

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 nascent 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 variegated 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.

There is quite a lot to debate and to contest in these historical chapters. To state, for example, that "the War-Communism period extended from the October Revolution to 21 March 1922" and that "the NEP lasted from then until December 1927" (p. 7) is to invite criticisms from historians. Another statement which traces the lamentable state of the Soviet economy by 1920 to the nationalization of the banks in 1917 (p. 11) without mentioning the civil war which ravaged the country in the meantime is passionately anti-Leninist but quite contestable. Jasny always was a polemical spirit, and his writings never let the reader remain indifferent. One finds himself constantly provoked either to agree or to jump up in protest—but this is his forte.

One limiting factor is the narrow source material which Jasny managed to bring in, and especially the place he gave to the transcript of the "Menshevik trial" of 1931. Jasny knew well that this trial was a display of concoctions, but he nevertheless relied on it in some important points. He seems to have believed that the persons he respected did in fact belong to such organizations as the "Menshevik Bureau" (allegedly headed by Groman) or to the "Labour-Industrial Party" under Kondratiev. Jasny would probably have preferred them to have actually organized something to fight the system, but though these people did in fact fight for their opinions, the "parties" and "bureaus" and other counterrevolutionary activities ascribed to them were mythical. On the other hand, Jasny—besides having initiated this research—was personally acquainted with the main figures described, and this firsthand knowledge will help us in further study of the whole theme.

To sum up, this is a stimulating book for the scholar and for advanced seminars on Soviet industrialization and planning.

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SOVIET PLANNING TODAY: PROPOSALS FOR AN OPTIMALLY FUNCTIONING ECONOMIC SYSTEM. By *Michael Ellman*. University of Cambridge, Department of Applied Economics, Occasional Paper 25. New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1971. xv, 219 pp. \$10.00, cloth. \$4.45, paper.

The revival of Soviet economics after 1954 is the topic of Ellman's book. Western economists have often quarreled about the importance of the literary and mathematical components of their discipline. The Soviet experience seems to show that a country with a strong mathematical tradition can overcome an almost total lack of a literary economic tradition in a period of fifteen years. But the situation is a little more complicated than that.

A planned economy both prepares and executes plans. Both "phases" of this economy take place in the context of an environment (physical, political, and international) lying outside the control of the planners. The observer of a planned economy is interested in the reasons for discrepancies between plan and performance, and in the manner in which plans are corrected in the light of such discrepancies, as well as in the impact of environmental changes upon plans. In contrast, the economists whose work is summarized by Ellman are so caught up in the planning process that their attention is centered on a technical problem: how to prepare that vast array of numbers which makes up a Soviet plan. Im-