of the people's property. The function of defending the country militarily from foreign attack fully remained; consequently, the Red Army and the Navy also fully remained, as did the punitive organs and the intelligence service, which are indispensable for the detection and punishment of the spies, assassins, and wreckers sent into our country by foreign espionage services. The function of economic organization and cultural education by the state organs also remained and was developed to the full. Now the main task of our state inside the country is the work of peaceful economic organization and cultural education. As for our army, punitive organs and intelligence service, their edge is no longer turned to the inside of the country but to the outside, against external enemies.²

² J. V. Stalin, "Report on the Work of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party," in his *Problems of Leninism*, Moscow, 1953, p. 797.

Tito's Challenge

THIS revision of the doctrine of the withering away of the state was of deepest political significance since it provided the ideological justification for the whole Stalinist system of state and society: the arbitrary rule of the bureaucracy and the police terror which epitomized Stalinism. Until 1950 Stalin's doctrine remained unchallenged throughout the Communist orbit. Then, however, Tito decided to air the issues long raised by the outside world. He declared:

In 1939, it could really be said that the Soviet Union was entirely surrounded by capitalist countries. But after World War II, when a whole series of new socialist states emerged in the proximity of the Soviet Union, there could no longer be any question of capitalist encirclement of the Soviet Union. To say that the functions of the state as an armed force, not only of the army but also of the so-called punitive organs, are directed only outwards means talking with no connection with reality, just as [such talk] has no connection with the present situation in the Soviet Union. What is the tremendous bureaucratic, centralistic apparatus doing? Are their functions directed outwards? Who deports millions of citizens of various nationalities to Siberia and the Far North? Can anyone claim that these are measures against the class enemy, can anyone say that whole nations are a class to be destroyed? Who is obstructing the struggle of opinions in the Soviet Union? Is not all this being done by one of the most centralized, most bureaucratic state apparatuses, which bears no resemblance whatsoever to a state machine that is withering away?³

Tito went on to invoke Lenin's view that the proletariat had use only for an atrophying state. The Yugoslav state, he declared, was precisely such an apparatus:

Where is the beginning of this withering away process in our country? I shall mention only the following examples. First, decentralization of the state administration, especially in economy. Secondly, turning over the factories and economic enterprises in general to the working collectives to manage themselves, etc. The decentralization of the economy and of political, cultural and other aspects of life is not only profoundly democratic but has inherent in it the seeds of withering away not only of centralism, but of the state in general, as a machine of force.⁴

Tito stated further:

From now on, the state ownership of the means of production—factories, mines, railways—is passing gradually on to a higher form of socialist ownership. State ownership is the lowest form of social ownership, and not the highest as the leaders of the USSR consider it to be. Therein lies our road to socialism and that is the only right road as regards the withering away of state functions in the economy. Let the Cominformists remember that their slanderous

³ Josip Broz Tito, *Workers Manage Factories in Yugoslavia*, Jogostampa, Belgrade, 1950 (English edition), p. 29.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

hue and cry cannot obscure the correctness of our building of socialism.⁸

IT is not necessary here to go into the question of whether the Yugoslav system actually represents a return to Leninism. There is good reason for arguing that what Engels and Lenin had in mind was the atrophy of the very branches of the state which are still powerful in Yugoslavia—the army, police, courts—rather than decentralization of the economy and establishment of a market economy. Be that as it may, pronounced anarcho-syndicalist elements can be discerned in the new Yugoslav economic concepts.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

When challenged on this score, Yugoslav Communists would no doubt answer with the ever-useful dictum of Lenin that Marxian theory is neither finished nor inviolate, that it must be developed further independently. More significant and less easy to brush aside is another objection to Titoism, namely, that his economic system is in the last analysis incompatible with the existence of a totalitarian party, and that it cannot function with any degree of efficiency or be called democratic so long as industrial plants are controlled by cells of the party of totalitarian dictatorship.

It has become a truism that in any type of organi-

WHAT IS MEANT BY "DEMOCRATIZATION" AND "DECENTRALIZATION"?

