

that otherwise makes a significant contribution to scholarship. But in this case the author's difficulty with the English language is yet another obstacle for the prospective reader.

Abraham Ascher

The Land and Its People

GEORGE B. CRESSEY: *Soviet Potentials: A Geographic Appraisal*. Syracuse, New York, Syracuse University Press, 1962.

THE SCHOLAR who proposes to answer one of the perennial questions concerning competition between the Soviet Union and the West frequently finds himself in a rather awkward position. On the one hand, he must be loyal to the methods and standards of his discipline; on the other, the very posing of the question of competition places a value judgment upon the results of his research which constantly intrudes.

Thus, Professor George B. Cressey, Maxwell Professor of Geography at Syracuse University, attempts to answer the question, "Does the USSR have the environmental potentials with which to become the world's greatest state?" (The dust jacket simply states that this book "provides up-to-date background on our opponent in the struggle for world leadership.") When we find, then, that the northern tundra and certain desert areas in the USSR offer possibilities for only a pitiful kind of human existence, are we to consider this "fortunate" or "unfortunate"? Professor Cressey himself takes the most generous, although somewhat contradictory, path out of this dilemma by considering unfortunate what his original question implies to be fortunate.

Soviet Potentials is most valuable as a source of geographic informa-

tion about the Soviet Union for persons previously unacquainted with the area. The volume contains enlightening discussions of the specific characteristics of the continentality of the Soviet climate, and of the demographic, geographic, geologic, and economic features of the country. The assessment which emerges is that of a nation both blessed and condemned by nature. Although the Soviet Union derives much of its strength from its size, its very dimensions form an obstacle to efficient administration. While its resources in minerals are perhaps the greatest in the world, a considerable portion of that reserve is inaccessible. The great spaces which protect the Soviet Union from invasion multiply the problems of internal transportation. The fertility of the Ukraine is concentrated in the most vulnerable section of the nation and offers a temptation to invaders. The magnificent river and canal system is enormously limited in its usefulness by long periods of frigid weather. The multinational character of the USSR simultaneously increases the appeal of the state for its admirers and raises questions of ethnic divisions and irredentism across international borders. The occupation of Mackinder's strategic heartland coincidentally means entrapment within a land mass without access to oceans.

All these conflicting factors are carefully weighed by the author in his assessment of Soviet potentials. His conclusion is, "The United States of America enjoys assets of climate, soil, resources and location which seem to outweigh those of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. If the two people have equal technical ability, patriotism, and determination, the United States should keep in the lead. The only way in which the Soviet Union can overtake America is by more sacrifice and harder work than the latter cares to invest."

Prof. Cressey's survey is marred by a number of minor but bothersome defects. Many observations are either trite or quite inexact in

meaning. At the beginning, we learn that "in all the world there is no other country quite like the Soviet Union." Further on, we read that "Soviet planning finds its basis in the supposed logic of dialectical materialism." And in yet another spot, we are told that "just as all roads led to Rome, so many roads and railways center on the [Soviet] capital." The discussions of economic growth and international relations are already rather outdated in view of the author's failure to mention either the recent slowdown in Soviet industrial growth or the Sino-Soviet conflict. And, finally, though the book makes no claim to original scholarship, it is disturbing to find publications of US Congressional Committees cited for basic geographic data more frequently than either Western or Soviet primary sources.

Loren R. Graham

Turmoil in Africa

MICHAEL LOFCHIE: *Zanzibar: Background to Revolution*. Princeton, N.J., Princeton Univ. Press, 1965.

THE PRO-COMMUNIST aura surrounding the Zanzibar revolution of January 1964 and its aftermath tended, for many, to obscure the underlying causes of the explosion itself. The pro-Soviet, pro-Chinese, and even pro-Cuban leanings of some of the actors in the drama were represented by some commentators as the most significant aspect of the upheaval, and even as evidence of Communist authorship of the revolution. Others, on the other hand, saw the roots of the revolt as lying in a purely local history of social unrest and racial violence and felt that Communist attributions were irrelevant to the real issues. Nor was this just a difference of opinion between

armchair commentators and those on the spot; many eyewitness observers of events attributed them to Communists, while many who only read of them preferred to regard the revolt as fundamentally a local conflagration.

