

# Stalin to Khrushchev: Less Mystery But More Enigma

**Khrushchev's Russia** by Edward Crankshaw. Penguin. 175 pp. 85 cents.

**The Red Executive** by David Granick. Doubleday. 334 pp. \$4.50.

by Francis B. Randall

Modern Russian history used to begin in 1917; now it seems to start in 1953 with the death of Stalin. Russia, in Stalin's last mad years, was a horrible country to live in, but a relatively simple one to comprehend. Outside the Communist world, even in a dictatorship, public and private policy is the result of the pressures of thousands of groups with special and conflicting interests. But in Stalin's Russia, to an astonishing degree, there was only one dictator ruling through one party, while everyone else in the country—and in the Communist Party—affected policy only by slowing work when the police weren't looking, and by collapsing and dying. In Stalin's Russia, there were many secrets, but few enigmas.

Such a near-slave camp society does not exist today outside of China and its satellites. Russia has changed—but how much? Is it of overriding importance that Khrushchev, like Stalin, exercises one-man control in Russia through a disciplined party in order to build the economy rapidly and extend Communist influence abroad? Or is it of more significance that Khrushchev does not, as Stalin did, use his power to keep millions in slave camps, stir up wars abroad, and abolish all serious cultural life?

This is the essential question for analysts of Russia in the West today, and the lack of agreement on it often makes Russia seem like a more complicated and enigma-

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matic country than it used to be. One cannot resolve the question, for there is no scale of quantifiable units of change-in-Russia which all can agree to measure. We are left with the paradox that while Khrushchev *can* kill any man in Russia just by placing a phone call, more people have *in fact* had their eyes gouged out in Cuba these last five years than in Russia.

One cannot resolve the question, but one can lean to one side. Messrs. Crankshaw and Granick, in the books under discussion, emphasize the changes since Stalin, and are even relatively happy about the situation in Russia today.

Edward Crankshaw is the Russian analyst for the London *Observer*. His book, he proclaims somewhat bumptiously, deals not with Russian foreign policy which obsesses Western readers, but with domestic developments which they ignore. Most Penguin/Pelican books assume a more highly literate audience than that. He sketches the horrors of Russia at Stalin's death and tells the story of the power struggle won by Khrushchev, but the bulk of this little 150-page book is taken up by two self-explanatory chapters, "New Policies; New Methods" and "The Great Thaw."

Khrushchev, says Mr. Crankshaw, desires "the transformation of the Soviet Union into a prosperous and enlightened society, always within the framework of the Leninist idea." This is probably true. The incompatibility between the quest for enlightenment and the limitation of Leninism constitutes what might almost be called the tragic dilemma of Khrushchev. According to Mr. Crankshaw, Stalin came to power because he "killed and killed" but Khrushchev "in the last analysis has reached his present posi-

tion by consent."

Whose consent, one wonders; surely not the people's? "He persuaded his colleagues to raise him up." The murdered Beria? The humiliated Bulganin? Malenkov who has disappeared for three years now? All those high and middle ranking bureaucrats whom Khrushchev has replaced with his own tools? Khrushchev would not be dictator of Russia today if he had not, among other methods, used force.

Politically, Mr. Crankshaw maintains, Khrushchev's chief effort is directed at revitalizing the Communist Party. This means replacing the hundreds of thousands of incompetent yes-men left over from the Stalin regime with younger, dynamic, "practical" men something like Khrushchev, or at least like his own self-image. Along with this goes a reassertion of Party control over great areas of Russian life—the police, the army, and the economic machine—which Stalin's paranoiac divide-and-rule policy had detached from the Party and transformed into clumsy personal empires. This is one of the paradoxes of Russia since Stalin—that de-Stalinization has been carried through by increasing the functions of the Communist Party.

Economically, says Mr. Crankshaw, Khrushchev's main effort and hardest task has been to stir some life into Russian agriculture, and into the hundred million-odd peasants, "the other Russia," the dead weight of Asian poverty that dragged down industrial, urban Russia in its race to overtake America. He credits Khrushchev with major success in making Russian agriculture work for the first time in Communist history; even the much-ridiculed Virgin Lands he sees as a program designed sensibly to produce needed extra crops between the dust bowl seasons.

Mr. Crankshaw is moderate in his predictions for the Russian economy. Successfully reorganized by Khrushchev, he believes, it will grow and grow and grow—but he can't believe that it will reach the American standard of living in the foreseeable future. In any event, Khrushchev will not live to see the day; his hopes will have to be fulfilled by his successor—if at all—with the aid of a large corps of competent Communist managers.

It is these managers, the "red executives," who are examined by Professor David Granick, an economist at the University of Wisconsin. The bulk of his book is devoted to Russian business men at work—their problems in procuring supplies, handling discontented workers, and meeting state production quotas, to say nothing of the problem of getting promoted! Perhaps even more significant are his findings in the sociology of Russian managers.

In the wild days of Stalin, business men could rise from any social class, provided they showed industrial and political ability, and most of them did not have overmuch formal education. But in Khrushchev's much less stormy Russia, a large proportion, probably the majority, of the new managers are themselves sons of managers or equivalently privileged people. Today a would-be manager almost certainly goes to college, and in most cases he takes an engineering degree. He may even go to a business school! In either case his training will concentrate on the technology of industry, not on human relations—which he will learn, if he ever does, on the job in a factory.