... our party placed as the main task before itself and before all of society the struggle against bureaucracy ... The chief weapon and political instrument in this struggle was the effort to broaden the mass basis of the *executive* function of power in general and of executive power in the sphere of economic administration in particular. In other words, a course was taken toward the decentralization and democratization of the executive function of power in general, and particularly in the administration of the national economy. In line with this orientation, a system of workers' councils, communes, and various agencies of self-government ... developed; the system of administrative agencies was abolished and the state administrative apparatus was drastically reduced, and the role of the people's assemblies and people's committees was strengthened.

This does not mean, of course, that we Yugoslav Communists are in favor of the atomization and breaking down of society into isolated, decentralized areas ... The process which we call decentralization, a name which does not reflect its true nature, does not therefore involve the abolition of centralized functions which are necessary in a contemporary socialist society, but it does lead to their democratization.

Thus the purpose of the whole reorganization has been to ensure, through the transfer of a whole series of executive functions from a single state executive apparatus to numerous agencies of self-government of the working people ... direct control and direct influence of workers over production and over the implementation of decisions and tasks in all spheres of social life, above all, in the realm of the national economy.

Despite all this, however, it is still clear that the decisive factor in the end is the guiding activity of the conscious forces of socialism, first of all the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Socialist Alliance of Working People. This activity is essential both in the molding of socialist consciousness and in the struggle for constant socialist progress, in the struggle to overcome static tendencies, distortions due to habit, obsolete views, ideological survivals of the past, inertia, etc., not to mention the struggle against the emergence of antisocialist elements.

The actual power ... is vested in numerous agencies of popular government of many different types, such as workers' councils, people's committees, councils of people's committees, large committees and councils of self-government which direct institutions and various public services. ...

Thus the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, which had changed its name in the new circumstances to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia precisely in order to emphasize by this change a new phase in the development of socialist relations and in the social role of Communists, was able to ensure the success of a specific political course only if the Communists concentrated first of all on persuading the broad masses of the working people through organization of the Socialist Alliance of Working People and of the numerous agencies of self-government ... The League of Communists of Yugoslavia turned toward the masses on the entire front of socialist construction and social life, in an effort to ensure, first by the method of political activity among the masses and within their organizations, that their representatives in the agencies of popular self-government would adopt socialist decisions ... Since the organizations comprising the Socialist Alliance of Working People are not monolithic in the ideological sense—it is united only by a joint and common attachment to socialism—it is clear that various nonsocialist views and opinions break out there. The task of the Communists in this respect is to expose the true nature of such views to the masses and to struggle to eliminate them. It happens only rarely that the activities of the Communists in these cases are not successful ...

—"On the Leading Role of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in the Socialist Structure," by Edvard Kardelj, Vice Chairman of the Federal Executive Council of Yugoslavia, *Pravda*, Moscow, June 2, 1956.

zation a small but determined minority of the membership, proceeding systematically, can capture control. If this ruling clique also can prohibit the formation of any other group within the organization because it has the backing of the power of the state and, if necessary, can simply have the members of the opposition group arrested, it is obvious that nothing like democracy exists. This is exactly the case with the workers' councils and other so-called self-administering organs in Communist Yugoslavia.

Under present conditions, the system of workers' councils in Yugoslavia is consequently just a camouflage for party dictatorship. And it is probably this very absence of genuine democracy which makes Titoism so attractive to the Soviet leaders.

The Change in Soviet Attitude

STALIN avoided Titoism like the plague. He would never even engage in discussion of the workers' council system, merely dismissing it as a relapse into capitalism. He knew what he was doing, because Titoism has a propaganda advantage over Stalinism and the latter would of necessity come out second best in any debate. The advantage of Titoism derives from the fact that it has been conceived from the standpoint of the worker—a factor of controlling importance for a doctrine like Marxism-Leninism, which purports to be the ideology of the working class. The Stalinist, in having to defend the centralized direction of all enterprise by the government, is from the outset placed in the unfavorable position of having to deny self-determination and to condone the rule of bureaucracy.

