

intelligentsia and the literary and artistic heritage of pre-Stalin Russia. To quote Fischer again, he "has the courage of the age" or, if one may put it differently, the old man's overriding concern with posterity. For one cannot help but feel that in the post-Stalin period Ehrenburg has been laboring strenuously towards a more respectful obituary, a more favorable historical verdict than the unredeemed two decades spent in the service of Stalin's propaganda machine would have warranted.

Since not all the returns are in, and the story is still unfolding, it would be difficult to say with any assurance or precision what such a verdict will or should be.

Yet two predictions may be in order. Whatever the exact terms of the judgment, it will disappoint both the admirers of Ehrenburg, who bill him as the conscience of Soviet literature, and his detractors, who view him simply as an opportunistic weathervane: the record is much too ambiguous and contradictory to yield either a blanket condemnation or a clean bill of health. Moreover, since the career of Ilya Ehrenburg has larger implications, as this article has tried to point out, its assessment is likely to have some bearing on such disparate matters as the uses and pitfalls of irony, the moral cost of collaboration with totalitarianism, and the remarkable resilience of literary sensibility.

## Perspectives on East Central Europe

- Eastern Europe in the Post-War World*, by Hubert Ripka. New York, Praeger, 1961.
- East Central Europe and the World's Developments in the Post-Stalin Era*, Stephen D. Kertesz, Ed.  
Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1962.
- Die Entwicklung der kommunistischen Parteien in Ost-Mitteleuropa*, by Alexander Korab.  
Hamburg, Terrapress-Verlan, 1962.
- Revolution in Hungary*, by Paul E. Zinner. New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1961.
- Communism in Czechoslovakia 1948-1960*, by Edward Taborsky. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1961.
- Poland 1944-1962: The Sovietization of a Captive People*, by Richard F. Staar.  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1962.
- Im Vorzimmer der Diktatur*, by Fritz Schenk. Cologne and Berlin, Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1962.

Reviewed by Melvin Croan

IN A SYMPOSIUM published in 1956 (*The Fate of East Central Europe: Hopes and Failures of American Foreign Policy*, Notre Dame, Notre Dame University Press), Professor Stephen D. Kertesz called attention to the dual character of Soviet control over the satellites. "It is a dire threat to the security of the Western world," he wrote then, "but it may also prove to be the Achilles' heel of the Soviet system." These words, so timely when written, have lost none of their relevance since. In his introduction to the present volume, *East*

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Mr. Croan, who has previously contributed to this journal, teaches in the Department of Government at Harvard University and is an Associate of Harvard's Russian Research Center.

*Central Europe and the World*, a sequel devoted to the developments of the post-Stalin period, Professor Kertesz has wisely chosen to restate the same basic thought. "This duality," he observes, "remains one of the major characteristics of Eastern Europe, despite all that has happened since Stalin's death."

Any such reminder of the inherent vulnerability of the Soviet position in East Central Europe—no less than of the menace which that position has posed to the West—is now doubly welcome. It comes as a useful corrective to the mistaken notion that East Europe no longer counts in world affairs; and it serves as a timely challenge to the unfortunate tendency to dismiss internal developments in the Communist states of East Central Europe as invariably and exclusively the re-

sult of Soviet policy. While adequate comprehension of both the internal development of these states and their role in international politics is impossible without prior reference to the Soviet Union, to focus on the Soviet "center" alone tends to produce an excessively narrow range of vision. It is liable to obscure other dimensions in a multiple set of relationships between the ruling Communist parties and the Soviet party, within the separate Communist elites themselves, and between the individual regimes and the societies they rule. Events of the last decade should prompt a recognition of the need to look beyond the obvious uniformities, to watch carefully the subtle process of diversification within East Central Europe as a whole, and, finally, to study closely specific characteristics of particular countries of the Soviet bloc. Indeed, neglecting these internal factors is tantamount to accepting the proposition that Soviet power has permanently sealed the fate of East Central Europe. It is clear also that such neglect narrows the scope for effective Western policy in the area.

HUBERT RIPKA'S posthumously published essay, *Eastern Europe in the Post-War World*, is devoted precisely to questions of grand policy. Writing in the immediate aftermath of the Polish October and the Hungarian Revolution (to each of which he devotes an informative chapter), Ripka proposes to extricate East Central Europe from Soviet control. Toward that end, he advances a specific plan calling for far-reaching military disengagement and extensive political neutralization designed to meet the security needs of both the Soviet Union and the West.

