Book Reviews

Moscow and Peking: Divergences in Strategy

The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956–1961. Donald S. Zagoria. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1962. xii + 484 pp. $8.50.

The widely differing views that have been held in the West about the Sino-Soviet conflict are pointed out in the first part of this book's introduction. At one extreme it has been argued that Sino-Soviet differences are of little importance, perhaps even a joint plan to deceive the non-Communist world. At the other extreme it has been argued that a Sino-Soviet split is inevitable, because the Soviet Union has become a conservative rather than a revolutionary power, because of divergencies of national interest, or because the Communist system admits of only one leader. The author, Donald Zagoria, then summarizes his reasons for disagreeing with both extremes.

Next follows a short but very interesting "note on methodology." It is argued that a great deal can be learnt about the working of the Communist system by a study of Communist publications. The Communist movement desires to maintain the appearance of infallibility and complete unity but the Party leaders have to communicate changes in policy to their followers and, especially since the death of Stalin, there have been different groupings which need to argue and to win support for their views. To reconcile these conflicting needs, Communists have developed a special technique of communication. "Embedded in Communist communications is an obscure but vast world of meaning, part of which is accessible to those with certain necessary tools" (page 27). And this use of language has become habitual, "Either some of the published portions of the alleged secret letters exchanged between Peking and Moscow are very well conceived frauds, or the Russians and Chinese argue in private much as they argue in public, disputing such questions as 'the nature of the present epoch,' the 'inevitability of war,' and the possibility of 'peaceful transition to socialism' " (page 28). Examples are given of the ways in which communication is carried on through such devices as polemical tone, divergent emphases, or sudden changes in routine formulas. And defectors from the Communist system confirm that ". . . the Communists themselves read their own communications with a full awareness of the vast world of meaning in them for the practiced eye" (page 28). Such reading of Communist material requires a vast amount of labor. For example, the author found some confirmation of reports of Sino-Soviet border incidents in 1960 when a Soviet historical journal suddenly criticized Chinese attacks on Russian borders in the 17th century.

Mainly on the basis of this kind of study, Zagoria then gives an account of the development of Sino-Soviet disagreements since 1956. The first disagreement came over de-Stalinization. The Chinese were alarmed by the possible implications of Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin, only in part because of its implications for Mao Tse-tung, and put forward a theory of possible contradictions within socialist society which the Russians on their side disliked. And, in the latter part of 1956, the Chinese, by supporting Gomulka and in their statements, worked for some decentralization of the Communist bloc.

Then came a sharp shift to the left in China, partly because of the traumatic experience of the experiment in free criticism and partly because a dispute on economic policy, which could be traced in the Chinese press, ended with a victory for the left. This led to a Chinese internal policy which was embarrassing to the Soviet Union because, in the communes policy, "Peking was suggesting that it had discovered a short-cut that might bring China to Communism before its Russian ally, which had a 32 year headstart" (page 98) and also because the Chinese were able to claim the authority of Marxist classics which "had been ignored for years in the Soviet Union" (page 108).

The main issues, however, have been in the international field. By the end of 1957, the Chinese had reversed their position of a year before and were taking a stronger line than the Russians against Yugoslavia and against decentralization in the Communist bloc. More important has been a steadily widening disagreement in estimates of the world situation. The author traces a marked difference in reaction to the first "sputnik" launching. Chinese statements claimed that there had been a decisive shift in the balance of military power in favor of the Communist bloc, that "the socialist forces are overwhelmingly superior to the imperialist forces" (page 160), while Soviet statements only claimed that the Communist bloc had become relatively stronger than before and had attained adequate deterrent power against any imperialist attack. The Chinese estimate implied that the Communist bloc could afford to take a much more intransigent line towards the non-Communist world, that it should not hesitate to use every opportunity for spreading Communism and had no reason to be afraid of possible Western reactions, while the Soviet estimate implied that it was still necessary to be cautious, that it was both preferable and possible to spread Communist influence by peaceful competition, and that there was a risk of a major war in which the Communist bloc countries would suffer severely.

The Taiwan crisis of 1958 provided a particular issue on which it seems clear that Russian support for Chinese action was very cautious and much less than the Chinese had hoped for. But this was only an episode in a steadily widening disagreement between an intransigent Chinese and a more cautious Russian position. Chinese statements have stressed the unchanging nature of imperialism, that capitalist powers will always be aggressive and can only be handled by superior force, that conferences with the imperialist powers could serve no purpose except to demonstrate the bad faith of their claims to want

peace, that transition to socialism was only possible through armed force, that the Communist powers should support all "wars of national liberation" while realizing that the bourgeois nationalists in anticolonial struggles were unreliable allies to be replaced as soon as possible by local Communist forces, that the Chinese Communist Party had provided the model for revolutionary movements in underdeveloped countries, and so on. As time went on Chinese statements became less oblique and cautious in suggesting that Khrushchev and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were inclined to harbor illusions about the strength of imperialism and inclined to be deceived by imperialist professions of desire for peace and finally that Khrushchev was betraying Leninist principles and becoming revisionist. They could support their position with such quotations from Lenin as ". . . no serious Marxist will believe it possible to make the transition from capitalism to socialism without a civil war" (page 230).