Similarly, Stalin used to pick his political henchmen up anywhere, but now the rising young state or Party official is also apt to be a scion of the privileged classes. He will also go to college, and he too is most likely to take an engineering degree. His first job may also be in industrial

management, and he will most likely try his hand at that sometime in his career. The young manager and the young bureaucrat will both join the Communist Party if they have any ambition.

Two striking conclusions can be drawn from Professor Granick's study of younger Russian business men. One is already well known: the regularization of the recruitment of future elites from the college-educated sons of those who are now well off—in spite of Khrushchev's efforts to juggle the educational system to prevent this. The other is surprising: in Russia the manager of industry and the managers of state and Party are sociologically indistinguishable. They have common social origins; they receive the same training; they usually shuttle back and forth from industry to government at the beginning of their careers; they may continue to rise in both hierarchies for the rest of their lives. If Russian industry and government are both staffed and run by men who are so closely intermixed, sociologically and professionally, then one can hardly expect any split with serious political consequences between the Communist Party and the technocrats. Khrushchev's Russia, on such a basis, can continue to grow, smoothly and rapidly.

Neither of the books under review takes Communist ideology very seriously. Professor Granick dismisses it with such terms as "fancy-Dan Marxist gymnastics." Mr. Crankshaw sees it as "an impressive doctrinal rag-bag full of bits and pieces of ideas and feelings, some of them constructive and good, others plain bad, others simply silly," and claims that no one can tell him precisely what the ideology is.

Mr. Crankshaw, at least, is being willful in his skepticism. To be sure, there is a definitional problem. To be sure, Communist ideology is not a clear-cut entity, but a name for a complex of "ideas and feelings" held by mil-

lions of people during the last sixty years. But Communism is not so incoherent or indiscussible as all that.

There used to be only one Communist Party—a notably well organized group—and it possessed elaborate machinery for formulating its ideology as a set of ostensibly true and systematic propositions, and for securing outward assent and inner belief on the part of all its members. So expressed, the ideology covered everything from grand metaphysics to tactics for street fights.

There are now dozens of Communist Parties, but even the very few genuinely autonomous Parties (except for the Trotskyites and Titoists on the fringes) make great efforts to coordinate and enforce their ideologies.

All Communists deviate at times, just as Christians sin and scientists are often irrational. The world is diverse, and so are the Communists in it. But Communists tend to be less diverse than other men—for good institutionalized reasons. Communists in Great Britain and in North Korea are more like each other—in philosophical belief, political action, and even in much of private life—than any other category of Britons and Koreans. Such similarities are observable by even the most behavioristic social scientists; in explaining them one cannot get away from the ideological bonds of world Communism.

A knowledge of Communist ideology will not help us predict the details of Russian policy, but it indicates the limits within which that policy will vary. The interrelations between an ideology and a society officially committed to it are complicated, but without the effort, one misreads the society. Professor Granick largely ignores Communist ideology. Mr. Crankshaw stidently hoots at the whole idea. In books on contemporary Russia, these procedures are not virtues.

**Reinhold Niebuhr on Politics**

Edited by Harry R. Davis and Robert C. Good. Scribners. 364 pp. \$6.50.

"For Niebuhr," the editors write, "theology and politics are not really separate fields, but two perspectives on a single reality." This view has produced one of the most impressive and influential formulations of political philosophy in contemporary thought, as is well represented in this volume of writings taken from sixteen of Dr. Niebuhr's books and over one hundred of his magazine articles.

**Giant Among Nations: Problems of United States Foreign Economic Policy**

by Peter B. Kenen. Harcourt, Brace. 232 pp. \$5.

Foreign aid, trade and investment are criticized from the standpoint of America's long-term interests abroad, which the author sees as coincident with the economic ambitions of the underdeveloped nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

**A Roman Catholic in the White House**

by James A. Pike. Doubleday. 143 pp. \$2.50.

The Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of California expands his widely discussed "Life" article into a general consideration of Church and State, the nature of bigotry, and the "legitimate concern" which non-Catholics may feel about the power of a Catholic President "to fulfill his high office in accordance with American tradition."

**The Spiritual Legacy of John Foster Dulles: Selections from his Articles and Addresses**

Edited by Henry P. Van Dusen. Westminster. 232 pp. \$3.95.

The President of Union Theological Seminary has assembled a collection of the late Secretary of State's public utterances on such subjects as "The Faith of a Statesman," "The American Heritage," "The Spiritual Foundations of World Order," "The Role and Responsibility of the Churches," and "The Power of Moral Forces."

**Our Own Kind: Voting by Race, Creed, or National Origin**

by Moses Rischin. Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. 38 pp. Single copy free.

This brief, pertinent study of past elections brings to light the effects which ethnic and religious interests have had upon voting behavior, and the ways in which these interests have themselves been influenced by major trends in American life since World War II.

**The Facts About Nixon: An Unauthorized Biography**

by William Costello. Viking. 306 pp. \$3.95.

The tag "unauthorized," in this case, will be adjudged to mean "unfriendly" by the Vice-President's supporters, but Mr. Costello, a veteran Washington correspondent, has frequently been at pains to establish the exact nature of his subject's "controversiality" in his resumé of Nixon's political career.

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