

ent excellent translation of the official Soviet history of the operations of the Soviet Air Force during World War II offers a detailed, if not unbiased, account of that struggle. The usefulness of this book to students of the Second World War and the development of the Soviet Air Force is enhanced by editorial notes, comments, and tables on Soviet aircraft types and characteristics, as well as by forty-three photographs of Soviet and German aircraft and an extensive index.

This volume shows that, at the start of the war, Soviet numerical superiority in aircraft over the *Luftwaffe* was offset by the large number of obsolete planes in the inventory, greater experience of the German pilots, and the success of the initial German surprise attack. The Soviet account acknowledges the loss of over 1,200 aircraft in the first day of the war (as against a German claim of 1,811 aircraft), most of which were destroyed on the ground. While the quality of the Soviet war planes greatly improved during the course of the war, the initial superiority of German planes and pilots prevented the Soviet Air Force from gaining air supremacy until 1943. German superiority was especially marked during 1941 when the Soviet Air Force lost some 7,800 planes in the first three and one-half months of the war. That it recovered from such a massive loss was because of the ability of the Soviet aircraft industry to produce large numbers of planes (some 137,000 during 1941–45) despite the loss of vital industrial regions to the Germans. The official history, however, omits giving any credit to U.S. and British shipments of aircraft to the Soviet Union which helped make up for Soviet losses and offset, to some extent, the initial German qualitative advantage.

It is clear that the Soviet Air Force was essentially used in a ground support role. Soviet wartime strategy called for the massing of 1,500 to 2,000 aircraft on a relatively narrow front in support of ground offensives. In contrast to U.S. and British air forces, the Soviet Air Force was weak in strategic bombardment capability and much of its bomber force operated only in daytime because the pilots had not received sufficient training in night and instrument flying. And, despite the Soviet claims of having defeated the “best squadrons” of the *Luftwaffe* and of having received little benefit from Allied air operations in the West, the record shows that the Germans were able to make effective use of relatively obsolete aircraft on the Russian front far longer than in the West.

The Soviet Air Force has come a long way since 1945. Even so, its war history is worth studying. As the Soviet authors point out, “the battle experience acquired by the airforce during the war years is still of great value” for the present-day Soviet Air Force.

LEON GOURE
University of Miami

KHRUSHCHEV REMEMBERS: THE LAST TESTAMENT. By *Nikita S. Khrushchev*. Translated and edited by *Strobe Talbott*. Foreword by *Edward Crankshaw*. Introduction by *Jerrold L. Schecter*. Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1974. xxxi, 603 pp. \$12.95.

While the authenticity of the tapes and transcripts from which this and the preceding volume of Khrushchev's memoirs (*Khrushchev Remembers*, trans. and ed. by Strobe Talbott [Boston: Little, Brown, 1971]) were compiled is now established beyond reasonable doubt, their value as a historical source remains disappointing.

Not only are the usual limitations apparent—an old man recalling without documents things long past and concerned with presenting his role in the best possible light—but Khrushchev is also obviously reticent and evasive about many of the major events in which he was involved as well as about the formal and informal setting within which these were played out. There are few gems here for the historian or political scientist. The political psychologist should fare rather better, for the sheer bulk of the material and its apologetic style and purpose give it unique value for studying the personality and attitudes of the former Soviet leader. Even here, however, the impact of this volume (like its predecessor) is to deepen already familiar lines rather than to indicate new ones.

An extreme version of the ethnocentrism that all too often goes with the achievement of supreme power is abundantly evidenced in these pages. It is clear also that Khrushchev's incomprehension—often ludicrous and sometimes disturbing—of foreign parts, but especially the West, is the result of a dogmatic and Manichean ideology and the enforced isolation of the Stalin era, as well as the normal limitations of upbringing and education. It is depressing to find Khrushchev resorting to the same shopworn formulas one hears from provincial bureaucrats to reconcile unmistakable Western superiority in “culture” and living standards with a belief in the “capitalist hell.”