Thanks to widespread public debate in recent years about one version or another of these tantalizing themes, Ripka's proposals will not strike the reader as exactly novel. Even without the gratuitous publisher's note to the effect that had the author lived longer, he might have wished to revise his conclusions, it is easy to dismiss Ripka's suggestions as totally outdated today and largely unrealistic even when first propounded more than five years ago. Precisely because this is the case, it may be tempting to dismiss the book out of hand. Yet, Hubert Ripka, who in the 1930's served as the foreign editor of the distinguished Czech liberal newspaper, *Lidové Noviny*, and subsequently held responsible governmental positions under President Benes, writes knowledgeably about the general political evolution of East Central Europe. Ripka's analysis of how interwar rivalries among the great powers contributed to internal divisiveness through-

out the region merits attention, as do his claims on behalf of the capacity of its people to develop their own democratic traditions, if given the chance to do so. That his hope for a truly independent East Central Europe functioning as both bridge and buffer between the Soviet Union and the West seems illusory for the present need not rule out forever that combination of "internal and external pressure" which, as Ripka anticipated, "could eventually persuade the Russians seriously to negotiate with the West about a new political settlement in Europe."

While Ripka's treatise was inspired by the events of 1956, which to his mind foreshadowed "the disintegration of the Soviet empire and the fall of communism," the contributors to the volume edited by Kertesz take a look at the post-1956 period from a less immediate vantage point and they are considerably less sanguine about the prospects. Indeed, their major emphasis is upon "the skill and rapidity with which the Soviet Union has recovered from the various forms of disaster which threatened it then," to borrow a felicitous formulation from Robert F. Byrnes' concluding remarks. At the same time, however, the Kertesz volume is informed by an appropriate awareness of the innovations and complexities of the Khrushchev' era in bloc relations. It delineates the ways in which the Soviet leadership has had to take account of divergent interests and distinctive problems within the bloc, and devotes special attention to China's unexpected role as a "new power" in Europe. All these facets of the post-Stalin period are enormously significant, even though events subsequent to the publication of the book have already demonstrated the limitations on China's role in Europe and the rapidity with which it is being played out.

In dealing with a collaborative enterprise such as that edited by Kertesz, the reviewer is traditionally obliged to disclaim responsibility for assessing each individual contribution. Suffice it to note that in this case there are fifteen separate essays, covering both internal developments and foreign relations, largely country-by-country, and that the geographic coverage stretches the customary limits to make room for the Baltic States on the one side and Finland and Austria on the other. If there is anything missing from this comprehensive survey, it is perhaps an incisive analysis of the prospects and pitfalls of economic integration. The topic receives passing mention at various points throughout the book, but it is treated far too sketchily in view of its obvious importance in Khrushchev's program to secure Soviet hegemony in East Central Europe through shared interests and mutual assist-

ance (*i.e.*, economic interdependence). The absence of such discussion will be missed all the more since developments in the economic sphere do have, as the editor rightly suggests, "an important long-range effect on relations between Western and Eastern Europe."

APART FROM THE economic ties which bind the individual Communist regimes to one another and to the Soviet Union, another crucial theme deserving separate treatment involves the cohesiveness and purposefulness of the ruling parties and their leaderships. It is almost a "law" of totalitarian politics that when the totalitarian party is monolithic, the entire system is dynamic; when, however, the party is divided internally and the dissension exposed to the public, the whole totalitarian edifice may be threatened with collapse. In view of the variety of Communist politics in East Central Europe in the post-Stalin period, a comparative study of the various Communist parties has long been overdue. For this reason alone, the publication of Alexander Korab's *Entwicklung der kommunistischen Parteien in Ost-Mitteleuropa* should evoke considerable interest.

For the present, Korab limits himself to the Communist parties in three countries—Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia—with the promise of a second volume in the future to be devoted to the Balkan parties. Korab's presentation is essentially chronological in method. Beginning with the founding of each party, he carries the story up to the present day, and while he marshals much useful data on inter-party factionalism, the treatment of each party is entirely self-contained. There is, alas, little or no attempt at comparative analysis. What is more, the theoretical underpinnings of Korab's study are, at best, rather weak, and some points of interpretation seem quite dubious. How else to evaluate, for example, his ascription of the origins of the concept of "people's democracy" in East Central Europe to Mao Tse-tung's "new democracy"?

One would have expected Mr. Korab, a journalist who has been covering Polish and Soviet affairs for the Swiss newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, to have devoted special attention to those recent developments with which he may be presumed to be most familiar. That he has not done so may be attributed to his decision to write a large general history. To be sure, Korab does offer pertinent observations on the prospects for domestic autonomy in Poland, the strength of nationalism in Hungary, and the characteristics of party leadership in Czechoslovakia; unfortunately, however, the short shrift accorded to the period since 1956 may

cause his concluding judgments on the Gomulka, Kadar, and Novotny regimes to appear both superficial and glib.

