

# Messages and Miscreants

By Jeffrey W. Hahn

GAYLE DURHAM HOLLANDER: *Soviet Political Indoctrination*. New York, Praeger, 1972.

WALTER D. CONNOR: *Deviance in Soviet Society*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1972.

THE STUDY of political socialization has evolved with the application of comparative systems analysis to the study of political phenomena. It is concerned with the problem of how, in different societies, values, attitudes, and beliefs about the political system are transferred to those living within that society. System stability, it is felt, varies with the degree of consensus that exists among members of the society with respect to these behavioral norms. In the case of the Soviet Union, there is an officially sponsored set of norms which are ideally to be embodied in the so-called "New Soviet Man." As a model of desired behavior, the "New Soviet Man" is a paragon of Communist virtues: hardworking, sober, conscious of his social responsibility, polite, politically literate, disciplined, patriotic, honest, modest, and, above all, devoted to the cause of communism (as defined by the CPSU).<sup>1</sup>

The two books under review both attest to the growing interest in the process of political sociali-

zation in the USSR, though they look at the process from differing perspectives. Professor Hollander's work describes the post-Stalin evolution of the media as the "main agency of adult political socialization in the USSR." Her book devotes one chapter to each of the major Soviet media—newspapers and periodicals; books; radio and television; and films—and a chapter to the agitation and propaganda apparatus (Agitprop). In each chapter dealing with the individual media, she first examines the quantitative growth and institutional structure of that particular medium and then reviews audience surveys measuring the impact of the medium on the audience. The latter analysis is particularly valuable since it utilizes much new work done by Soviet social scientists, and it is brought all together in a single chapter at the end of the book.

While Professor Hollander's book examines how the official message is transmitted and suggests some of the consequences of media development for political socialization, Professor Connor's

work adduces evidence that the official message is not equally internalized by all Soviet citizens. Outside observers of the socialization process in the Soviet Union might find it tempting to over-emphasize the seemingly greater capability of the Soviet leaders to manipulate social values and attitudes, and from this might draw erroneous conclusions about the relative effectiveness of Soviet socialization practices. In fact, to take such a view is to ignore important "discontinuities," or alternative sources of values, which exist within Soviet society. Such discontinuities may influence an individual to behave in a manner inconsistent with the officially sponsored norms, that is to say, in a manner termed "deviant" from the point of view of society. It is with the phenomenon of deviance in Soviet society, and with its sources, that the Connor volume is concerned.

PROFESSOR CONNOR examines three types of what he terms "apolitical" or nonideological deviance in the USSR: alcoholism (and drunkenness), juvenile delinquency, and crime. The book accords two chapters to each of these forms of deviance, first describing the manifestations and amplitude of each (using such statistics as are available), and

<sup>1</sup> The model is perhaps most clearly delineated in the "Moral Code of the Builder of Communism," set forth in the 1961 *Party Program of the CPSU*. For text, see Jan F. Triska, Ed., *Soviet Communism: Programs and Rules*, San Francisco, Chandler Publishing Co., 1962, pp. 112-13.

then examining Soviet explanations for the deviant behavior (Soviet criminological theory continues to be dominated by the social-determinist approach, attributing deviance to "bourgeois survivals," institutional malfunctioning in the family, etc.). The following chapters review Soviet responses to deviance through various forms of correction or prevention.

Notwithstanding its focus on "apolitical" forms of deviance as distinguished from "principled" or politically nonconforming behavior, Professor Connor's study does have definite relevance for students of Soviet political socialization. After all, the "New Soviet Man," whose development is the objective of the socialization process, is a behavioral model that embraces the individual's total social behavior, including his political behavior. Thus, the prevalence in the USSR of the "apolitical" forms of deviance discussed by Connor can be said to suggest, in some sense, a failure to instill the values of the "New Soviet Man" *in toto*, political as well as social.

