

stimulate liberalism in the Western world. Indeed, I am afraid that the chief effect of *The New Class* on those people who are likely to read it most eagerly and praise it most highly will be to increase their intellectual complacency and political conservatism. Nor will it have much value for Western Social Democrats, since very few of us accept the validity of Marxist dialectic. Where it should be read and analysed line by line is in the Communist countries. It is, indeed, a sobering thought that, among a great majority of the human race to-day, the Communist dialectic is accepted as the only valid method of thinking about politics. Even outside the Communist countries, a large part of the intelligentsia in Asia and Africa are at least half inclined to accept it.

The importance of *The New Class* is that it provides for this intelligentsia of the Communist and of the uncommitted world not merely a Marxist critique of Communism (that has often been done before) but a Marxist "treatise of Civil Government." No wonder the book is difficult, inconsistent, in-

coherent! Indeed, to understand it fully the reader must actually participate in the tortuous escape of a Communist mind from the Communist prison in which it has been confined, and share with that mind its agonising inability to describe in the categories of the prison-house—the only categories it knows—the freedom it now enjoys. Will *The New Class* be permitted to reach the readers at which it is aimed? In the non-committed countries there will be no difficulty. But Djilas knows better than anyone else that Khrushchev's anti-Stalinism and Tito's National Communism do not connote any real liberalisation, but are merely defensive mechanisms, employed by the New Class as a result of their new insecurity. Ironically enough, those Communists in Yugoslavia and Poland who are struggling most eagerly to escape out of Stalinism are least likely to be permitted the access to this book. They might disagree with it violently, but they would, I think, have to admit that its author beckons them from ahead along the road they have chosen.

Morgan Phillips: THE REBEL AND THE PRISONER

WHEN I first met Milovan Djilas in Belgrade in 1950 I took it as a matter of course that our discussions would follow the same formal, guarded character that seemed to be the standard adopted in all Communist dictatorships at that time. At first there were the familiar assurances to my colleagues of the Labour Party deputation that we were free to ask any questions we liked and to discuss any matter we chose. For the sake of amity, we resisted the temptation to point out that we were more interested in the candid answers than in the careful questions we had prepared. And indeed, our prudence was well rewarded, for I was never more surprised in my life at the staggering critical frankness of

this Communist statesman, who for three years had been plugging the orthodox Stalin line.

This was only a short time after Yugoslavia's break with the Cominform, but Tito's rejoinder to Stalin's denunciations had been, up to that time, so restrained that it seemed that a reconciliation was still not out of the question. Djilas, however, destroyed that illusion completely. Not only did he hit ruthlessly at the sacred Russian "centralism," but his obvious enthusiasm for the importation of a more truly democratic system into his own country helped to clear a little of the extraordinary mystery which surrounded the dramatic quarrel between two great Communist leaders.

The cold war was at its peak. The iron curtain had crashed across Europe, dividing the world into two camps. It seemed as if the line-up for the next conflict was complete—and then came the great rift between Tito and Stalin. What did it mean? What had caused the Communist empire to stagger so violently? After my two-day talk with Djilas, then the chief intellectual among the triumvirate at Tito's side, I had no doubt whatever that it was his critical and bitter resistance to the crushing domination of the Soviet Union that was the inspiration behind the break.

I HAVE seen Djilas several times since that memorable interview, and on each occasion I have been more and more impressed by his remarkable personality. Vigorous, straight-backed, and yet relaxed, he would discourse with quiet fluency on the problems of his country. When he dealt with the dispute with the Soviet Union he became more than usually sardonic. I quote the following passage from his conversation to show that even as long ago as 1950 he had fully made up his mind where his duty lay:

"I am now speaking as a Communist. We were a Communist Party, the most devoted to the Bolshevik Party of the Soviet Union, and we confirmed this with the war. We firmly believed their words about equality among peoples, about equality among workers' movements, that the Soviet Union had no hegemonic appetites, etc. Naturally, already during the war we felt certain differences between ourselves and them, but only in practical state relationships after the war these differences began to assume a more serious character. When it became obvious to us what the point was, although we were alone, a small undeveloped country, we said to ourselves: 'The people heeded us when we called them to fight in the war for their independence. They made enormous sacrifices in that war. We have no right to betray that struggle for the sake of some kind of words about the leading power in the world of socialism and about socialist solidarity with the Russians and I know not what!'"

But even more significant I found his views on democracy—which, undoubtedly, have put him in the jail where he languishes to this day. One of his favourite themes in those days was the development of democracy in a one-party state (he has revised his ideas considerably since then). Rejecting the necessity for a multi-party state he declared:

"It seems to me that the essence of democracy lies elsewhere—and it consists in this: that the masses are really in a position to express their opinions, that there is a guarantee that they can freely elect those whom they feel will represent them well, and that it should be possible to engage in the free battle of opinions. What were conditions like under capitalism? Capitalism did not thwart any battle of opinion as long as it did not endanger the capitalist ownership of the means of production. I do not see why this battle of opinion should not develop in our own country on the basis of socialist ownership."