FEW TOPICS IN postwar East European politics have evoked more serious study or penetrating analysis than the Hungarian Revolution. Among the several excellent contributions to this subject that have appeared thus far, Paul R. Zinner's masterful study, *Revolution in Hungary*, must be accorded a special place of honor. Professor Zinner's effort has been modestly advertised as an "essay." Actually, it contains at least three separate essays. The first deals with the Communist takeover between 1945 and 1948, in both its social and diplomatic contexts. This is followed by an analysis of the physiology of the totalitarian system that was established in Hungary in 1948 and the symptoms of its disintegration which led to the outbreak of the revolution in 1956. Here is a lucid account of the repression and revival of social forces, the ferment among the intellectuals, the students and the workers, together with an astute discussion of the confusion and factional struggle within the party. The third part of the book retells the story of the revolution itself, reconstructing the day-by-day events as they unfolded in Budapest and in the Hungarian countryside.

Numerous personal vignettes enliven the presentation. There is Imre Nagy, a tragic figure forced into the role of a national hero, a bewildered man swept along by events not of his own making; and Janos Kadar, who emerges not only as a rank opportunist but also as a villainous traitor. There is Cardinal Mindszenty, presented as haughty and self-righteous but entirely peripheral to the main events; and Jozsef Dudas, depicted as a fiery self-seeker momentarily thrust to the fore, only to be bypassed by the mainstream of the revolution. Behind them all lurk the Soviets, at first vacillating and indecisive, but then ruthless in their massive intervention and deceitful in their feigned negotiations.

Despite these sharply-etched characterizations, Zinner's judgment is balanced throughout. Where personal motives are unclear, alternative explanations are examined. Where documentation is lacking, as in the case of certain key Soviet decisions and actions, the author studiously avoids improvisation. All of this makes for a persuasive as well as a moving account of the Hungarian Revolution. Much of the vividness of color and the sense of intimacy with events can be laid to the author's skillful use of the resources of the Columbia University Hungarian Refugee Project and

its interview materials with 250 respondents who actually participated in or were close to the episodes described. The reader is left unaware of what proportion of the narrative is based directly upon such eyewitness testimony and how much of it represents Zinner's own inference. Offend though it may the formal requirements of narrow scholarship, the author's decision against identifying his sources at every step has helped to preserve the high drama of revolution. To have done otherwise might have entailed sacrificing the moral legacy of the revolution itself, and it is this legacy above all else that emerges from Zinner's work.

TURNING FROM HUNGARY to the history of Czechoslovakia reopens the question of an apparent paradox that has not been adequately explained. While Hungary witnessed a violent upheaval in 1956, and Poland a significant change of regime, and while rumblings of unrest were heard even in East Germany, Czechoslovakia—the only democratic state in East Central Europe during the interwar period—remained quiescent. Except for some comments on the "over-cautious, strictly realistic Czech mentality, and a corresponding behavioral pattern," Professor Taborsky's study of *Communism in Czechoslovakia, 1948-1960*, does not really elaborate upon the political passivity of 1956. The reader will look in vain for an analysis of the historical factors and social forces which have shaped and conditioned this attitude and "behavioral pattern." He will regret also the author's disinclination to assess the impact of the twin tragedies of 1938 and 1948 upon the Czech national psychology, as well as his reluctance to venture an explanation for the apparent internal cohesion of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in the post-Stalin period.

If the weakness of Professor Taborsky's book lies in his neglect of these important questions, its strength may be found in the author's excellent treatment of the institutional-administrative structure of the Czechoslovak Communist regime. In this latter respect the volume is truly a mine of useful information and an indispensable reference for all serious students of East European affairs. The organization of the book into four separate sections serves the author's purposes more than adequately. Part One introduces the reader to the party and its National Front "partners," and leads him carefully through the details of the party's organizational structure into a revealing exploration of how the party actually functions in power. Part Two, the longest section of the book, is given over to a discussion of the formal structure of the government

## THE SYSTEM THAT FAILED

According to Lenin, revolutions will occur when the rulers cannot and the people will not continue in the old way. In Hungary, both conditions were met.