In contrast to Stalin, his heirs do not shrink from contact with the Titoist "heresy." Indeed, in the Belgrade Declaration of June 2, 1955, they acknowledged that Titoism was a "concrete form of socialist evolution," implicitly recognizing the Yugoslav system of a market economy with decentralized management of production as a valid alternative to the Soviet system of centralized planning.

Titoism got a further boost at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party held in Moscow last February. The Congress' downgrading of Stalin meant not only the defamation of his person, but the discrediting of his theory. Certain works written or inspired by Stalin have been expressly repudiated, and others can no longer be quoted or cited without arousing suspicion. Walter Ulbricht, chief of the East German Communist Party, expressed the logical conclusion of this denigration when he declared that "Stalin was indeed no classic exponent of Marxism."

The central core of Stalin's doctrine, the thesis of

the all-powerful socialist state with its functions of economic organization and cultural education, has been shaken along with his other pronouncements. The Twentieth Congress formulated the new line of "Back to Lenin!", and every well-trained Communist recalls that on the subject of the state Lenin's views differed widely from Stalin's. Even if Stalin's heirs had the intention of defending his theory of the state, they would find it difficult going today. And in this author's opinion, if they had intended to salvage the central tenet of his doctrine, they would have been more circumspect and less radical in their attack on Stalin.

Is Russia Going Titoist?

IT IS essential to realize that Stalinist ideology was intimately bound up with the institutions of Soviet society created by Stalin; indeed, the ideology served the specific purpose of justifying the institutions. Specifically, Stalin's theory of the socialist state was designed to justify total planning of the economy, the centralized system of government—in short, the dictatorship exercised by the gigantic Soviet bureaucratic machine. Any action undermining the ideology would thus appear to this author to foreshadow changes in the institutions, that is, a structural re-vamping of the economic and governmental system.

In periods of rapid expansion and the opening up of new territories, as also during an armaments race, a total planned economy such as Stalin's possesses distinct advantages. It makes possible the concentration of all effort upon specific objectives, regardless of cost or profitable operation. But such a system is, by its basic nature, unsuited to satisfy the nation's demand for consumer goods. It is much too cumbersome to adapt itself to demand, and by separating production from distribution it also makes the producers lose all interest in improving the quality of goods or enlarging their assortment. Malenkov's program for boosting the supply of consumer goods within the framework of a total planned economy probably failed for just this reason.

The Malenkov program was an unmistakable sign that there is dissatisfaction among the Soviet people, right up to the highest ranks of the party hierarchy, over the present economy of scarcity, and that the Soviet leaders are under great pressure to do something about it. Nothing suggests that the pressure and dissatisfaction have abated in the recent past.

A market economy, conversely, is far better adapted to satisfy the demand for consumer goods than a totally planned economy. In the past, market economy and private ownership of the means of pro-

duction were synonymous. Now Tito has come up with a concept of a market economy without private ownership of the means of production, based upon an ideology of revolutionary class struggle. This, much more than any consideration of foreign policy, seems to this author to be the real reason for the Soviet leaders' present interest in Titoism.

The idea that the giant Soviet Union, with its economic and political might, could be learning at the feet of little Yugoslavia might seem grotesque. But it becomes less implausible if stated in the form of a question: What *can* Communists do when they are compelled by external circumstance and internal pressure to "destalinize," to abandon the totally planned centralized economy? The answer is that they must do precisely what Marshal Tito did in 1950.

Today there are a number of concrete indications, some of them already mentioned, of Soviet leanings toward the Titoist economic system. Summing up, these indications are:

1. The fact that the present Soviet leaders exhibit no fear whatever of contact with the dangerous Titoist heresy.
2. The Belgrade Declaration of June 2, 1955.
3. "Destalinization," which embraces the discrediting not only of Stalin's person but also of his doctrine.
4. The gala reception accorded Tito in the Soviet Union in June 1956 and the agreements signed on that occasion for Soviet-Yugoslav cooperation at governmental and party levels.
5. The announcement of partial decentralization of the Soviet economy, to be effected by abolition of some all-Union ministries and transfer of their responsibilities to ministries of the republics. This is exactly how the reform of the Yugoslav economy began in January 1950.