But it is above all in his analysis of the causes of deviance that Professor Connor makes a significant contribution to the study of political socialization in the USSR. He argues forcefully that modernization itself may be an important source of deviant attitudes and behavior. In his own words (p. 261),

*... the legacy of coercive modernization is a large element in contemporary Soviet life. If one examines the forms that crime, delinquency, and alcohol problems assume, one can see the legacy reflected there as well. It would be disingenuous to ignore*

*the impact of low living standards, crowded housing, and the pressures of an urban environment on the drinking behavior of working-class males.*

If the "legacy of coercive modernization" is at least partly responsible for such forms of deviance as alcoholism, crime, and delinquency, may it not also be a source of attitudes and behavior undesirable from the regime's social and political standpoint? For example, the presence of manufactured consumer goods priced well above the abilities of the average consumer is not likely to encourage a socialist attitude toward property. Nor is the fierce competition among secondary-level graduates for entrance into the technical-scientific training provided by the universities conducive to cooperative attitudes toward one's fellow students. Examples could be multiplied, but the point is that both attitudes are inconsistent with the officially desired set of norms associated with the "New Soviet Man," and both are partly a consequence of Soviet modernization. Connor's argument, which does not necessarily negate Soviet explanations about "bourgeois survivals," does suggest that Soviet-type "coercive modernization," especially with its resultant industrialization and urbanization, leads to forms of deviance. It is a useful insight.

ANOTHER THEME with important implications for the Soviet political socialization process receives expression in both books—that is, the existence of a "dissensus" between the views of the public on the one hand and the state on the other. In the case of the media—especially radio and television, the fastest growing forms of com-

munication—Professor Hollander sees such a dissensus in the fact that while the ruling elite views the media primarily as a powerful tool for political indoctrination, the popular audience is more interested in being entertained or in receiving practical information. The latter desire not being satisfied, the Soviet citizen turns to alternative sources, such as foreign radio broadcasts, which have the attraction of providing more objective news reportage (Hollander, pp. 125, 194). The resultant socialization discontinuities can, however, be minimized through greater sophistication in media usage. The author notes that such a change is indeed taking place in the USSR, and she expresses the view that the Soviet media can increase their potential effectiveness as an instrument of socialization by giving the public what it wants in terms of attractive packaging and more entertainment. After all, "apolitical" entertainment can also carry a political message, as anyone who has watched spy thrillers, detective stories, historical dramas, and World War II movies on American television can attest.

Professor Hollander observes that Soviet efforts to indoctrinate via the media confront a new problem resulting from what she calls the "privatization" of media use. By that she means that the great quantitative growth of the Soviet media has made it easier for the Soviet television viewer or radio listener to "tune out" what he does not want (straight propaganda) and "tune in" what he does want (entertainment, human interest items, etc.). She suggests, however, that increased media sophistication may also provide an answer to this problem. As American advertisers have learned, it is

not so much what you are selling as how you go about selling it.

The dissensus which Professor Connor sees between state and public with respect to deviance is not so easily resolved. He convincingly argues that public tolerance toward heavy drinking especially and, to a lesser extent, toward juvenile delinquency and nonviolent crime has frustrated efforts by the regime to eliminate these forms of deviant behavior, and that their persistence, as well as the persistence of tolerant popular attitudes regarding them after fifty years of concerted effort to replace such attitudes with new ones, raises serious questions about when, if ever, the "New Soviet Man" will emerge. Connor views this phenomenon as further emphasizing the need to examine socialization discontinuity in the context of modernization. Is deviant behavior in the USSR the result of bourgeois "survivals" and traditions as the regime maintains, or should one look rather to industrialization and urbanization for the causes of behavior at variance with the official value system? If the latter is true, as Professor Connor suggests, what other forms of deviance—such,

for example, as the development of a "consumer mentality"—can be attributed to the impact of these fundamental social processes?

In any event, students of Soviet political socialization can surely profit from Connor's illuminating analysis of dissensus, for it has significant implications for political as well as nonpolitical forms of deviant behavior.