Mr. Lofchie's timely book is above all a study of events leading up to the revolution. He spent 18 months in Zanzibar in 1962-63 doing field research for the study—and consequently did not know at the time that he was, in effect, studying the “background to a revolution.” He learned Swahili, which is indispensable to an understanding of the coastal peoples and their way of life. “Leaders of all political parties,” he says, “cooperated with this study.” His compendious bibliography includes much out-of-the-way material. The recent history of Zanzibar is, in general, well documented so far as official reports and the local press are concerned (over 20 newspapers or periodicals were circulating in the island before the revolution), but there was also much party literature that could only be obtained by a researcher on the spot.

Mr. Lofchie tells the story of how a multiracial society, which was

nevertheless in many respects a harmonious society, became divided by bitter racial antagonisms. Political strife, the struggle for control of a future independent Zanzibar, became racial strife between Africans and Arabs. In this situation, those who regarded themselves above all as Zanzibaris might perhaps have merited recognition that they were putting national interests first. But the exponents of multiracialism were to be found primarily in the Arab-dominated Zanzibar Nationalist Party. “Arab nationalists,” Mr. Lofchie calls them, and he dismisses their patriotic pretensions. “Arab nationalism,” he says, “despite its liberal multiracial ethos, was basically a conservative if not altogether reactionary phenomenon”: it wanted “to return Zanzibar to . . . oligarchic rule by a small landowning minority” (p. 157). In contrast to Arab ambitions, Mr. Lofchie sees the nationalism of the African community as a defensive reaction to the above—“a movement of fear rather than hope.”

The tragedy of the situation was that even up to a late stage in the long drawn-out pre-independence turmoil, so many of the Shirazis, the real sons of the soil of Zanzibar

and Pemba, were still setting their faces against the racial appeal. Then, when the ZNP leaders had the chance to show their own multiracialism by agreeing to a coalition government after the 1963 election with its disastrously anomalous result, they rejected it and thereby sealed their fate. “Force,” says the author, “had become the only method by which African leaders could oust the Arab ruling caste from its historic position of political and economic supremacy and create an African-ruled state” (p. 12). Yet the new regime now has its own multiracial ethos. One hopes, with Mr. Lofchie, that racial harmony will be “far greater” in the future.

Those interested in the “leftist” trend in Zanzibar politics will find the author's account of the origins and ideology of the Umma Party interesting but tantalizingly brief. Whatever the cause of the revolution, this trend has come in on its back. But this would require another book on its own. For the prerevolutionary phase, no one could want a more informed and readable guide than the present work.

David Morison

HISTORY IN PERSPECTIVE

General Maleter: A Memoir

By Peter I. Gosztony

The place was Budapest; the time, between 7:00 and 8:00 A.M., October 24, 1956. A tall, spare, still rather young-looking officer wearing the uniform and insignia of a colonel in the Hungarian People's Army strode hurriedly through the streets of the old Buda section of the capital, skirting the west bank of the Danube, on the way to his headquarters on Castle Hill. He was Pal Maleter, formerly a Panzer officer and now—as one of more than 2,000 army colonels—the little known commander of the Army's Technical Auxiliary Forces. Yet, the turbulent events of the next ten days were to thrust him suddenly from obscurity into the limelight of history as one of the heroic figures of Hungary's 1956 revolution.

Although the streets of Buda remained deceptively quiet, the capital was in fact already in a state of mounting chaos by the morning of October 24th. What had started out the preceding afternoon as a massive but peaceful demonstration by students

and workers demanding greater political freedom and an end of Rakosist police repression had suddenly been transformed into revolutionary carnage by the action of the hated security police (AVH) in firing upon the unarmed crowds. The demonstrators had then procured or seized what weapons they could lay their hands on and had begun fighting back in a sudden outburst of pent-up fury. Early on the 24th Soviet tanks had moved into the fray at the regime's request, and insurrectionary violence was rapidly spreading.

Colonel Maleter reached his headquarters in Uri Street to find it the scene of frantic activity and confusion. Telephones were ringing, couriers were coming and going, and all sorts of conflicting reports were flooding in from Pest, the eastern section of the city across the Danube, telling of armed clashes at various points. Maleter was particularly concerned over the situation of the Kilian Barracks, a massive 200-year-old masonry structure in the heart of Pest, which housed about 1,000 technical troops, mainly new recruits, directly under the command of Maleter's headquarters. Communications with the barracks had been cut off since the preceding evening, when a crowd of demonstrators had forced the barrack gates and, without bloodshed, taken possession of most of the garrison's weapons and

During the 1956 revolt in Hungary, Dr. Gosztony was an officer in the Hungarian Army and served under General Maleter at the Kilian Barracks in Budapest. He now lives in Switzerland, where he is Director of the Swiss East European Library in Bern.