The Titoist system of "socialist market economy" functions in small and backward Yugoslavia much better than the totally planned Stalinist economy did in its time, but it is still far short of satisfactory. Not the least of the reasons for this is the lack of technical and administrative cadres. The latter are in adequate supply in the Soviet Union, and the essential conditions for the functioning of a "socialist market economy" may therefore be better in that country than in Yugoslavia.

In addition, it must be borne in mind that the Soviets may well derive certain propaganda advantages by adopting the Titoist economic system. True, the last few years have proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the Yugoslav Communists are not contemplating to yield power, to abolish the secret police, to grant political rights to other parties, to establish freedom of thought and expression—in short, truly to *democratize* their country. Nevertheless, by instituting a "socialist market economy," by abolishing *total* economic planning, and by restricting the rule of an all-powerful bureaucracy, they at least gave the impression of removing the most hateful features of a Communist society. To the Soviet leaders, burdened by Stalin's legacy and anxious to streamline their system without at the same time yielding an inch of power, the Titoist formula must seem ingenious (and disingenuous) indeed.

The above considerations, then, coupled with the previously outlined moves on the part of Moscow, make plausible the supposition that the Soviet Union may be planning to adopt some of the basic elements of the Titoist system. Certainly this situation, with its vastly important economic and ideological implications, is one which warrants close attention by the rest of the world, both within and without the Soviet orbit.

Background to Poznan

Editors' Note: One of the favorite Communist pejoratives for trade unions in "capitalist" countries is the term "company union." This term stands for unions which are organized and fully controlled by the management. Yet, as Mr. Grzybowski's article demonstrates, trade unions in Poland are "company unions" par excellence: completely dominated by the government bureaucracy, they are designed first and foremost as instruments for maintaining and raising labor productivity.

The plight of workers during the first years of the Communist regime recalls the plight of workers in 19th-century England, described by Karl Marx in the third volume of *Das Kapital*. Not unlike the 19th-century capitalists, the Polish government was bent on sheer industrial expansion, and consequently the rights of those who bore its burden were disregarded. Once the cup of misery was full—finally overflowing in the abortive Poznan uprising—the government reversed itself and hastily introduced a number of reforms.

Unlike capitalism in the West, however, contemporary

communism in Poland shows no signs of any profound transformation. The recent reforms, however far-reaching, are cautiously kept within the framework of the existing system. Abuses will be corrected, wages will be raised, working conditions will be improved, but the worker will still not be permitted to assert his independence, or to protect himself against the power of the state apparatus. The limits of the current process of "liberalization" have perhaps been most clearly expressed by Wiktor Klosiewicz, chief of Polish trade unions, who denounced strikes in Poland as "harmful to the interests of the working class and the people." (*Trybuna Ludu*, August 21, 1956)

The two articles below are offered here as background information essential to an understanding of the tragic events in Poznan. But they also supplement this magazine's continuing reports on labor in Communist countries, all of which highlight the incompatibility between the stated aims of communism—the liberation of labor—and its essentially totalitarian character.

Trade Unions In Communist Poland

By KAZIMIERZ GRZYBOWSKI

THE Polish trade unions, underground during World War II, were rebuilt almost immediately after the war as autonomous bodies, independent of government and political parties, with specific, well-defined tasks in the economic and social life of the country.¹ This was a period when Polish Communists publicly espoused a native "Polish road to

socialism," when one of the fundamental articles of their program was that the solution of the economic and social problems of Poland should not be influenced by patterns cut either by the Western democracies or

Mr. Grzybowski, Assistant Editor of the Mid-European Law Project of the Library of Congress, is the editor of *Economic Treaties and Agreements of the Soviet Bloc in Europe, 1945-1951* (New York, 1952). He has written many studies on legal developments in the Soviet Union and its satellites.

¹ The first postwar national congress of the trade unions adopted a resolution (November 18, 1945) which defined the purpose and position of the Central Board of Trade Unions as "... a non-party organization, independent of the government or political parties. The Trade Union Central Board has been organized with the object of improving economic and social conditions of Poland and stabilizing their democratic achievements." *Proceedings of the First Congress of the Trade Unions*, Resolution No. 4.