

Reviews in Brief

Lenin and Stalin

STEFAN T. POSSONY, ED: *Lenin Reader*. Chicago, Henry Regnery Company, 1966.

T. H. RIGBY: *Stalin*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J., Prentice-Hall, 1966.

THE *Lenin Reader*, edited by Mr. Possony, director of political studies at the Hoover Library in California, comes in the wake of numerous collections, official or critical, of Lenin's writings, alone or with those of other Communist leaders. Most of the material Possony uses is familiar—*What is to be Done?*, *Imperialism, State and Revolution*—and practically everything in the *Reader* was included in the ten-volume *Selected Works* published in New York in the 1940's. The material is organized topically and chronologically. Thus the compilation affords a convenient introduction to the development and consistency of Lenin's ideas on any particular subject—theoretical principles, economics, the state, the national question (rather a weak section), imperialism, revolutionary strategy and tactics.

Mr. Possony explains that the introduction he originally wrote for this book grew into his recent, controversial biography of Lenin.¹ In the new brief

introduction to the present volume, he suggests that Lenin had lost his revolutionary fanaticism before he died, and was entering a new "constructive phase." This was the line continued by Bukharin during the NEP, broken off by Stalin, and only now, Possony thinks, hesitantly approached again by the Soviet leadership. This idea, while not entirely new, is argued convincingly by the author.

The anthology of Stalin, edited by Mr. Rigby, Professor of Political Science at the Australian National University, is of a very different sort. It is cast in the framework of Prentice-Hall's "Great Lives Observed" series, which brings together, along with an introduction by the editor, a selection of the man's own words, the impressions of his contemporaries, and the judgments of several historians. Applied to Stalin, the method is interesting, but it cannot be called an unqualified success.

If Possony's collection is limited by graphing only the inner Lenin, Rigby's suffers from the opposite. Apart from the first section, a succinct, well-chosen collection of Stalin's writings and interviews, most of the material consists of snapshots that often reveal much of Stalin's character and qualities, but neglect the subtleties of his thought and the vicissitudes of his progress to power. Practically all the authors Rigby reprints—from Lenin and Trotsky to Isaac Deutscher and George Kennan—underscore the familiar image of sly tenacity and machiavellian powerquest. Many—E. H. Carr, Robert Tucker, Milovan Djilas—emphasize the unwesternized Russian who lived inside the Georgian Marxist. What is lacking

here is the kind of motivational revelation that Lenin makes about himself. This is not Rigby's fault; it reflects the paucity of sources and the shortcomings of existing biographical analysis of Lenin's successor. What he could have done was to trace Stalin's construction of the party machine—a topic on which material does exist, but which to this day has not been adequately investigated.

In weighing these two compact documents of the character of Lenin and Stalin, it is tempting to wonder again which leader is more responsible for communism as we know it. Or more concretely, what features of the Soviet regime and the Communist movement can be attributed to their respective periods of leadership? To raise the question and suggest that Stalin may have made a contribution supplementary to Lenin's, or independent of him if not actually contrary, is to challenge the view that the Soviet system has followed inexorably from Lenin's plans and methods. But it is the overwhelming consensus of serious scholarship, including Rigby himself, that a real evolution or shift did take place from Lenin to Stalin, not to mention the changes from Stalin to Brezhnev, even if a good deal of Lenin's legacy may have survived.

In Lenin's writings we can see the polemical vocabulary and the Manichean world-view of the elect struggling against all the forces of darkness that still distinguishes official Soviet thinking. In the Possony volume there are some interesting and relevant excerpts on the control of culture, the resort to capitalistic industrial ideas, and a general machiavellianism in

¹ Stefan T. Possony, *Lenin: The Compulsive Revolutionary*, Chicago, Henry Regnery, 1964. Reviewed in *Problems of Communism*, No. 1 (January-February), 1965.

political tactics. But for the real spirit of Soviet political authority, Soviet economic development, Soviet anti-intellectualism, we surely have to turn to Stalin.

Stalin's biographers all stress this, even those who represent him as a mere agent of history. Lenin was the destroyer, who barely had time to begin his reconstruction. Stalin was the builder, on his own lines. This much is obvious. But disagreement is likely to continue over whether the lines of Soviet construction were based on Lenin's "blueprints" or departed from them, and if the latter, whether the new lines were dictated by historical forces that Lenin never grasped, or by the views and wishes of Josef Visarionovich Stalin.

