potentially interesting differences in interpretation and evaluation pass unacknowledged and unexplored. In consequence, the reader is left with only a few disjointed insights into the dynamics of Soviet society and almost no coherent guidelines for independent thinking and research. This would be lamentable under any circumstances, but it is particularly so in the case of a badly neglected field where acceptable texts are rare and works of in-depth scholarship are virtually nonexistent. One's regret is even greater because the present volume might have had the incidental but desirable effect of encouraging American scholars to pay more attention to the work of their German colleagues, many of whom have done and are currently doing outstanding research. Professors Meissner, Ruffman, Anweiler, and Thalheim all belong to this category, but *Social Change in the Soviet Union* does not present them at anything like their best.

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THE SOVIET RUSSIAN STATE. By *Robert G. Wesson.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972. vi, 404 pp. $8.95.

THE SOVIET STATE: AN AGING REVOLUTION. By *Robert G. Wesson.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972. vii, 222 pp. $3.95, paper.

The Soviet Russian State is a solid textbook written for the undergraduate course on Soviet politics. (*The Soviet State* is an abridged version suitable for an introductory comparative government course.) The first third of the book (four chapters) is devoted to the historical background of the contemporary system. There follow chapters on ideology, the party, state, economy, the "psychocultural front," law, the army, nationalities, and extensions abroad of the Soviet empire. A final chapter makes a judiciously cautious attempt to weigh the future prospects of this "aging revolution." In contrast with some other recent volumes aimed at the same market, Wesson's combines balanced coverage of most aspects of the system with commendable depth. A short list of suggested readings is appended to each chapter. The unifying theme is that a strain toward autocratic structures of rule has existed in both the tsarist and Soviet periods, created by the functional need to prevent disintegration in a vast Russian-dominated multinational empire. "The multinational character of the Soviet state," Wesson asserts, "is probably the most important determinant of the peculiarity of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet system" (p. 309). The book also explores the historical tension between the need to introduce Western technology and the need to maintain political control within the empire, and the various implications of the fact that "the Soviet Union has largely outgrown or outworn the revolutionary impulses and the social transformation of its birth and has become a settled authoritarian state" (p. v).

Wesson is not impressed by recent attempts to reformulate the questions one should ask about Soviet politics. His approach is broadly historical-descriptive, stressing similarities between the Soviet and tsarist regimes, and between both and earlier "imperial orders." On this level of analysis his work ranks well above most other introductory texts. This approach, perhaps, has led him to dwell on "the Party's" monopoly of power, and to spend much time pointing out—in the traditional manner—discrepancies between mythology and political reality. The result, not surprisingly, is a relentless exposure of Soviet hypocrisy—one with

which most scholars in the field (the reviewer included) would probably sympathize, yet one that may strike some student readers as evidence of "anti-Soviet bias." This impression is unnecessarily accentuated by frequent pro-American comparisons, which (editors should by now realize) also stamp such books as provincial or worse in the eyes of their audience in the broader English-speaking world. The essential question, of course, is whether a fixation on the distribution of power provides the best framework to convey a sense of how the political system operates. It appears to this reviewer that Wesson is sometimes misled by his "power" focus. The chapter on "The Party," for example, repeats too much of the conventional wisdom and pays insufficient attention to the complexity of inter- and intra-organizational relationships (documented, in particular, in the writings of Jerry Hough).

Despite the occasional overgeneralization or dubious assertion of fact, Professor Wesson nevertheless has fundamentally achieved what he set out to do. He has written the kind of readable textbook, thematically integrated but with much useful illustrative detail, that many students want and probably need.

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SOVIET ECONOMISTS OF THE TWENTIES: NAMES TO BE REMEMBERED. By *Naum Jasny*. Soviet and East European Studies. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1972. x, 218 pp. $12.50.

This is the last text written by the late Naum Jasny, who died in 1967. It was probably not yet ready in a definitive version, but the missing editorial stage was supplied by Michael Kaser, and the final product is a timely book, rather a set of essays on the non-Bolshevik economists in the twenties. This brilliant lot of experts who staffed the top levels of different Soviet economic agencies—Gosplan and the Commissariats of Agriculture and Finance in particular, as well as numerous university chairs—played a key role in the development of Soviet planning and economic thought, and their influence may still be felt today in the renascent economic science in Russia. But for all too long these "bourgeois specialists" were not studied and their role remained in the shadow, since they were tried in the early thirties and, in most cases, physically annihilated.

An extremely interesting and personally and politically varigated group, the economists "to be remembered" came from different political families—they were former Mensheviks, Narodniks, Kadets, Marxists, non-Marxists, and anti-Marxists. some continuing to stick to previous creeds, and others evolving in different ways under the pressure of Soviet realities, under NEP and during the first stages of industrialization. They all preferred to stay in Russia and chose to collaborate with the new regime. Their political and personal reasons for doing so, the role they played, and their fate and the controversies they aroused form exceedingly interesting material for study. It needed the passionate and combative spirit of Jasny to launch the theme and to force it upon scholarship, West and East. The main contribution is in the biographical part of the book, in which Jasny portrays Groman, Bazarov, Ginzburg, and Kondratiev in some detail, and a host of others in a set of brief sketches. But introductory chapters on "war communism," NEP, and the First Five-Year Plan make interesting reading too.