Moreover, while conformity to conventional attitudes that may do less than justice to the author's humanity and perceptiveness is to be expected in utterances intended for the public record, one also senses here a level of conviction impervious to experience. One apparent source of this is an underdog mentality combining class and ethnic aspects and originating in Khrushchev's early years working for foreign firms in the Donbas. Khrushchev is determined to beat the West and the capitalists at their own game, and an important element here is the intense competitiveness that eventually took him to the top in his own country. I emphasize “competitiveness” rather than “drive for power,” for there is little evidence of a need to elevate himself through the humiliation of others. The concern is rather to win, to achieve results, and to command respect. Thus Khrushchev is capable of a seemingly genuine regard for “worthy opponents” such as John Kennedy, General de Gaulle, and even John Foster Dulles.

Two further facets of Khrushchev's political personality—his fascination with technical matters and his capacity, or indeed need, for warm and spontaneous human response—are well attested in this volume. These attributes, dubious assets in a member of Stalin's political entourage, may have given him crucial advantages in the political circumstances following Stalin's death. On the other hand, Khrushchev's Philistine and provincial faith may paradoxically have contributed to the relative liberalism of his policies by desensitizing him to the vulnerability of Soviet claims and thereby causing him to underestimate the role of close ideological and police controls in maintaining them.

Despite the limitations of these memoirs as a historical source, there are substantial gleanings on a variety of topics, and they deserve careful scrutiny by students of modern Russia and international communism. The present volume mainly relates to the years 1953–64, but there are many flashbacks to the Stalin era. A quarter of the book deals with matters of internal policy: defense (especially), the arts, housing, and agriculture. A second quarter is concerned with relations with China and Eastern Europe, and the remainder with dealings with the Western powers and nonaligned countries and Khrushchev's travels in these

parts. On all these matters there are new pieces of information which, if accurate, will significantly amplify the historical record. Yet the scholar must look carefully before swallowing these tidbits, for many of Khrushchev's statements which *are* subject to verification contain errors of date and identity, and have misleading omissions.

For the student of Soviet politics there are many sidelights on leading officials and their mutual relationships; and on how particular decisions were made. More important, however, are the patterns that emerge incidental to or implicit in the narrative. For instance, while Khrushchev continually affirms his adherence to the principle of collective leadership, he relates many instances where policy was first initiated in discussions between himself and the experts, and then reached an advanced stage of decision before its referral to the Presidium (Politburo) for endorsement. One is also surprised at how frequently, according to Khrushchev's account, new policy departures originated in encounters among leaders, or between leaders and specialists, while on vacation (ironic, when one recalls the circumstances of Khrushchev's overthrow). The emphasis given in this volume to shared recreation as a means of cementing political relationships reveals the informal structure of Soviet politics, presumably of great and often crucial importance. This informal structure has been so poorly illuminated in the past that one must be doubly grateful for these few flashes of light.

T. H. RIGBY

Australian National University

SMITH'S MOSCOW. By *Desmond Smith*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974. xii, 335 pp. \$8.95.

FODOR'S SOVIET UNION 1974-75. Edited by *Eugene Fodor* and *Robert C. Fisher*. New York: David McKay, 1974. 543 pp. \$10.95.

A Western guidebook to the Soviet Union for tourists seems almost like a contradiction in terms. Most visitors, whether traveling individually or in groups, sooner or later spend time sightseeing with an Intourist guide. Unless a traveler is particularly adventurous and/or equipped with a knowledge of Russian, he or she is not likely to stray far from the officially assigned hotel, use telephones and public transportation, queue up for meals and theater tickets, sample museums and other cultural activities, in short, to act as tourists normally act anywhere else in the world. Both of the guidebooks before us, the latest in a growing literature of this type, provide the prospective visitor with the useful information that the charge for a telephone call from a public booth is two kopecks, that a two-kopeck piece must be placed in the slot *before* picking up the receiver, and one must wait for the dial tone before dialing the desired number. The fact is that the casual Western tourist is not likely to venture anywhere near a public telephone in the Soviet Union.

Be that as it may, travel handbooks continue to be published and need to be judged on their merits. Of the two under review, *Smith's Moscow*, by a British-born journalist who worked in Moscow in 1966 on assignment for the American Broadcasting Company, is a chatty guidebook that gives a sense of immediacy, but is unfortunately badly out of date. *Fodor's Soviet Union*, covering the entire country, is a far more structured handbook in the Fodor manner, with 200 out of 500-odd pages devoted to background information about the Soviet scene, including