Robert V. Daniels

Russia and China

RAYMOND L. GARTHOFF, Ed: *Sino-Soviet Military Relations*. New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1966.

IN THE MARXIST-LENINIST interpretation of history, war is a phenomenon of class societies, intrinsic to the capitalist system of economically competitive states. Indeed, of all the possible kinds of wars posited in Marxist-Leninist theory—including wars between the Communist and capitalist systems—the one variety conspicuously missing from the list is a war between fraternal proletarian states. The Sino-Soviet dispute of the past decade has raised many questions, but none perhaps of greater interest than whether the dispute is likely to lead to an outright military conflict, which would invalidate the long-standing dogma that war between two Communist states is impossible.

Obviously, no one can predict how history will answer this question, and the present volume of essays does not attempt to do so. It does suggest, however, that military relations between these Communist powers have developed in a way not foreseen in the earlier days of the Communist movement. Although the editor, Raymond L. Garthoff, sets down the chances of open military conflict as "remote and

unlikely," the reader may infer from the record of past Sino-Soviet relations that war between the two Communist giants cannot be excluded from possible developments in the future.

O. Ferdinand Miksche, one of the contributors to this collection, takes precisely this assumption as the starting point for a chapter on the strategic and geopolitical conditions of a future war between the Soviet Union and China. Other contributors, including O. Edmund Clubb, Harold P. Ford, John R. Thomas, and Alice Hsieh, provide a useful and informative historical review of a variety of issues that have arisen in Sino-Soviet military relations, mostly in the period since World War II. Conflict in the Sino-Soviet borderlands, Soviet intervention in Manchuria toward the end of the war, the 1958 Quemoy crisis, and the nuclear dialogue between Moscow and Peking are among the subjects treated. One will also find an interesting appraisal by Malcolm Mackintosh of how the Chinese problem may look to the Soviet marshals as well as chapters by Mr. Garthoff on the political side of the increasingly strained military relations between the two Communist rivals.

Unfortunately, the essays making up this volume were written before there was time to assess such developments as Mao's turbulent Cultural Revolution, China's test of a thermonuclear weapon, and the impact of the lengthening Vietnam war on Sino-Soviet relations. Still, the volume meets the need for a competent presentation of the rocky course of Sino-Soviet military relations—an aspect of the quarrel between Moscow and Peking to which the literature of the dispute has given comparatively little attention.

Thomas W. Wolfe

Soviet Insurance

BERNARD RUDDEN: *Soviet Insurance Law*. Leyden, The Netherlands, A. W. Sijthoff, 1966.

IT COMES AS A surprise to many people to learn that there is not only a social security system in the Soviet Union, but also many of the branches of what is known as private insurance

—such as, for instance, life insurance. Even many students of the Soviet economy are unaware of the extent of voluntary insurance in the USSR. *Soviet Insurance Law* should thus prove very helpful to those who seek a general introduction to this subject and a discussion of its legal basis.

The first part of the book takes up the history of insurance in Russia from the days of the Tsars to the present. This is followed by descriptions of the structure and operations of the internal insurance organization, *Gosstrakh*, and of the various kinds of compulsory insurance for property (buildings, crops, livestock, and fishing vessels—primarily, of course, those owned by collectives) and for personal injury to travelers on public transportation.

Part II, which deals with the development of the Civil Codes, is of relatively little interest to the general reader. Part III consists of two sections: (1) a description and brief discussion of the social security program; and (2) an interesting analysis of the legal provisions regarding the public liability of an individual or organization for damages caused to another person.

In Part IV Mr. Rudden raises the question of whether insurance is compatible with a socialist form of government. He concludes that the idea of risk-spreading is consistent with communism, for Marx's slogan—"from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"—after all amounts to one of the broadest principles of insurance. This reviewer prefers to argue that this analogy is an oversimplification, and that, furthermore, all insurance is not necessarily desirable for the good of mankind.

Mr. Rudden is to be commended for a very thorough study and a clear presentation of Soviet insurance law, even though, on certain points, he seems only to consider the shape of the system on paper without venturing to the more demanding question of how the system works in practice. For example, the casual reader might believe that there is far more private ownership of the means of production in the Soviet Union than is actually the case. There is also a certain naivety in several remarks about Soviet life: at one point the author says that every building and every cow are insured (p. 52), and at another, he accepts, apparently without question, Soviet claims about the large numbers of persons of extremely