

Yugoslavia in Transition

DAVID TORNQUIST: *Look East, Look West; The Socialist Adventure in Yugoslavia.*
New York, MacMillan Co.; London, Collier-MacMillan Ltd., 1966.

Reviewed by Anthony Sylvester

THIS BOOK PROVIDES good background reading on the conflict and tensions in Yugoslavia between reformers and liberally-minded Communists on the one hand and diehard dogmatists and power-hungry bureaucrats on the other. The conflict, which has now led to a major shakeup in Belgrade, is not an isolated phenomenon. It has occurred all over the Communist world, and some of Mr. Tornquist's observations might apply to any Communist country, at any time since the Russian Revolution.

To a small extent, but certainly to a larger degree than any other Communist country, Yugoslavia is ruled by the consent of the governed. Yet, as Mr. Tornquist points out: ". . . the party is not the people," and it is precisely the power, organization and methods of the Yugoslav League of Communists that have blurred and frustrated the Yugoslav vision of democracy. He does try, however, to see the good, wherever possible, in the Yugoslav experiment in industrial democracy.

The author bases his observations on his two year sojourn in Yugoslavia where he worked as a translator, learned Serbo-Croatian, and adopted as nearly as possible a Yugoslav standard of living. He attended meetings of workers' councils, housing committees, pre-election meetings, battled to secure a flat for himself and his wife, and got to know first hand the underhanded methods of people in authority and all the little pressures and intrigues that go with everyday life in a Communist country.

The most illuminating chapters of the book deal with the system of workers' self-management. In

describing the workers' administration of a publishing house, a hospital and a drug factory, among others, Tornquist makes the point that Yugoslav industrial democracy works only under strictly circumscribed conditions. For example, a director can and often does manipulate the workers' authority and get his own way, provided he works hand in glove with the party organization in the enterprise. But he must be "a politician on all sides." In addition, there are strict legal provisions regulating the distribution of profits and the fixing of employees' incomes. During the author's stay, one director actually was appointed by the local authorities, a procedure which has since been changed, formally at any rate, to permit the workers' councils of each enterprise to appoint its director. In practice, however, the local authorities no doubt continue to play a large role in the nominating process.

Workers' councils do exercise real power in labor relations. No employee can be discharged without the approval of the council, for example. In this connection, Tornquist notes that a kind of workingmen's solidarity often develops when layoffs are threatened. Workers' councils as a rule tend to oppose layoffs even when these may be necessary for economic reasons. Indeed, one of the crucial problems of the Yugoslav economy today, and a reason for Yugoslavia's persistent inability to pay her way in the world, is precisely the excessive number of uneconomic enterprises which employ more workers than they need.

The case of the Galenika drug factory provides a

striking illustration of the problem. According to the author, economic experts recommended that some 200 workers in the factory be laid off. After considerable argument 85 were given notices, and it was clear that political considerations played an important part in the final decision as to who would stay and who would go.

Mr. Tornquist expresses some doubts about the economic advantages of democratic self-management by workers' councils and managing boards in Yugoslavia. Yet he maintains that the system "allows a man to get more than money out of his job. It offers him . . . a chance to move out of his atomic existence as a worker. It allows him to begin to comprehend the important workings of the society he lives in." One cannot help wondering, however, whether Yugoslavia can afford, under present conditions of international competition, the luxury of relegating economic efficiency to second place. Indeed, the entire recent emphasis of the economic reforms has been on the need to increase industrial efficiency.

The author's chapter on agriculture is something of a disappointment, for in this area he has taken much of the Yugoslav official line at face value. Although he notices that expensive foreign machinery is often used at a fraction of its capacity, and that the socialist agricultural enterprise in Yugoslavia (as indeed elsewhere in the Communist world) is heavily subsidized by the state and often does not justify the capital outlay, he presents an idealized picture of the agricultural "cooperatives." The "cooperatives" did function well in the late 1950's. But

by the time the author was in Yugoslavia, in 1963 and 1964, farmers were greatly overworked, and as one Yugoslav journalist reported last July, "they are paid disgracefully low prices for their products." Another Yugoslav newspaper charged that the "cooperatives" were setting themselves up as "big capitalist enterprises," exploiting both the farmer and the consumer. Only some 12 percent of the land in Yugoslavia is in the socialist sector. The rest is farmed by peasants who in effect constitute about 50 percent of the Yugoslav population. The latest changes have been beneficial to the farmers, but many influential members of the League of Communists continue to regard the peasants as "class enemies" who must be treated accordingly, despite their numerical importance in Yugoslav society.

