

A Spectre Is Haunting Communism

THAT SOVIET technology is getting ahead of ours is worrisome enough, but the unending crises within the Soviet leadership are nothing to make us cheerful either. Even assuming that the successors of the commissars do not cherish the prospect of nuclear war any more than we do, how can we reach even a tenuous substitute for peace with men who are so little at peace among themselves?

Stalin is very dead indeed. While he lived it was easier for the West to deal with Communism, contain it, and counteract its thrusts. Since his death, the totality of power that was his could not be reassembled in the hands of any one single man. Khrushchev is credited with having set in motion the centrifugal pressures still operating in the Soviet world. Perhaps he could not help it.

This astute, bouncy man, this sorcerer's apprentice, is hard at work trying to recapture the forces that he himself—or Stalin's death—unleashed. They run fast and make for change. So far, he has succeeded in establishing himself as the beneficiary of most of these changes. But how long will his luck hold?

Not long, we think. He may be more clever and ruthless than Stalin. He may even succeed in curbing Zhukov and other chieftains of the Red Army without running into any greater trouble than Stalin did when he had Tukhachevsky murdered. But from now on, how can he embark on a trip abroad without tempting someone to do unto him what he has done unto Zhukov?

His way of conducting Soviet affairs creates considerable problems for us, too. Less than a month ago he was mad at us for not inviting Marshal Zhukov to Washington. The visit "would contribute to an understanding," he told James Reston.

Had the two old soldiers met again after Geneva, they would presumably have dealt with more serious subjects than the health of the Aberdeen cattle at the Gettysburg farm. And how would the President, how would the world have felt had Zhukov been demoted promptly upon his return from Washington?

These Soviet leaders act like men possessed or, perhaps we should say, unpossessed. Lately—like Tito before him—Khrushchev has discovered in his own way what Justice Brandeis used to call the curse of bigness, and is trying to enforce a sort of Sherman Act in Soviet Russia. But trust busting will do him or Communism little or no good. All the frantic changes in the political high command and in the organization of production come from the dread the Soviet leaders have of those who work for the trusts, no matter whether centralized or decentralized—the workers who make up the Soviet proletariat.

IT WAS Karl Marx, of course, who spoke of the proletariat as the class that has nothing to lose but its chains, the expropriated purveyors of raw manpower destined to do away with the expropriator. Capitalism was the expropriator, and Marx compared it to a gravedigger digging his own grave.

The industrial West gave the lie to all these prophecies. But in the Communist countries capitalism was deliberately organized according to the pattern that Marx attributed to the West. There men really did become the tools of their machines, and both men and machines were run for the benefit of those who had unchecked control over them—Djilas's "new class" of party bosses.

There have already been several instances of proletarian revolution. One took place in Czechoslovakia

when, on June 1, 1953, the workers started rioting at the Skoda Works. The same month East Berlin revolted. Then in June, 1956, came Poznan. Shortly after there was Hungary. In all these cases the proletariat rose and fought. The workers manned the barricades, and there was no marshal or former commissar to lead them.

The post-Stalin Soviet leaders are not at ease with and among themselves, for they are not at ease with their own people. True, the Russian workers have proved docile. Under Communism what a man produces counts much more than what he believes—and the system itself dulls a man's capacity to believe in anything. Yet things were set astir in Russia by no one but Khrushchev. Or maybe it was because things were astir that Khrushchev made his memorable speech.

WHEN HUNGARY revolted, our country did not cover itself with glory. A few weeks later, the fear that Eastern Germany would go the way of Hungary reached panic proportions in Washington. The whole world knows by now that our government has no intention of "liberating" anybody. But what if the enslaved peoples start again to liberate themselves? Can our government offer the Soviet world a guaranty of internal *status quo*?

There is a spectre haunting Communism and no government can exorcise it. True to Marx's prophecy, these merciless rulers are digging their own or their best friends' graves. How long will it take before the final consummation, and how many attempts will these possessed men make to escape their fate? For we cannot forget that these gravediggers have more powerful tools at their disposal than pick and shovel.



Yugoslavia: No Middle Ground

GEORGE BAILEY

"A LOT of what Djilas put into that book of his is just what Kardelj has been saying all along," I was told by a young party official in Belgrade a few weeks ago. There is obviously a wide gulf between Milovan Djilas and Edvard Kardelj. Djilas, a former vice-president of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and the author of *The New Class*, was recently found guilty for the third time as an enemy of the Yugoslav state. Kardelj is still a vice-president and, since Djilas's fall, chief theorist of the Yugoslav Communist League. Nevertheless, there would seem to be some truth in the suggestion that many of the same ideas run through the writings of the two men.

"The new class," according to Djilas, "obtains its power, privileges, ideology, and its customs from one specific form of ownership—collective ownership—which the class administers and distributes in the name of the nation and society."

Kardelj has written that the Stalinists "treated the relationship between individual and collective interests by

subordinating absolutely individual interests to collective interests—which in reality cease to be collective interests as soon as individual interests are excluded from them."

Of course, Kardelj persists in his faith—or desperate hope—that his country's special brand of Communism will manage to reconcile the interests of the individual with those of state-sponsored collectives. Kardelj seems to understand that collective ownership can provide the basis for a more complete exploitation of the working class than private ownership ever did. What he and his colleagues actually do to prevent the exploitation, how they avoid the dangers some of them have recognized—here lies the ultimate test of their régime.

It's No Worker's Paradise

In the hope of overcoming—or seeming to overcome—some of the basic contradictions of Communism, the Tito régime has introduced several changes in the economic and political life of Yugoslavia since 1953. For example, workers' councils have

been set up to give the workers direct influence over the distribution of their produce and to cut them in on the "surplus profits" resulting from it. Nine-tenths of the country's agriculture has been decollectivized. Furthermore, Yugoslavs are now permitted to employ as many as four workers in business undertakings.

All these changes are part of a campaign to convince the Yugoslav worker or farmer that there is no necessary conflict between his personal well-being and the success of a state-sponsored collective economy. "Look about you and rejoice in your good fortune," the citizen is told, "because it all belongs to you."

Just how fortunate are the beneficiaries of these latter-day Marxist innovations? Wages of an unskilled worker may run as low as 7,000 to 9,000 dinars a month. At the official exchange rate this is the equivalent of \$23.33 to \$30, though it is difficult to render an accurate equivalent in terms of actual purchasing power. Of all consumer goods in Yugoslavia, food is the most reasonably priced,