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China: The Other Communism

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tional struggle (to produce an effective "team"); President Kennedy and the CIA (with a look at the Bay of Pigs fiasco); Laos; the Cuban missile crisis; the Congo crisis; the United States and Communist China; Indonesia, Malaysia, and confrontation; Vietnam; and, finally, the making and managing of foreign policy. The last few pages, an epilogue, are an assessment of John F. Kennedy's statecraft.

Hilsman's book is as honest and frank about his own role in these affairs as it would seem possible for any participant to be. He does not gloss over or rewrite the record — or if he does, he does so without detection by this reviewer. Another of the book's best features is its high standards of accuracy. In short, it is a highly dependable book from the standpoint of scholarship.

Nor does the author confine his frankness to his own actions. He characterizes Secretary McNamara, for example, in this fashion (p. 43): "McNamara was an extraordinarily able man, a brilliantly efficient man. But he was not a wise man." Speaking later on the same point (p. 579) with reference to what he considers a basic mistake in U.S. strategy in Vietnam, he says: "If the Secretary of Defense . . . had been less self-confident and dominating, the political side might have received more emphasis. But no cabinet member can be faulted for presenting his own and his department's case with all the eloquence and vigor at his command . . . and the real blame rests with the Secretary of State and his department."

These excerpts suggest the flavor of what is quite a forthright (and equally a controversial) book. The value of what Hilsman has done does not rest on whether the reader agrees with his arguments and judgments. It rests on the honesty and vigor with which one person in a policymaking position during critical and important developments states his case, and the insights he gives as to how particular options were chosen and why. This is a book which sheds real light on how Government really operates. It deserves a wide audience.

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Karol, K. S. *China: The Other Communism.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1967. 474 p.

This lengthy volume, translated from the French, was authored in 1965-1966 by a Polish refugee (as a teenager from Hitler's armies) of Communist leanings. First "enraptured" by his new Soviet fatherland, he became a Soviet cititzen for 7 years, played around the edges of the Russian-sponsored Communist Government of Poland, and returned briefly to Poland in 1946. Finally, becoming less fascinated with Stalin's brand of communism, he settled in France in the late 1940's (when the French Communist Party was getting stronger daily) and began writing for leftist publications.

The book centers on author Karol's 4-month trip (his first) of approximately 16,000 miles (by air and train) in Communist China during February-June of 1965, during which his time was so thoroughly scheduled that even "the majority" of his evenings were taken up. His prior knowledge of China (other than of its communism) was meager and, based on his own comments, stemmed primarily from a single volume of pre-World War I vintage for foreign travelers. Professing to be a "socialist," but a "socialist" within the confines of the Communist definition, the author states that he was "admittedly . . . prejudiced in [China's] favor." That the ChiComs

approved his visa request in relative record time tends to confirm that they shared his belief in this "prejudice." Nevertheless, Karol goes through the motions of stressing his objectivity, although his "objectiveness," at best, is measured within a Marx-Lenin-Stalin-Mao (primarily Mao) frame of reference as he compares Soviet Russia with the other communism — Communist China. Soviet Russia comes in a poor second to Chinese egalitarianism and its rejection of the Soviet economic system, while the non-Communist world, particularly the United States, serves as a target for a perceptible amount of his biases, as well as his tirades, in his "objectiveness." The book's philosophy could well have caused it to be renamed *The Communist Gospel according to Mao.*

The author appears to demonstrate his greatest competence in setting forth China's history as "they see it" today, in describing the communes he visited, and in the developing of "correct" political thought for towns. But his aplomb is badly mauled when he discusses the "elusive proletarian culture," and dismay creeps into his chapter as he tries to make logical assessments of the role of writers (the area in which he has the most experience) and their treatment by the ChiCom government and the Red Guards. But shaking off these doubts, Karol ends on a crescendo in acclaiming China and its role in the world as though he were reading the pronouncements of Mao in undiluted fashion. Only infrequently, but periodically nevertheless, throughout the volume the author appears to forget his advocacy and omits the sometimes deft twists he gives events; for example, he notes that the isolationist tendencies of China which "daily becomes more marked," or observes that the ChiComs "feed the hostility the Chinese feel toward the United States," or concludes that "the China of today . . . leads to a . . . view of . . . extremism." Portions of the volume are illuminating and informative when one looks behind the facade erected by Karol, particularly if the reader has traveled some in continental China and has kept his reading on China current. To glean those portions, however, is a task not worth the effort unless the reader has these qualifications or has time on his hands to spare.

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Marshall, Samuel L. A. *Battles in the Monsoon.* New York: Morrow, 1967. 408 p.

Battles in the Monsoon is a penetrating and graphic account of the role played by the individual soldier in the small-unit actions that are the backbone of the strategy currently employed in the Vietnamese War. Never before in the history of ground warfare has the ultimate outcome of the conflict depended so much on the professional skill and courage of the lieutenant, the sergeant, and the private. Much to the dismay and frustration of the hundreds of war correspondents, news editors, and historians, Vietnam is not, and probably will never be, a war characterized by decisive battles being fought between division-size forces expertly led by battle-seasoned and well-known generals. In Vietnam the big conflict is a composite of hundreds of squad-, platoon-, and company-size engagements. Rather than by battle-seasoned generals, these small units are maneuvered and led in combat by men recently departed from the teeming cities and rural communities of the United States. The author, S. L. A. Marshall, has provided a detailed analysis of these young warriors and many of the skirmishes and actions in which they fought. Only a writer like Marshall