No doubt he has long since regretted the lamentable naïvety of that deposition, for it was in the very act of furthering his ideas that he fell foul of the Communist system which brooks no opposition.

In his book, *The New Class*, which he wrote some six years later and managed to send to America for publication, he expresses a belated perception of the constant need of Communists to treat the State as an instrument of force. The Communist State, he says, cannot become a lawful state in which the judiciary would be independent of the Government: Even if Communist leaders wished to do so they could not create a lawful state without imperilling their own totalitarian power.

"An independent judiciary and the rule of law," he reflects somewhat bitterly, *"would inevitably make it possible for an opposition to appear. Laws in the Communist system guarantee all sorts of rights to citizens and are based on the principle of an independent judiciary. In practice there is no such thing."*

In that final staccato sentence he sums up the grim lesson which the monolithic State,

much of it of his own making, had taught him.

IN THE Spring of 1954, after his final break with Tito, I learnt from a variety of sources of the deliberate and remorseless process of denigration and humiliation of the man who had been Yugoslavia's Vice-President.

After a staged trial in January 1955 his pension was taken away and his family victimised. He with his mother and son were forced to exist, until his imprisonment, on his wife's pay as an official, and from the sale of personal property. People who came into contact with him were immediately interrogated by the police and ordered to keep away from him or to act as an informer. Secret police occupied the flat opposite and photographed everyone who visited him. He was followed everywhere he went and there were constant attempts to provoke him and his wife to physical violence.

In April 1954 I learned that this persecution was to be intensified by attempts to compromise him publicly on moral issues and to destroy his marriage and family life. Sure enough, only a few weeks later, Stefania Djilas, his wife, was accosted in a Belgrade street by a screaming woman who declared she was Djilas' mistress and demanded that Mme Djilas give her husband a divorce. The police arrived and a court case followed.

So many of these reports reached me that I felt impelled to take what action I could to relieve the plight of a man whom I not only regarded as a friend, but who had once brought personally to the Labour Government in England the hope of a new spirit of freedom in the lands of Eastern Europe.

I WAS personally acquainted with Marshal Tito, whose guests my family and I had been on the island of Brioni in 1952. I therefore felt that a private letter to him expressing my real sorrow and concern at what was happening would make a deeper impression than a formal public statement. This letter has never been published, and I received

no reply to it other than a crude, violent, and sustained attack in the Yugoslav press and radio; but it was essentially concerned with the issue of personal freedom and I did not want to become involved in other political questions.

I emphasised to Tito that it was painful to have to write such a letter because, for six years, I had been particularly interested in the experiments in Yugoslavia, and had become attached to many of the Yugoslav leaders through personal contacts. I had always appreciated the nature and the extent of the problems that they had to overcome, but recently I had been disturbed by news that I had received.

I reminded the Marshal that when Djilas and Dedijer were put on trial, Mr. Sam Watson and I had private talks with Yugoslav friends in London. We had explained that in our view this was the kind of test that would demonstrate to progressive opinion

"I have acquired humility," [Djilas] told me in 1956, two years after his split. "I was arrogant when I lived the life of an important bureaucrat. I did not even know the price of bread. After my downfall, when I went for the first time to ride in a bus I entered by the wrong door. This has been a marvellous and true lesson for me. I was a stupid lug.

"Now for the first time I have plenty of time to study. It is a good experience. And it is wonderful for my children. I assure you they were little bureaucrats. When Branko was six he used to go to the door and shout: 'Where is the car?' Now they know the value of money. They take part in our family councils to discuss accounts. I am finance minister. And I am more criticised than poor Rab Butler ever was in England. But I haven't yet been fired."

(C. L. Sulzberger, Chief Foreign Correspondent *New York Times*, in *The Big Thaw*.)

throughout the world the measure of Yugoslav progress towards a real socialist democracy. We had been relieved at the result of the trial but we now feared that our relief had been misplaced.

I had been informed that Mr. Djilas had been deprived of his war pension; that members of his family had been dismissed from their jobs. This was extended even to the husband of one of Mr. Djilas' sisters. More distant relatives still had been dismissed from the army after long service because they visited his family. I emphasised that as Djilas was a political journalist he could not earn a livelihood in that field. I asked that something should be done to enable him to earn an honourable livelihood.

I confessed that I was appalled that the country which since 1950 I supported in articles and speeches should have slipped into the evil ways of the Cominform countries. I concluded by expressing the hope that Yugoslavia in its relations with individuals would demonstrate to the world the fundamental superiority of a socialist system of society. I asked for observations on these points.

