

“Asiatic” peasant populace. The political behavior of the urban proletariat, either alone or in relation to the Mensheviks, receives surprisingly little emphasis in this regard. Instead, we are presented with a Menshevik politics comprised of policy debates and strategic efforts carried out by a number of Menshevik *intelligentsy*. And here too the Menshevik writers are reticent where they might have been particularly insightful. In Dallin’s account, we are told of Mensheviks who remained aloof from right-wing military conspiracies and Allied interventionist schemes, but we learn nothing about the civil war activity of Mensheviks who had fervently supported the Allies in 1917. Why, one wonders, was it necessary for the Menshevik Congress to pass a resolution in December 1917 which branded independent political statements against the decisions of competent party organizations “absolutely impermissible outside the Party”? A later resolution prohibiting members from writing on politics in non-Menshevik newspapers is less mysterious, but still needs further explanation in light of Sapir’s claim that Mensheviks helped to keep alive a tradition of democratic socialism. Nevertheless, any reader of this volume will know what Sapir means. Mensheviks considered opponents to be honest unless proven otherwise; recognition of fundamental differences was not followed by a Trotsky-like relegation of the enemy to the “dung heap of history.”

Mensheviks remained ideologically consistent despite the arrest, imprisonment, and execution of their comrades. They did not make claims for the inalienable rights of any individual or group and opposed Bolshevik treatment of the peasants as a “class enemy,” at the same time maintaining that, in principle, peasants were hostile to the goals of proletarian socialism. They appear to have differed most fundamentally from Bolsheviks in the same way that Moshe Lewin has suggested that Bolsheviks often differed from Stalin: they did not sanction the use of unlimited brutality to eliminate the threat which the peasant majority of the population might pose to a revolutionary minority in power. Despite their evident suspicion and fear of the peasant as the embodiment of “Asiatic” backwardness, it seems unlikely that any Menshevik government would have sent even the most recalcitrant of peasants to Vorkuta. Whether this is a satisfactory definition of democratic socialism is, of course, another question.

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LENIN’S LEGACY: THE STORY OF THE CPSU. By *Robert G. Wesson*.

Histories of Ruling Communist Parties series. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978. xviii, 318 pp. Appendixes. \$7.50, paper.

Any historian of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union faces substantial problems of definition. Before the October Revolution, the party was a clearly limited organization, despite the problem of deciding whether the entire Russian Social Democratic movement or merely the Bolshevik component is the appropriate frame of reference. But after coming to power, the party assumed such wide-ranging responsibility that it is no simple matter to determine the boundary between party history and the general history of the Soviet Union, not to mention the Comintern and Communist countries closely associated with the USSR. Robert G. Wesson has dealt with these problems by using the supreme leadership of the party as the main theme of his book, which is basically divided into four sections, devoted respectively to Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev (along with a chapter on the pre-Lenin heritage). The only exception to this statement is a chapter combining Lenin’s last years and Stalin’s ascent (the 1920s), a device that works quite well and serves to emphasize Wesson’s adherence to the school of interpretation that sees primarily continuity between the two party leaders.

But this leader-oriented approach tends to direct attention away from the party as an institution and toward the general history of the USSR. *Lenin's Legacy* has very little to say about the structure and internal dynamics of the CPSU, and this is disappointing in a series devoted to, and entitled, "Histories of Ruling Communist Parties." The book offers some basic data on party membership through the years and a few bits on structure, but the emphasis is on high-level politics and general history. For example, the discussion of the collectivization of agriculture is more or less what one might find in any short textbook, except that the most specific reference to the role of the party seems to be erroneous. (If there is evidence that the Central Committee actually met in January 1930 and approved the all-out drive, this should be documented.) There is a good deal here and there on the foreign policy of the Soviet state (for example, Stalin and the eve of the war, Khrushchev and the Cuban missile crisis), but next to nothing on the Comintern (not even listed in the index), even though Wesson grants that Lenin attached great importance to it. Given the statutory subordination of the Soviet Communist Party to the Comintern and the reverse subordination in practice, this is a puzzling omission.

Lenin's Legacy is a readable and up-to-date synthesis of writings in English. Judging by the bibliography and 662 footnotes, only a few works in other languages were consulted and only one work in Russian. Interpretative originality is not the main thrust of the book. Its main departure from earlier works occurs in the fairly extended discussion of German financial aid to Lenin during World War I. Wesson goes further than the various writers who accept that such assistance did occur and even constituted a significant advantage for the Bolsheviks in 1917. He believes that the German government successfully influenced Lenin's policies and in particular induced him to sign the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, which was contrary to any reasonable perception of Soviet interest. Wesson even seems to suggest that Lenin's cultural Germanophilia led him to favor a German victory (p. 58). This is not persuasive. Wesson nowhere maintains that Lenin was other than a sincere Marxist revolutionary, and he states that, in the case of a German victory, the latter "certainly would not have permitted the continued existence of a Bolshevik neighbor in truncated Russia, treaty or no treaty" (p. 86). What, then, does he believe Lenin's calculation to have been in February 1918?

The short section on the Brezhnev administration, only thirty-five pages long, reflects the scant and uninspired literature on this period. Like other writers, Wesson has had trouble finding a focus or pattern in the years since 1964 in the USSR, and the chapter rambles somewhat.

Lenin's Legacy contains tables showing Politburo and Secretariat membership in 1977, party membership since 1905, ethnic composition, percent of female membership, age distribution, social status, number of local party organs, educational level of party members, and a curious one-page essay, "Women in the Party," along with a rather short "Bibliographical Note."

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THE SOVIET UNION. Edited by *R. W. Davies*, with the assistance of *Denis J. B. Shaw*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978. 191 pp. Illus. \$14.75, cloth. \$7.50, paper.

This textbook is a handsome contribution to undergraduate education. Intended to introduce students to the Soviet Union, it contains chapters from a *kollektiv* of British experts on the Soviet Union in the social sciences, humanities, and even science. Chapters are integrated so that no undesirable overlap destroys the book's unity, but each retains the special style and quirky interests of its author. Authors and