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Communism in North Vietnam

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Honey, P.J. *Communism in North Vietnam*. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1963. 207p.

This work is the second of a series by the Center for International Studies examining the interaction between domestic factors in various countries and the impact from outside, reflecting the growing disunity in the International Communist movement as a result of the Sino-Soviet dispute. Mr. Honey, lecturer in Vietnamese at the University of London, has systematically and exhaustively analyzed the course of events in North Vietnam, basing his discussion on untranslated Vietnamese sources.

Of all the communist countries, probably none is less known yet more important to American and Western policy-makers than North Vietnam. She presents an enigma insofar as her position in the Sino-Soviet dispute is concerned. Refusing to commit herself wholly to either side, North Vietnam has to warily steer an erratic and tortuous middle course, veering sometimes closer to one side, sometimes to the other. Perfectly valid reasons have dictated each move although they have often been obscured. The author analyzes these moves in the context of the events, pressures, and personalities involved. He clearly exposes the violently opposed pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese North Vietnamese factions and their leaders, and shows how the old master, Ho-Chi-Minh, has personally had to control every move in order to maintain a balance between the factions, to maintain stability in the face of urgent national problems and popular discontent, and to maintain North Vietnam's neutral position between Russia and China. The pressing problems of food and industrialization are made abundantly clear. So too is the North Vietnamese role in the Viet Cong war in South Vietnam and the place the conflict has in helping Ho-Chi-Minh to solve internal problems. Top secret documents, captured a decade ago, are cited to show the intended pattern for communist domination of Southeast Asia, and the point is made clear that nothing has occurred to indicate a change in this basic plan. The current discussions on 'neutralizing' South Vietnam are highlighted by the analysis of North Vietnamese policy. The great fallacy of such a course is clearly indicated; this very idea has persistently been stimulated recently by Ho-Chi-Minh himself for the reason that it would solve his major problem of reopening the avenues to the food supplies of South Vietnam. In the struggle for supremacy between China and Russia, despite North Vietnam's efforts to hold a neutral position, she cannot indefinitely avoid the traumatic experience of having

to choose one or the other. When this occurs, regardless of the choice, the almost inevitable result will be a slippery slide toward Red Chinese domination.

This is an excellent book, well written by an author with no apparent axe to grind. The objective and unemotional treatment makes it highly recommended reading for the Naval War College.

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Thomas, Norman M. *Socialism Re-examined*. New York: Norton, 1963. 280p.

For over forty years, the author has been a leading proponent of Socialist philosophy in this country. From this intimate association, he has in this book set forth a most enlightening review and appraisal of Socialism's history: its ambitions, aspirations, successes, and failures. Against this backdrop, Mr. Thomas analyzes the current world situation in all its aspects in the context of the possible answers to problems that may be found in current Socialist doctrine. In so doing, he includes a valuable exposition of what he views as good and bad, current and outdated, in the teachings of Marx. In particular, he provides incisive criticism of that aberration of Socialism—Communism. In brief, Mr. Thomas views the world's problems essentially as manifestations in one form or another of socioeconomic injustice and imbalance, on both national and international levels. Therefore, his proposed solutions are weighted very heavily in the direction of controlled redistribution of the world's resources for the betterment of human beings the world over. Essential to this process are a strengthening of the supranational powers of the United Nations; multilateral controlled disarmament; improved programs, preferably United Nations-ministered, of economic aid to the emerging nations; and worldwide birth control. As he himself states in his foreword, Mr. Thomas raises more questions than he answers. His views and evaluations are provocative, whether or not one agrees with him.

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