THE main reply to this letter took the form of a savage attack on me by Veljko Vlahovic, President of the Foreign Relations Commission of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia, in the newspaper *Borba* on 20th May, 1956. The attack took the familiar form of the Communist "side-kick" or diversion of

"At the end of January 1948, Stalin requested that a member of the Yugoslav Politburo, preferably Djilas, come to Moscow immediately. The specific mention of Djilas caused general surprise... Later, however, the reason was understood. During Djilas' two stays in Moscow in 1944 and 1945, Stalin had become convinced that Djilas was a very frank man who said what he thought..."

(Vladimir Dedijer in *Tito Speaks*.)

the argument to alleged weak points in the record of the Labour Party.

The long tirade concluded with the following solemn castigation: "The Yugoslav public, and not only the Yugoslav Church, are very displeased with the case of the internment of Makarios, to say nothing of the hangings in Cyprus or that terrible figure which was recently published on the executions in Kenya. I am not mentioning this out of any malice but because the Yugoslavs, as men who wish to perfect the human side of government, are very pained by the miseries and misfortunes of other people, as well as by a certain passivity and impotent resignation of the Party headed by Morgan Phillips, towards human tragedies of this type."

The only significance in this grotesque distortion of the truth is the desperation with which it must have been written. It was obviously only meant to be read by the ignorant, and one can only assume that the Yugoslav people have not been kept informed of the Labour Party's public declarations on the events in Cyprus and Kenya. I cannot understand why this should be, but it is not too late to make amends, nor indeed to publish the congratulations which the Greek Socialists conveyed to the Labour Party at the Congress of the Socialist International in Vienna on its handling of the Cyprus question.

The unprecedented publicity which Vlahovic's denunciation of my "interference" was accorded in Russia and the countries of Eastern Europe speaks for itself.

THE climax came, however, with the Hungarian tragedy. Despite the rigid supervision of his activities, Djilas took the first opportunity of expressing his disgust with his Government's passive acceptance of the Russian intervention. In a statement to the French Press agency, Djilas attacked the Yugoslav decision to abstain in the United Nations vote to put Soviet military intervention in Hungary on the agenda of the assembly.

"This attitude on the part of the Yugoslav Government," he said, "constitutes the aban-

donment of the principles of sovereignty and of the right of every nation to develop its own internal affairs." Hungary was threatened by *"the same imperialism which menaced the independence of Yugoslavia."*

He was immediately arrested on a charge of "activities against the régime" and, after a secret trial, sentenced to three years' imprisonment which he is now serving in the self-same prison of Sremska Mitrovica to which he was sent for three years by the former fascist government of Yugoslavia. I have no doubt that the irony of the situation must appeal to Djilas' subtle mind. In his latest writings it is clear that he has recognised that the story of Milovan Djilas, intellectual revolutionary, Communist leader, unorthodox theoretician, and finally scapegoat, sums up the classic dilemma which is expressive of this day and age. Men of goodwill from all classes of society have supported the establishment of Communist régimes in

many countries in the sincere belief that a democratic free society would eventually emerge peacefully from a revolutionary situation. The state, as Lenin had promised, would "wither away" and men would achieve the final state of civilisation in which they were truly their own masters. Djilas, like many others before him, has been earnestly seeking the elusive road back from Communism to a free society, but has failed.

Has he now finally rejected the materialistic view of all Communists that the end justifies the means? Knowing him as I do, I would say that he has, and has actively demonstrated in an unanswerable personal history that, on the contrary, the means determine the end and that Communism is, in effect, a disease that is incurable from within.

This voice from a prison cell in Central Europe is a small one, but it may yet shake the world.

Richard Lowenthal: DJILAS AND THE YUGOSLAV DILEMMA

MILOVAN DJILAS wrote his fundamental critique of contemporary Communism before the Hungarian and Polish events of last autumn. The article on the Hungarian revolution, which led to his imprisonment in the very same cell of Mitrovica gaol which he once inhabited as a Communist revolutionary, was written after the book was completed in manuscript; but the book shows that the author took the same uncompromising stand against the Communist Party State even before the object lesson of Hungary. Knowing the régime, he must have foreseen the consequences of publication even then—and must have deliberately faced them without the aid of the new impulse of hope afforded by the East European upheaval.

In fact, this is a book born not of hope, but of despair. I do not mean that Djilas has despaired of the future of humanity, of free-

dom, or of socialism; his faith in these has remained unshaken. But he indicates no concrete way in which the tyranny he describes is likely to be overcome; and he is explicit in rejecting any hope based on reforms initiated by the Communist rulers themselves on the Yugoslav pattern. It is this despair of the road chosen by his former comrades, the men whose ambitions and whose risks he shared in the war against Hitler, in the rise to power and in the struggle against Stalin, which forms the background of human experience behind the book, as it forms the background to the whole unique story of Djilas' development.

For it is a unique story: the story of the only Communist leader who started to doubt the fundamentals of Communist ideology, not because he had been defeated in an inner-party struggle over some acute issue of the day, but at the height of his power—because