The basic Soviet position was expressed in *The Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*, published in 1959 after nearly four years of preparation, a book that the Chinese have neither reviewed nor translated (page 227). This argues that wars are no longer inevitable and that revolutions are possible without them (page 229). It also argues that, under certain conditions, a peaceful transition to socialism is possible. On the more practical side, Soviet policy has gone much further than the Chinese like in moves towards reaching at least a temporary compromise with the non-Communist powers. It has also been inclined to give assistance to non-Communist nationalist regimes even when, as in Egypt, they have been suppressing local Communist parties. Soviet statements have also become steadily less oblique and cautious in referring to the Chinese as "dogmatists," "adventurists," and "left-wing deviationists."

The development of this dispute is traced in considerable detail up to the Bucharest Conference, in June 1960, and the Moscow Conference, in November 1960, and with rather less detail up to the 22nd Soviet Party Congress, in October 1961. The declaration of the Moscow Conference was a compromise document, though most of the concessions came from the Chinese, and it did not settle the dispute. However, even though the dispute has continued for so long, both sides still seem determined to avoid an open split and, in 1961, made a test case of the minor issue of Albania. The result was interesting in revealing the relative support for the Russian and Chinese positions in the international Communist movement. Almost all the party delegations from Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America joined the Russians in condemning Albania; among the Asian parties only the Ceylonese mentioned Albania, though none of them positively supported the Chinese criticism of the Soviet attack on Albania. Sympathy with the Chinese position may be stronger than this indicated. Parties, such as the East German, likely to lose through a Soviet *détente* with the West, have been sympathetic to the Chinese though obviously not in a position to defy the Russians.

Zagoria concludes that the Sino-Soviet conflict has been real and serious, even though both sides have tried to avoid a complete split, but that it is not necessarily an advantage to the West. To meet the criticisms of the Chinese and their sympathizers, Khrushchev probably has to be more intransigent in his dealings with the West than he might otherwise be inclined.

Within its terms of reference this is an important, one might almost say definitive, book that represents the results of a very thorough coverage of the information available in Communist publications. As a complete study, its terms of reference may have been rather too narrow. What is missing is the dimension of emotion. The parties involved, especially the Chinese, are men who have deliberately tried to divert into politics the emotional energies which, in healthy societies, would be distributed over sex, religion, art, amusements, and other similar outlets, and the whole Communist movement has a considerable element of romanticism and myth. Again, what impressed nearly all visitors to China in 1958 and 1959 was the general atmosphere of enthusiasm. All this is hardly reflected in the book, and indeed there are a few points where the author slightly distorts his material to play down the influence of emotional factors. Thus, one might describe the book as a very good black-and-white picture of a situation which is, in fact, vividly colored.

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Evaluation Guide

The Determination of Stability Constants and Other Equilibrium Constants in Solution. Francis J. C. Rossotti and Hazel Rossotti. McGraw-Hill, New York, 1961. xiv + 425 pp. $12.50.

The authors present a very useful review of experimental methods and mathematical procedures required to evaluate the stability constants of mononuclear and polynuclear complexes. They do not tabulate constants, nor do they attempt to correlate variations in stability constants. The difficulties of each experimental method are enumerated in detail. In certain instances, the exposition of difficulties is likely to discourage anyone, perhaps rightly so, from using some of the methods. The mathematical procedures are given in full generality.

A possible deficiency is the discussion of the variation of activity coefficients upon variation of concentrations of complexing groups. On page 20, the authors correctly demonstrate that the activity coefficient of HCl can be expected to remain constant upon replacement of one cation by another, always maintaining constant ionic strength, only when the changes in concentration are small, for example, less than $0.1M$. On page 25 they note that McKay has emphasized that Harned's Rule and Bronsted's specific ion interaction treatment predict similar changes in activity coefficients for a given interchange of cations, whether there is a small or a large excess of electrolyte. Nevertheless, throughout the book the authors retreat to the position that their procedures require constancy of the activity coefficients, and they emphasize too strongly the idea that a large excess of electrolyte at constant ionic strength is likely to produce the desired constancy. The discussion of the work of Bronsted, McKay, Guggenheim, and others is cast in such a light as to give the reader the impression that there is considerable question about their conclusions. On the other hand, results indicating constancy of activity coefficients are given considerable prominence, although in my opinion the examples given are not typical. The discussion might give the reader an unrealistic view of the activity coefficient problem. However, if he recognizes activity coefficient variation