SOME FINAL remarks may be appropriate with regard to the source material used in the books under review. Outside students of Soviet behavior tend to be overly apologetic in reporting their findings, largely because of the fact that they are as yet unable to carry out cross-cultural survey research inside the USSR. Obviously, this constitutes a substantial limitation, but it is not as serious as many make it out to be.

For one thing, as both these books make amply clear, indigenous survey research is gradually coming of age in the Soviet Union itself—in quality as well as in quantity. There is good reason for this: pragmatism in decision-making and problem-solving re-

quires it, and pragmatism rather than ideological rigidity seems to characterize the present Soviet leadership. Thus, an increasing volume of survey research and other kinds of data is now appearing in Soviet professional journals and books dealing with social problems that were previously discussed only in ideological platitudes. It should be noted in this connection that the Hollander and Connor studies contain interesting statistical data tending to show an association between socio-economic status and behavior and suggesting, among other things, that lower socio-economic status may correlate positively with both lower media consumption and deviant behavior. Although data of this sort still remain tantalizingly incomplete, the fact that such information is becoming increasingly available is encouraging. Professors Connor and Hollander are both to be commended for digging into this valuable material and incorporating it in their works. Their books help to bring the study of Soviet society more nearly within the framework of modern comparative systems analysis, a development which this reviewer welcomes.

# Urbanization in China

By Victor C. Falkenheim

JOHN W. LEWIS, Ed.: *The City in Communist China*. Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1971.

THE STUDY of the urbanization process in the Third World has been accompanied in recent years by considerable theoretical confusion. This confusion stems in part from the dissatisfaction of researchers with models of urbanization drawn from the experience of the West during the industrial revolution. While scholars agree that the Third World is experiencing urban growth at a pace that outstrips that of early Western urbanization, they are uncertain about the causes and consequences of that phenomenon and have been calling increasingly for empirical models of urban change specifically related to Third World settings.

One such study by T. C. McGee, appropriately subtitled *Explorations in Search of a Theory*,<sup>1</sup> questions the relevance of two conventional Western views of the city to an understanding of Southeast Asian Cities. Neither the view of the city as "catalyst" of socio-economic change nor the image of the city as a parasitic enclave, he holds, is helpful to students of

urban change in the Third World; and while recognizing that urbanization outruns industrialization in those areas, he sees new revolutionary consequences flowing from that fact. McGee's views are supported by Joan M. Nelson's study of urban migration and political instability, which comes to similar conclusions.<sup>2</sup>

For any effort to study Third World urbanization, China offers a fruitful area for comparative research. McGee excludes China, North Korea, North Vietnam and Cuba from his focus on the ground that "their problems of development are being tackled in a different manner."<sup>3</sup> However, such a distinction hinges narrowly on differences in urbanization *policy* and does not lessen the desirability and value of including China in the comparative study of the *dynamics* of urbanization. In common with much of Asia, for example, the primary functions of the traditional Chinese city were administrative and political. Strong efforts were made by the Confucian state to contain trends toward urban commercialization and social diversification by restricting city growth and city autonomy.

These policies led to what Etienne Balasz has described as a pattern of "arrested" urban development in which the cities of China never became "magnets" for the countryside or catalysts of social change.<sup>4</sup>

This pattern of urban development changed in part after the 1840's with the growth of modern industrial cities in the foreign treaty ports. These cities were relatively autonomous and did serve to generate some limited political diversification and commercial and industrial growth. But, as the centers of foreign influence as well as of bourgeois power and Kuomintang support (after 1927), the cities earned the mistrust of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders who came to power in 1949.

The primary concern of the CCP after 1949 was to establish control over the cities, and then to direct the subsequent process of urban development within the framework of clearly established political, economic, and strategic priorities. The first priority was to alter the skewed pattern of urban development inherited in 1949. In 1948, only 18 cities in China could be classed as industrial

<sup>1</sup> *The Urbanization Process in the Third World: Explorations in Search of a Theory*, London, G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1971.

<sup>2</sup> *Migrants, Urban Poverty and Instability in Developing Nations*, Cambridge, Mass., Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1969.

<sup>3</sup> McGee, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy*, New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1964, p. 78.