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Brain-Washing in Red China: The Calculated Destruction of Men's Minds by Edward Hunter

No Secret is Safe: Behind the Bamboo Curtain
by Mark Tennien

Out of Red China by Liu Shaw-Tung

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His practical outlook seems to have been a fervent and unselfish love of his fellowman, a zealous energetic devotion to improving man's condition on earth. One wishes that there could have been someone, a first lieutenant perhaps, to bring Sidney Hillman into contact with the warm vibrant teachings of the Papal Encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. Hillman found by trial and error much that is advocated by the Popes. It would have been so much finer for him and for all his workers, if he had also the solid foundation of the dignity of man as a child of God. He would have been so much more comforted and supported in time of trial, if he knew that the solidarity which he so earnestly sought finds thrilling justification in the doctrine that all men are sharers in the same brotherhood of Christ, that an understanding of the Mystical Body of Christ gives so much more meaning to labor unions and industry councils. But alas, Catholic leaders who could have supplied Sidney Hillman with these dynamic realities, simply did not exist, not at that time in the clothing industry. Despite the fact that *Rerum Novarum* was sent to all the Catholic world in 1891, sixteen years before Sidney Hillman landed in New York, its saving teachings remained unknown to most Catholics. One watches the great accomplishments with a certain sense of sadness. The things he did were fine things, things which badly needed doing and he did them well. He could have done them with so much more inspiration if Catholics had been available in the labor movement to show him that all the things he was trying to do are dear to the heart of God and dear to the heart of Holy Mother Church. Had there been such, the very real gains which Mr. Hillman made for justice would also have brought the people nearer to the Heart of Christ into the bargain.

WALTER B. HOGAN

BRAIN-WASHING IN RED CHINA: The Calculated Destruction of Men's Minds. By Edward Hunter. The Vanguard Press, New York. 1951. pp. viii-311. \$3.50.

NO SECRET IS SAFE: Behind the Bamboo Curtain. By Mark Tennien of Maryknoll. With an Introduction by Cardinal Spellman. Farrar, Strauss and Young, New York. 1952. pp. 270. \$3.50

OUT OF RED CHINA. By Liu Shaw-Tung. Translated from the Chinese by Jack Chia and Henry Walter. With an Introduction by Dr. Hu Shih, former Chinese Ambassador to the United States. Duell, Sloan and Pearce—Little, Brown and Company, New York. 1953. pp. xxvi - 269. \$4.00

In the growing mass of articles and books by those who have suffered behind the Curtain and lived to document their experiences, the reader is impressed especially by the sameness of the technique employed, even in the most widely distant provinces of the Communist Empire. Whether Eleanor Lipper is describing the vaults of the Butykra in Moscow, or Vogeler the cells in Budapest, Bryant or Msgr. Fahy the prisons of Shanghai, each, independently reporting his own sufferings, reveals the identity of the basic pattern employed by the Communists to produce the same results.

Inhuman pressures are built up to create in the mind of the prisoner the illusion of an all-powerful State. Gradually there grows in him a sense of his own total dereliction, of the futility of resisting. If the pressure is sufficiently intense and long continued, the prisoner will confess, grovelling, to any crime whatsoever.

The means employed are the same: interminable questionings, startlingly detailed information about the prisoner distorted into a huge, sinister pattern of crime against the State; privation of the most elementary comforts, of privacy, for the eye of the guard is ever at the peephole, and prisoners watch and report on prisoners; privation of enough water to wash in, of freedom to use the toilet according to need. Through all the daylight hours except at meals and meetings, the prisoner must squat upon the floor, head erect, forbidden to speak, or move or sleep or sing or cry. Forbidden above all to laugh. There are hours of forced listening to the propaganda harangues of indoctrination; hours of discussion and savage 'self-criticism' meetings, in which each is obliged to take active part. There is the calculated pressure of uncertainty. And always there echoes that same refrain, from questioners, guards, brain-washers and other prisoners: "Confess! Confess!"

Imprisonment behind the Curtain is a matter of degree. Even high Party officials, no matter how privileged, are prisoners of the State. Their words and actions are observed, reported, scrutinized—but especially—remembered. Their lives, even in matters as personal as marriage, are completely subject to Party discipline.

As for the common people, a policeman assigned to each group of five or six families takes his meals with each family in turn, reporting all he sees and hears. Loud-speakers blatting from every street-corner, bill-boards, books and pamphlets, newspapers, plays and movies, the frequent and seemingly interminable meetings, at work, in the neighborhood association, at school, all carry on unrelenting psychological warfare designed to reduce the captive millions under Communist control to the sort of inhuman puppets described by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*, and George Orwell in *1984*.

"Brain-washing" is the popular term for the Party's campaign "to correct the thinking of the masses". Edward Hunter, the compiler of *Brain-Washing in Red China*, has to his credit more than

twenty years of accurate reporting and some remarkably correct predicting on affairs in the Far East. He calls this psychological warfare "the calculated destruction of men's minds". As he listens to a student's account of life and brain-washing in a so-called "university", there comes a vague uneasiness of having heard all this before. Then he remembers. He had gone to visit a friend detained briefly in an insane asylum. A psychiatrist had explained the technique of the cure. By psycho-analysis and hypnosis the mental mosaic of the patient is reconstructed. After the hidden causes are found, the patient is generally cured once he can be brought frankly to face the facts. Red China has become a vast psychiatric ward run by malevolent experts who apply their knowledge of the workings of the human mind not to madmen but to the sane, not to cure but to destroy.