The unwillingness of the population to be governed in the old way reflected years of accumulated grievances. . . . An exact scale of individual deprivation cannot be easily determined. But grievances caused by great and prolonged personal insecurity, affronts to individual dignity and self-respect, and humiliation of the national ego seemed to have a consistent priority over dissatisfactions with material conditions of life. People felt a revulsion against the lies which saturated their existence, and they despised the atmosphere of moral depravity which surrounded them. . . .

The structure of popular grievances gave the [Hungarian] revolution the predominant character of a national and democratic uprising rather than of a social revolution in the traditional sense of classes contesting for supremacy.

Although the Communists have denounced it as a counter-revolution, it was anything but that. The revolution provided unexcelled evidence of the dimensions of change in social structure and attitudes that had taken place in a little over ten years. Chief among these was the growth of the workers' political consciousness, which clearly belied the Leninist thesis that the working class cannot rise above economic consciousness without the guidance of its vanguard, the Communist Party. Many revolutionaries harbored deep hatred for Hungary's former ruling classes. Others, including intellectuals and students, regardless of Party affiliation, had a sincere devotion to a humane type of socialism. They had no use for bourgeois institutions as they had known them in their country or as they had understood them to be in the West. Their Western orientation consisted of a desire to have cultural and intellectual intercourse with the West on their terms, but not to imitate Western political, social, and economic institutions. . . . They wanted to substitute acceptable new values and patterns of human existence for the old ones, which the totalitarian Communist system had promised but failed to do.

—From *Revolution in Hungary* by  
Paul E. Zinner, pp. 359-61.

and includes a point-by-point comparison of the Ninth-of-May (1948) Constitution with the "Socialist Constitution" of 1960.

Although Taborsky's painstaking presentation may seem at times to go to unnecessary lengths, his judiciously balanced and closely reasoned assessment of all the available evidence is always applied to good effect. This is especially the case in Part Three, where

he turns to an examination of the economic achievements of the regime. Having presented vast amounts of relevant data on both the industrial and agrarian sectors of the economy, Taborsky suggests that the average standard of living in Czechoslovakia is probably lower today than in 1937. "Communist economic policies," he concludes, "have thus far significantly delayed rather than accelerated the country's progress toward higher living standards."

Striking and important as are Professor Taborsky's conclusions on economic development, his most forceful summary of the paradoxes of Czechoslovak communism comes in the final section of the book which deals with the regime's efforts to remake Czechoslovak society through mass indoctrination. Taborsky doubts that these efforts have been successful, but this does not cause him to indulge in any optimism about the future of the regime itself. On the contrary, he argues that the weakness of the party, its isolation from the people, and its very failure to transform "the great majority of Czechs and Slovaks into genuine believers in Marxism-Leninism" all serve to perpetuate the regime's reliance on coercion and its dependence on the Soviet Union. Currents of "liberalization" elsewhere in East Central Europe, and even the sneaking disdain of the Czech Communist leaders for their Soviet masters, have so far had very little effect in a party so completely on the defensive.

IN COMPARISON WITH the overwhelming greyness of Czechoslovak communism, Poland since 1956 offers many subtle shades and striking contrasts. Years after Gomulka's partial retreat from the victories of the "Polish October", and despite his present loyalty to Khrushchev in Communist bloc and international affairs, much about Poland remains unique. To mention only the most obvious, there is the continued vibrancy of Polish intellectual life in defiance of official controls; the distinctive operation of Polish agriculture; sustained and spirited resistance of the Church to encroachments by the regime; and the prevailing ideological skepticism within the party, accompanied by new forms of factional infighting. All of these phenomena attest to a pattern of politics at once different from and more complex than that which obtains elsewhere in East Central Europe. Surely, the political evolution of Poland since 1956 should inspire an exciting study. Unfortunately, Richard F. Starr's *Poland 1944-1962: The Sovietization of a Captive People* fails to convey any of the intrinsic fascination of recent Polish politics or to offer even a barely adequate

analysis of any of these developments. Indeed, Professor Staar's thesis that there has been a systematic and relentless conversion of Poland to the specifications of the Soviet totalitarian model leads him to dismiss the entire post-1956 period as only the third and highest stage of Poland's subjugation.

In his effort to represent Gomulka as a Soviet puppet and contemporary Poland as a Stalinist state (often by not very relevant documentation dating from the pre-1956 period), Professor Staar simply overlooks the crises and adjustments that have taken place in Soviet-bloc relations since Stalin's death. His discussion of the regime's handling of social forces is, if anything, even more shallow. Unaccountably, he has limited his treatment to the minor political parties, the Church, and the anti-Church movements, lumping all three together under the designation "pressure groups"—an ambiguous and misleading label, as the author himself admits. All told, the publication of Professor Staar's ill-conceived book makes the need for a truly discriminating account on Poland that much more urgent.

