

was made head of a reunified secret police organization, as interior minister, and also controlled an internal security army. This collective leadership was to lose one member in late June, 1953, when Beria was arrested and subsequently executed" (p. 124). Of course, we do not really know what happened, but a more pronounced stress on conflict and decision-making might reveal some of the workings of these succession crises. Further, as is illustrated in the treatment of the mass auxiliary organizations, there is often an emphasis on what is intended by official policy, rather than on the evasions and obstructions of those who are meant to be controlled by it. The Komsomol "embraces youth from 14 through 28 years of age" (p. 173). True, officially it does, but in fact the Komsomol by no means penetrates the urban working youth as thoroughly as it does the student population, and rural Komsomol members make up only 34 percent of the organization. Or, in the discussion of administration, Reshetar enables us to see clearly the jurisdiction of each agency but not what happens when a problem—for example, one concerning environmental disturbance—requires the interaction of several agencies and crosses jurisdictional lines.

But these criticisms are largely a matter of emphasis. A study as impressive, broad, and thorough as this one is offers countless insights—including, at the end, a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of several analytic models. The author has also provided an excellent annotated bibliography. In sum, the book is a welcome and lucid combination of the historical context and the Soviet present.

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INTEREST GROUPS IN SOVIET POLITICS. Edited by *H. Gordon Skilling* and *Franklyn Griffiths*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, for the Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Toronto, 1971. ix, 433 pp. \$12.50.

This volume is an outgrowth of political scientists' disenchantment with traditional models of Soviet politics. To characterize the Soviet system as totalitarian, or to focus exclusively on the struggle for power among the political elite, leaves out major political actors. The book is concerned with the political role of these middle-level actors, the major occupational groups in Soviet society. The editors see these groups not as transmission belts or control mechanisms, but rather as forces making political demands, bargaining, and otherwise influencing the policy-making process.

Skilling, the major force behind the book, acknowledges that Russian traditions, as well as Communist theory and practice, have been hostile to the idea of independent interest groups and have set strict limits on their activity. He also recognizes that many critics feel that the powerful institutional limitations on freedom of expression and association have "hampered the articulation of group interests and made research on the subject difficult, if not impossible," and that the essential conditions of pluralism—"some degree of group integration and means of mutual communication and some degree of autonomy"—have been largely absent (p. 410). But in Skilling's view, interest groups have come to assume a major role in the years since Stalin's death (particularly under Khrushchev), and though group conflict is not the central or predominant feature of Soviet politics, groups have become "an important element, the neglect of which makes the picture of Soviet politics incomplete and distorted" (p. 413).

Each of the very distinguished contributors deals with one occupational group in an effort to test Skilling's hypotheses. The seven case studies involve the party *apparatchiki* (Jerry F. Hough), the security police (Frederick C. Barghoorn), the military (Roman Kolkowicz), the industrial managers (John P. Hardt and Theodore Frankel), the economists (Richard W. Judy), the writers (Ernest J. Simmons), and the jurists (Donald D. Barry and Harold J. Berman). Clearly, each of these is a "group" in the general meaning of the term—a set of individuals involved in roughly similar activities, very likely having contact with one another. But the term "group" to be useful as an instrument of political analysis must be defined precisely. Group influences on the political process require, at the very least, common experiences or activities, shared values, and some sort of organizational tie uniting members of the group. What is more, those who share values, experiences, occupations, and goals do not necessarily function as a political interest group. What is needed is evidence of group consciousness—evidence that the group is in fact a reference group for its members. There must be evidence of cohesiveness and *activity as a group* (lobbying, voting, signing petitions, etc.). It is precisely this sort of evidence—crucial to determining whether certain individuals represent a politically relevant group—that is lacking in the Skilling-Griffiths volume.

Professor Griffiths, in his extraordinarily perceptive paper, confronts this problem directly. He distinguishes between "aggregates that press common claims" and "sets of *individuals* who share common attitudes but who may or may not purposely be acting in concert" (p. 342). The question is "whether we are dealing with an aggregate, a loose coalition of like-minded actors, or the parallel unilateral articulations of virtually atomized individuals." (Griffiths is essentially critical of the interest group approach.) Patterns of articulation clearly do exist, but there may be no organization linking those who hold some view in common. Moreover, the opinions and behaviors cut across formal groups, involving individuals with varied occupational and institutional affiliations. The organization of the book makes it impossible to explore such groups.

To be sure, the contributors are knowledgeable and articulate. Each of the essays is of unusually high quality. The arguments are always plausible, attractive, and imaginative. But the evidence cited is seldom adequate to support Skilling's contentions. The contributors were simply unable to test his hypotheses. But it would be preposterous to fault accomplished researchers for being unable to unearth evidence which Soviet censors assiduously hide from public view.

Skilling's argument is stimulating; it seems reasonable, and perhaps it is valid. But on the basis of the evidence assembled by the contributors, we cannot say. The essays are liberally sprinkled with such phrases as "I suspect," "it is likely," and "it is highly probable." The problem of evidence is overwhelming, and the case studies neither confirm nor invalidate the relevance of interest group theory to the study of Soviet politics. A science of politics cannot be built on intuition and surmise. But, given the nature of the data, there sometimes is no alternative. It is often impossible even to demonstrate the presence of interaction among individuals—the very essence of the term "group." The obstacles imposed by the Communist Party and its censors appear, at this time, to be insuperable.

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