The author is at his best when he recounts his experiences and personal impressions. His style is vivid and his anecdotes often amusing. When he is obliged to draw on material provided by the authorities, however, he makes a number of sweeping generalizations about such subjects as "Germanized Slovenians" and "Moslem Macedonians" which betray his lack of thoroughness. He also apparently accepts the thesis that all patriotic Yugoslavs were on the side of the Partisans in the last war. The truth is that the loyalties of the Yugoslavs were sharply divided during this period. The Communists did win the civil war, defeat the invaders and unite the nation. But unity was often only a façade behind which many old ideas and feelings remain alive to this day, despite the monolithic appearance of the party.

Reviews in Brief

Politics, Old and New

DEREK J. R. SCOTT: *Russian Political Institutions* (3rd edition). New York, F. A. Praeger, 1966.

DEREK SCOTT'S study, originally published seven years ago, has been known to specialists on the Soviet Union as a relatively short but solid survey of Soviet institutions. Although the book never really fulfilled the author's express intention of conveying a sense of "what it feels like to be another person in other circumstances"—it devoted too little attention to the processes of government and the position of the individual in the system—it did fulfill the promise of its title in providing a quite useful and reliable description of the formal party and governmental institutions.

Russian Political Institutions has now been published in a third edition, but unfortunately this edition is not nearly as satisfactory as the earlier ones. Perhaps the basic problem is that the seven years between the writing of the first and third editions saw greater changes in the Soviet Union than in the book. According to the jacket of the new edition, "Derek Scott has completely revised his original text, interpreting the impact of the Khrushchev era and the developments since Khrushchev's fall," but this claim only creates expectations which are not met.

The third edition was completed too soon after Khrushchev's fall to permit substantial analysis of the post-Khrushchev period, but the reader is justifiably disappointed to find that there is not even a systematic effort to assess the meaning of the Khrushchev era itself. If one compares the first and third editions, one finds page after page which are completely identical or

nearly identical. Even in the concluding discussion of such general topics as the budgetary process, low-level decision-making, and the techniques used to secure performance, there are only two places in the last thirteen pages of the book where as much as a single word has been changed. One of these changes involved the addition of a phrase stating that the Ministry of Internal Affairs is now called the Ministry for the Preservation of Public Order, the other the addition of two sentences indicating that certain economic offenders may now be executed.

To be sure, the descriptive sections of the book have undergone more changes than the analytical sections, for many of the statistics have been updated and institutional changes have been noted. In the two chapters on the soviets and the conventional state machinery, this has been done very thoroughly and accurately. The chapter on the party is also quite reliable, although it is regrettable that the author did not choose to incorporate the information we have learned in the last decade about the central party secretariat. It is difficult to understand why five pages are devoted to describing elections to the soviets, two pages to the commissions of the soviets, and then only sixteen lines to the organization of the Central Committee secretariat since 1948.

The chapter on "the web of management" is the most unsatisfactory. The statistics in this chapter have not been updated, and institutional changes (particularly in the legal and agricultural realms) are not adequately described. Here, for example, mention is made of the change in the name of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and functions are ascribed to the Ministry which are really performed by the Committee for State Security (KGB).

Russian Political Institutions remains a useful reference work on the soviets and the central governmental structure, but the undergraduate to whom this book is directed would be better advised to seek a more comparative book along the lines of those written by Alfred Meyer or Zbigniew Brzezinski and Samuel Huntington.

Jerry F. Hough

E. PREOBRAZHENSKY: *The New Economics*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1965.

AT THE TIME of the original publication of this book in 1926, the author, Yevgeni Preobrazhensky, shared honors with N. Bukha in as the leading Marxist scholar in the field of economics. He was thus a highly qualified contender for the right to enter the arena of national policy-making in the turbulent period following the October Revolution in Russia. This new translation of his work offers a clear presentation of the ideas which Preobrazhensky hoped to have accepted as a framework appropriate to the economic needs and ambitions of the new ruling elite. The work also portrays the intellectual excitement of a compulsively experimental decade in Soviet economic theory and practice.

Preobrazhensky's statement of economic principles and policy recommendations does not, however, ring with the self-confidence that one might have expected from an articulate member of the "inner circle." On the contrary, the tone is for the most part shrill and polemical, and it is clear that by this time the author had already been forced into a defensive position by his more