

DER BÖSE DEUTSCHE: DAS BILD DER DEUTSCHEN AUS KOMMUNISTISCHER SICHT DARGESTELLT AM BEISPIEL DER UNGARISCHEN MASSEN MEDIEN. By *Thomas von Tormay*. Studia Hungarica, Schriften des Ungarischen Instituts München, no. 5. Mainz: v. Hase & Koehler Verlag, 1971. 336 pp. Paper.

On the basis of several thousand radio broadcasts and printed articles, the author, formerly a lawyer and now a radio commentator and journalist, traces the changing image of the West, and of West Germany in particular, as portrayed in the Hungarian communications media from 1958 to 1971. His well-documented and scholarly analysis is a very successful pioneering work.

The image of the German Federal Republic underwent a fundamental change during this period as a result of the Eastern policy of the Brandt government. But despite this, certain features remain constant in the Hungarian media. East-West détente is seen only as an easing of relations between governments of different social structures, and only at state level. The international class struggle is unaffected by it, and condemnation of capitalist society remains total and irreversible. The most refreshing change in treatment by the Hungarian media is the disappearance of the crude and transparent falsification of fact. Distortion, however, is still there in the omission or arbitrary selection of facts and in the ideological "explanation" of those technical or other data that clearly reflect great Western progress or superiority. The Marxist-Leninist denial of capitalist society is, of course, the red thread through all commentary.

An interesting aspect of the study is Dr. Tormay's analysis of thousands of reviews of books published in the West. Works by John Steinbeck, Arthur Miller, Norman Mailer, and others were widely reviewed, and their diagnoses of the ills of Western capitalist society were applauded but with the repeated admonition that these writers are incapable of finding cures for its ills, because they are *ipso facto* incurable. The reviews follow the Kádár dictum: "Who is not against us is for us."

Although the complete denial of capitalist society is immutable, the portrayal of individual capitalist states is pragmatic and subject to change, quite radically sometimes. During the period under study, de Gaulle's France was the Western favorite of the Hungarian media. On the other hand, West Germany was, until the inauguration of Brandt's Eastern policy in 1970, both ugly and "Americanized," and the West Germans were selfish, rude, megalomaniac, and petit-bourgeois successors to the heritage of Kaiser Wilhelm II and Adolf Hitler. The East Germans, by contrast, were admirable, diligent workers—the men of Beethoven and Goethe. Since 1970 the unredeemed censure of West Germany has disappeared. Its social system is still condemned, of course, but government policy is now approved—not per se, however, but as evidence of the positive results of the correctness of the Soviet Union's peace policies. The West German people meanwhile have been elevated to the same "good guy" status that their East German brethren have enjoyed since socialism took control of their portion of Germany.

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