Biography

Kim II
With the death on March 9, 1948 of Kim II the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) has lost the most senior surviving associate of President Kim II Sung. In a regime that has experienced a rapid elite turnover his continuity in office, having been a member of all in KWP Central Committees, was matched only by Kim II Sung himself. Born Pak Tsa-in in North Hammongg Province in 1910, Kim II Sung II (Kim member name) joined the Chinese and Korean guerrillas fighting the Japanese along the Korean border of Manchuria in the 1930s, eventually becoming a member of the First Route Army which had come under the command of Kim II Sung. With Kim II Sung he retreated to the Soviet Union about 1941 possibly as a company commander in Kim's unit which was reconstituted and stationed near Khabarovsk. Some reports claim he then received education or military training in the USSR until 1945, although it is also said he returned to Manchuria in an undercover mission after only a short time in the Soviet far east. In other case he was already a member of the Korean guerrilla faction which came to dominate the KWP in the 1950s under Kim II Sung's tutelage.

Returning to Korea in 1945 he held organiser support for Kim II Sung in the north and participated in the 1946 conference which inaugurated the KWP, becoming a member of the KWP Central Committee and its Standing Committee. Kim II was also a member of the First Supreme People's Assembly of 1948 and 12 subsequent Assemblies. He became Political Commissar of the new Korean People's Army (KPA) founded in the same year, aligning attaining the rank of lieutenant-general. During the reverse suffered by the KPA in the closing phases of 1950 KWP II with other party and military figures was criticized and dismissed from his posts at the Central Committee plenum held in December. Allegedly he objected to the Soviet failure to provide sufficient aircraft to intercept US bombing of the north, but unlike some others he returned to prominence to the KWP Central Committee plenum of August 1953, becoming a member of the 5 man Political Committee. From 1953 Kim II held high party and state positions becoming in the 1960s number three in the hierarchy (after Kim II Sung and Ch'oe Yong-gwon). In the KWP Kim II was

Book Reviews


The title of Dunn's monograph is an ironic reference to the notorious chapter 9 of Wittfogel's Oriental Despotism. 'The Rise and Fall of the Theory of the Asiatic Mode of Production' contained the latter's charges that Marx committed a sin against science' and that Lenin crippled a truth which Stalin attempted to sell by sexual liquidation. Dunn is principally concerned to document the history of the Asiatic mode of production's (AMP) career in Soviet Marxism and the tawdry portion of the monograph successfully casts doubt on Wettifogel's simplistic account of its end in the 1930s. He achieves the laudable end by showing that the anti-Asiatic/led had theoretical as well as 'political' objections to the AMP.

Dunn charts the dismemberment of the AMP after World War II as the product of difficulties encountered by Soviet scholars in the application of historical materialism; in particular, in working with the concept of a universal slave-holding society. This is interesting both as a criticism of standard interpretations of Soviet intellectual debate and an illustration (possibly) of Gouldner's idea that the AMP is the historical materialist's recurring (Khanbaini) anomaly. Dunn classifies himself as a non-Azovski (one who does not see the AMP as a social order through which all peoples must pass) and in philosophical terms he is a naturalist who views historical materialism as in some respect harmonious with Darwinian evolution. These views are somewhat at odds with Dunn's apparent endorsement (p. 40) of Hinden and Hirst's 'pre-capitalist modes of production'. Hinden and Hirst vehemently rejected the AMP, nihilistically rejected the possibility of a scientific approach to history as zero, and would certainly engage in an epicomic polemic with Dunn's philosophy as a scientist.

Dunn has done non-Russian readers and researchers in the domain of pre-capitalist social orders an admirable service by writing an excellent piece in the history of ideas. Unfortunately, another mode of production determined the price of this paperback which would have had its value enhanced by a bibliography separated from the otherwise lucid and pertinent notes.

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This has been a general and vague impression that the four Communist Ministers in Maurois's Socialist governments have been good Ministers (on top of their briefs, formal, restrained and above all non-ideological). This book does not deviate with the public image, but states that it is only half the story, the other part is the quiet systematic 'whitewashing' of the state structure, that is the replacement of PCE nominees in key positions. The book reviews the activities of the four Ministers and the position in France's state-run TV networks and gives derailed evidence about the nomination of placements. Although puncturo to a fault, the book has made maximum use of patronage opportunities to createn client networks (in paste existing ones) similar to those set up in 1945 in, for example, other state sectors. When the PCE leaves government, as it is argued, it will not be easy to dismantle these groups of clients. Jeamian's book is a very important piece of research and will thus be of great interest for those interested in Communist power. The major failing is the lack of a comparative perspective: the Communist evidently are using their opportunities but how different is this from other parties of the