

COMMUNISM IN THE ARAB EAST. By *M. S. Agwani*. Issued under the auspices of the Indian School of International Studies. New York: Asia Publishing House, 1969. vi, 259 pp. \$10.00.

Professor Agwani, who teaches West Asian studies at the Indian School of International Studies, has set out to "describe and evaluate the more significant stages in the development of Arab Communist parties and their ceaseless interaction with rival political groups." It is not a systematic or comprehensive history of Arab communism, and it is somewhat uneven in character. The early part of the book presents little that is new; there is nothing about the Sudanese Communist Party, one of the strongest in the area, and very little about the Lebanese C.P. The sections about Iraqi communism under Kassem and on Syria in the 1950s are the most interesting, based on a wide range of sources in Arabic and English.

It is not always easy to detect the author's own point of view, and his infrequent comments strike this reader as a little naïve. He maintains that one of the cardinal shortcomings of Arab communism is that it has failed so far to relate Marxist doctrine to the specific conditions and requirements of the Arab East, that it lacks mature understanding of this doctrine, and that this explains the erratic course of Arab communism. He also blames the Communists for not having succeeded in gaining a firm foothold among the peasants in what is still a predominantly agrarian society. On the Egyptian revolution, the author says that it has "not been an unqualified success but few Communist or non-Communist regimes that attempted to take so much in hand have done much better" (p. 222).

Professor Agwani apparently takes it for granted that there is such a thing as a "correct Marxist course" and that it would have resulted in greater achievements for the Communists. He seems not to have posed the question whether the failure of communism among the peasants was the result of not trying hard enough or whether their policy simply did not correspond with the beliefs and interests of the peasants. On the other hand, he writes sensibly about the appeal of communism as a modernizing force, and adds (unfortunately only as an afterthought) that the indirect and ideological impact of communism—through Nasserism and the Ba'th—has been much more significant than the influence exerted by the various Communist parties themselves.

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SOVIET RUSSIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST. By *Aaron S. Klieman*. *Studies in International Affairs*, no. 14. The Washington Center of Foreign Policy Research, School of Advanced International Studies, The Johns Hopkins University. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970. vi, 107 pp. \$6.50, cloth. \$2.45, paper.

Mr. Klieman has provided a short, competent, and unstartling survey of the emergence of the new "Eastern question." Like most recent writers, he concentrates on the Arab countries, especially Egypt, the keystone of Soviet policy; there is little about Turkey and Iran. For the most part he deals sensibly with the dilemmas facing the superpowers in the area. However, some of his statements seem a little sweeping. Why should one have assumed that the tensions within the Middle East would be an adequate deterrent against involvement by external powers? It would seem that, on the contrary, the very existence of these tensions facilitated the growth