Some of the stories are from the lips of those who have escaped, others from those obliged to go back to Red China because their families were hostages to guarantee their return. A student tells of his indoctrination and eventual escape; a school teacher who had helped the Reds take Hankow tells what is happening to the schools. Excerpts from the text-books tell an even more forceful story. There are pages from the diaries of Communist guerrillas captured in Malaya; descriptions from *The Cartoon Propaganda Reference Book*; analyses of plays, especially of one called *A Question of Thought*, which lays bare the technique of brain-washing. Directives from the Ministry of Culture show how all the arts are controlled and welded into weapons of psychological warfare. An article outlines *The Means of Thought Reform* by the ablest of the popularizers of Communist Theory, Ai Szu-Chi (who has, since the publication of this book, fallen from grace and been obliged to make a most abject retraction of his errors). Most pitiful is a letter, one sample from among the hundreds which appear in the papers every day, in which the son of Dr. Hu Shih denounces his brilliant father as an enemy of his people and of himself.

Out of this collection of documents arises a vivid picture of the vast operation in which the Red authorities are engaged: the wiping from the minds of the 450,000,000 under their control of all that is worthwhile in a culture which has merited to endure for three thousand years, and the attempt to replace it with slogans and lies and hatred. "It is psychological warfare on a scale incalculably more immense than any militarist of the past has ever envisaged."

Father Tennen's book, *No Secret Is Safe*, is the day-to-day account by an eyewitness of how the Communists took over the town of Shumkai, and the changes they brought about during the first two years. This book is not a thesis; Shumkai is not some sociologist's Middletown. He tells what he saw and heard with quiet humor, with a deep sympathy for this people he has known and loved.

But through the humor and the low emotional pitch of the writing, the facts speak for themselves of heroism without heroics, of the spirit of the martyrs without the pride of martyrdom, as though this manly facing of death each day were just part of the job. The moments of high tension as when the searchers almost find the diary strapped to his leg, produce no purple patches. (A welcome relief from modern novelists, who would have blown up this one incident into a full-length novel detailing their mental states). After the transfer of the diary to his foot-locker, it is discovered by the police in Canton. But Father Tennien sweats out twenty hours of brow-beating, questioning and anxiety in less than four pages.

To have allowed him to witness the 'land-reform' meetings held in the church, the public trials, the beatings, the sentencing and execution of the landlords was a mistake. A mistake also to allow him to keep a diary in prison, to smuggle it out of jail, to type it out in the final period of house-arrest, for it was destined to become a book to expose the Reds. "And after all these blunders, I began to wonder if they would make the final mistake of letting me get out of China. If they arranged to have me conveniently die, it would correct all their mistakes." This was in the beginning. The Chinese Communists are not making so many mistakes today.

There emerges from this book the same picture of Red China as in *Brain-Washing*. That last island of human dignity, the right of a person to the privacy of his own thoughts, no longer exists. If some prisoners escape being driven insane or broken in spirit, it is because the Chinese Reds have neither the time nor as yet the skill of their Russian masters, to apply to such a vast number of prisoners the full treatment of mental cruelty.

Out of Red China is the story of a fourth-year university student working part time, who, when the Reds take over, finds himself without a job and joins the Southbound Working Group in order to live. After brain-washing and indoctrination, he is assigned, first to the New China News Agency, then to the Political Training Department of the Fourth Field Army. When he dares point out to the woman assistant of the Minister her violations of regulations, she demands that he be investigated. Over the week-end an opportunity to use someone else's pass presents itself, and he is able to escape to Hongkong. Within the framework of this story Liu Shaw-Tong gives us vivid sketches of the life within the party, how a man's life and future hang on the whim of those above him in the Organization, how only by toadying to the old Party members, by voicing only "correct" sentiments, by spying on everyone and knowing when and whom to denounce, can a Communist official achieve a certain shaky security and, perhaps, advancement.

However, this book must not be taken as a picture of life within the Chinese Communist Party now. The year described, 1949-1950,

was still the Honeymoon period. The rapid expansion of the Party at that time loosened the tight discipline. Brain-washing and two great purges have taken care of many of those students who had been caught up in a propaganda wave of enthusiasm and then disillusioned by realities. Liu's escape would not be so easy today.

The book is important because it gives the views of an educated Chinese pagan. Father Tennien looks at Red China through the eyes of a Catholic priest, Hunter judges by the standards of the Western World, which, despite modern paganism, are still predominantly Christian. Liu condemns Communism for its inhumanity, for robbing men of their personality, of their freedom, of their cultural heritage.

Communism has a terrible weapon against the Free World. Perhaps the Free World finds it hard to conceive how a whole people's freedom of thought, speech and action can be forcibly stolen from them. Yet the Communists have managed to do just that, in China, by the use of pleasant-sounding and true-ringing terms. They have created a whole new vocabulary, and words can mean whatever the dictators want them to mean. With this new vocabulary they cover up their unforgivable crimes, and intoxicate all the people of the occupied area.

Liu goes on to give examples of this Communist double-talk. He believes that every lie must eventually be exposed. He thinks that even the unthinking among the people behind the Curtain will realize this. Let us hope that he is right. But even if they did come to a realization of this lie, what could they do about it? A younger generation is growing up shut off from any knowledge except that of the Big Lie.

DANIEL CLIFFORD

THE CATHOLIC MIND THROUGH FIFTY YEARS. Edited by Benjamin L. Masse, S.J. America Press, New York. 1952. pp. xxii - 681. \$5.00

This volume is at once a testimonial and a treasure. It is a testimonial to the splendid service which *The Catholic Mind* has been doing the English-speaking Catholic world for the past fifty years, by collecting and making available in handily conservable form, articles and addresses which represent the best of Catholic thought on most of the major problems of the twentieth century. It is a treasure, particularly for a land like the Philippines, which witnessed the loss of so many of its libraries in the undiscerning ravages of the last war. For here, within the compass of a single volume, are some of