Among the books under review, Fritz Schenk's volume of autobiographical memoirs, *Im Vorzimmer der Diktatur*, stands in a special category. In place of the usual extramural presentation, Schenk introduces us into the very "antechamber of the dictatorship" for an enthralling inside view of the Ulbricht regime. Between 1952 and 1957, when he fled to the West, Schenk was active in the East German economic apparatus, serving during most of that period as personal secretary to Bruno Leuschner, then Chairman of the State Planning Commission and a candidate member of the party Politburo. His assignments brought him into close contact with many of the leading figures of the SED regime, including Walter Ulbricht himself, as well as with the Soviet authorities in East Germany. Schenk is thus able to convey, in a matter-of-fact presentation that is remarkably free of any personal apologetics, a set of vivid impressions of the East German regime and its leading personalities. To relieve the 1953 uprising from besieged governmental positions or to experience the 1956 unrest from the point of view of the secret police adds a new dimension to one's understanding of the Ulbricht regime's uncanny knack of courting political disaster and yet managing to survive all the same. The failure of Ulbricht's opponents to combine effectively to unseat him becomes more intelligible in the light of Schenk's observations about the isolation of members of the SED leadership from one another as well as from the population at large, and his revelations about the omnipresence of police surveillance of all leading party and government func-

tionaries. To avoid having to serve himself as a secret police informer, Schenk made good his escape to West Berlin. One cannot help wondering how many would-be Schenks have been permanently shut in by the Wall.

WHAT CAN BE said, on the basis of this literary survey, about the future of East Central Europe? Almost all the books here reviewed—with the conspicuous exception of Staar's volume—contribute something by way of significant information or suggestive analysis, and many are quite explicit in their political prognoses or policy prescriptions. The latter range all the way from chance observations by Fritz Schenk about the importance of East-West trade (a theme which he developed at greater length in his earlier book, *Magie der Planwirtschaft*, in which he argued for a stringent Western embargo on strategic materials), to the elaborate special pleading of Hubert Ripka. On the matter of future internal evolution, Taborsky's view that rising living standards may engender demands

for more freedom is the most conventional. So, too, is his assumption that any such liberalization must first take hold in the Soviet Union in order to become operative in East Central Europe. Zinner, for his part, cautions that it would be idle to speculate about a repetition of the exact circumstances leading up to the Hungarian revolution, but adds an important reminder about "the inseparable nature of national and international politics in our time." Accordingly, he calls for continued attentiveness to the internal tensions that beset Communist regimes everywhere.

For the moment, however, perhaps the most opportune thought comes from Professor Kertesz. Challenging the conventional belief that the satellites are wholly dependent on stimuli from the Soviet Union, he suggests that they may also serve as "transmission belts" between the West and the USSR. Now more than ever, this approach may open up opportunities—on both sides—to stimulate peaceful change, benefiting, not least of all, the long-harassed peoples of Eastern Europe.

## Seeds of Revolution

*Dilemmas of Progress in Tsarist Russia: Legal Marxism and Legal Populism*,  
by Arthur P. Mendel. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1961.

<sup>1</sup> *Social Democracy and the St. Petersburg Labor Movement, 1885-1897*,  
by Richard Pipes. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1963.

*The Rise of Democracy in Pre-Revolutionary Russia: Political and Social Institutions  
Under the Last Three Tsars*, by Jacob Walkin. New York, Praeger, 1962.

Reviewed by Donald W. Treadgold

THE LAST CENTURY of Russian Tsarism, especially the reign of the last Tsar, has in recent years been the subject of increasingly exhaustive and sophisticated studies by American scholars. Only the period from the Revolution of 1905 to the Revolution of 1917 has thus far been unaccountably neglected. Two of the books here considered, those by Professors Mendel and

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*Professor of Russian History at the University of Washington (Seattle), Mr. Treadgold is Managing Editor of the Slavic Review, and author of, among others, Lenin and His Rivals (New York, Praeger, 1955).*

Pipes, belong to what may be called the Karpovich school of Russian historiography in the United States; this school, represented by former students of the late Professor Michael Karpovich of Harvard University and primarily concerned with intellectual history, has produced not only the largest number of American books on Tsarist Russia, but also some of the best.

The third book under review, by Dr. Jacob Walkin, is not a product of the same school. The author, a U.S. Foreign Service officer recently serving in Hong Kong and Jakarta, has been distant from the American university scene for some time, and this is perhaps