

ties with those neighboring regions. It is a pity that Blažiček did not enlarge the scope of his study to include Moravia.

The choice of illustrations is well balanced, and only a minor criticism should be voiced concerning the unnecessarily large size of some of the ground plans. Reduction of this megalomania would provide space for additional works of general appeal such as the Prague Loreta, Brokof's Moors, or those large altar-pieces whose dazzling complexity of form Blažiček overlooks as a subject of study.

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THE POLITICS OF CULTURE. By *Antonín J. Liehm*. Translated by *Peter Kussi*. Illustrations by *Adolf Hoffmeister*. Introduction by *Jean-Paul Sartre*. New York: Grove Press, 1972. iii, 412 pp. \$10.00.

In reading Sartre's introduction to Liehm's volume one cannot help raising an interesting question: Is Sartre naïve or is he a true seer? (In the heat of battle seers always seem either naïve or to harbor at the very least an unrecognizable death or destruction wish.) He has with the stroke of a pen become an unperson to the Soviet regime; in his essay he unequivocally chastises the "thing"-makers. There is no doubt that the French writer was extremely influential among intellectuals of Eastern Europe during the fifties, but his voice seems a bit raspy and hollow after the experiences of the sixties. Sartre today seems to be out of step. It is not what he says but the time he has chosen to say it. He should have said these things twenty years ago. In his article he insists on condemning the "five invaders," when he damn well knows that there was but one invader: the slaves of the "thing," as Sartre refers to wholesale Sovietization. The fourteen artists interviewed in this book do not seem to belong to Sartre's time.

One word springs up in every interview: freedom. For Novomeský, "free expression even for those people who are not geniuses" (p. 101); for Krumbachová, "freedom . . . to create" (p. 120); for Kundera, "to start defending his own liberty" (p. 137); for Škvorecký, to realize "human capabilities" (p. 176); for Vaculík, not at the price of "moral devastation" (p. 195); for Mucha, "to be in the midst of the tumult" (p. 212); for Putík it is to "have acted" (p. 235); for Tatarka it is "cultural creativity" (p. 274); for Goldstücker it involves "courageous thinking" (p. 286); for Čivrný it is the "duty to remain productive and young as long as possible" (p. 320); for Karvaš it is "more important than the question of prosperity" (p. 339); for Klíma it simply means "people are not machines" (p. 366); for Havel it is "inner independence" (p. 374); and for Kosík it means that man is a "potential revolutionary, because he finds life in such a manipulated system unbearable" (p. 399). This spectrum of significant phrases is a profound indicator of motives that propelled these intellectuals to act.

Liehm's own questionable thesis is that because of the course of events, the setbacks, and debacles, "many people [are convinced] that socialism is incapable of solving cultural problems and this, in turn, has resulted in an idealization of the cultural life of the West" (p. 66). Liehm proceeds to place the blame on the country's (and the USSR's) "faulty concept of cultural policy." This fact cannot be denied, but there is another explanation: the peoples of Eastern Europe merely idealize what is not within their reach (economic goals) and *not* the "cultural

life of the West." Who among them would exchange their literature, their heroes, their dreams, and even their defeats—their culture—for that of the West? Freedom, yes—but only limited freedom. To those who emigrate, our Republican Party, especially the conservative wing, is a far safer aviary to fly to than the liberal jungle that the Democrats seem to represent. Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor, like Milton's Satan before him, has many sympathizers and followers among the émigrés from Eastern Europe. Socialism has taught its lesson well: having received the child into its fold at an early age, its teachings remain in the subconscious forever. Even Havel, the most outspoken of all of Czechoslovakia's writers, would not exchange socialism for any other kind of "ism." He, like the others, would wish for a more human approach to political matters.

These fourteen interviews are not mere apologies; they are moments of contemplation for intellectuals who acted and were determined to change things. The fact that only two of the group chose to leave their homeland after the invasion gives the lie to those who have cast aspersions on the courage of these people. The Czechs and the Slovaks fight in their own way and suffer in their own way. What's more, as these interviews show, they are their own severest judges.

These intellectuals, who are admirable representatives of Czechoslovakia's artistic and intellectual community, were interviewed during the period January 1965 (Novomeský) to May 1968 (Kosík). They all realize that they are stuck with the system and that the only thing they can do is try to improve it. There is a great deal of analysis here—some self-indulgent—but no definitive answers. They have a common goal, to effect more freedom. Liehm's suggestion to place culture above economy as Czechoslovakia's leading export to the world is a sound proposal, probably the most realistic of all the proposals made in these interviews. Ten years earlier intellectuals in Poland (Tarn, Kott, and Andrzejewski) advocated a similar approach for Poland. They were all shouted down by the Old Necessity.

In each of these interviews Liehm has managed to capture the essence of the man and artist, sometimes in a phrase (or paraphrase), sometimes in the tone of the interview. His comments during the interviews place the entire Czechoslovak experiment in perspective. It is only when Liehm tries to suggest panaceas that he runs into problems: "The cultural policy of a socialist state has a twofold task: to liberate culture from the dictates of power, and to liberate culture from the dictates of the marketplace" (p. 66). Unfortunately, socialism cannot accomplish the two goals Liehm has arbitrarily set up for it. The sad fact is that socialism is itself a "power" and the "marketplace" is the people. They both decide—not the writer-artists. This is why the role of the artist in a socialist society (or in a capitalistic one for that matter) is a complicated one and not yet completely delineated.

Liehm's book is more than a group of interviews about a particular political or cultural event. I recommend it to anyone who is interested in why man goes on living after great pain and why man is the marvelous creature that he is. This is a very important book. The translation deserves the highest praise one can accord a translated work: the interviews seem to have been conducted in English.

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