

AN IDEOLOGY IN POWER: REFLECTIONS ON THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION. By *Bertram D. Wolfe*. Introduction by *Leonard Schapiro*. New York: Stein and Day, 1969. viii, 406 pp. \$10.00, cloth. \$2.95, paper.

An Ideology in Power is a collection of twenty-five essays originally published during the last twenty-eight years by the eminent scholar Bertram Wolfe. Unifying these essays are the subject—the Russian Revolution, its antecedents and consequences—and the highly individual and dynamic style of the author. The essays are drawn from a variety of publications, some popular, such as the *New Leader* or the *American Mercury*, others more scholarly and specialized.

Central to Wolfe's view of history is the conviction that there are no general laws in accordance with which history proceeds. Rather, history is the juxtaposition of specific and often unexpected, hence unpredictable, events. In "Marxism and the Russian Revolution" he asserts that "contrary to what Marxism in all its varieties holds, the idea of revolution arose unexpectedly, unplanned, unthought of, taking its leading actors by surprise, creating for itself an explanation and an ideology or a complex of conflicting ideological fragments only after the fact" (p. 3). For this reviewer the four essays that examine the events of the revolution in the light of this thesis are the most fascinating. These are chapters of a work in progress; they are history as drama. In one, "War Comes to Russia," Wolfe gives a lively account of the impact of the First World War on a Russia whose vastness dimmed the outlines of a remote engagement. In the Duma the Leninless Left was divided and ambivalent. The dilemma of choice between patriotism and internationalism is shown in another essay, "War Comes to Russia-in-Exile," in which Wolfe documents the rationalizations and vacillations of the émigré community and the tortuous line by which Lenin separated himself from each of the compromising positions.

For Wolfe, the historian's credo is contained in the essay "The Convergence Theory in Historical Perspective." In the perpetual controversy between "lumpers" and "splitters" Wolfe emerges as one of the latter. No less a person than Stalin termed him "an American exceptionalist" (p. 390), and Wolfe admits that he is more concerned with finding the differences between objects under investigation than with inventing artificial overarching categories that bind together the disparate elements of history. An exception to this position is Wolfe's strong commitment to the theory of totalitarianism, which he defines in the essay "Society and the State": "The essence of the total state is not tyranny nor terror but the fact that the state aspires to be 'total.' Totalitarianism asserts that the state is identical with society and coextensive with it, that all the purposes of the state are identical with the purposes of society and that society can have no purposes that are not state purposes. Therefore it denies autonomy to the individual . . ." (p. 155). The essay "Lenin, the Architect of Twentieth-Century Totalitarianism" is a persuasive argument that this political organization which Stalin was to perfect originated in Lenin's understanding of revolution and his own role as surrogate for an undeveloped proletariat.

In judging the utility of a theory its predictive or explanatory power is of primary importance. Even though Wolfe rejects the view that the methods of the exact sciences can be employed in the study of politics (on page 72 he warns against falling into Marx's "mistake of calling them sciences"), he uses the theory of totalitarianism to predict the future course of Soviet politics. Thus in his essay "Poland: The Acid Test of a People's Peace," written in 1944, he predicts the aggressive drive of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, and in another, "The Durability of Despotism in the Soviet System," he forecasts the elimination of

Khrushchev's partners and suggests that the consolidation of power by one man is in the offing. He wrote this essay before the expulsion of the antiparty group.

But the theory that generates these predictions militates against finding trends indicating change in Soviet politics. For example, Wolfe finds that although new leaders may exhibit novel characteristics, the change is essentially superficial and "within-system." He takes the long view and emphasizes the durability of Soviet institutions. A writer with a different emphasis might find, for example, that Khrushchev was a revolutionary who tried to effect a kind of populist egalitarianism in Soviet society. In his radical Leninism he sought major changes in social stratification by coercing the children of the intelligentsia to engage in manual labor; by stressing the party role of military commanders and thus setting them up as equals with other party members in the military unit, regardless of position in the hierarchy of command; by enlisting as propagandists millions of the educated in a campaign to subject the entire adult population to the study of the Marxist-Leninist classics. Similarly, a different emphasis might lead one to examine official directives in the light of the success or failure of their implementation. Wolfe describes the leaders' stated intentions to blanket the country with agitators at election time, but how many inefficient or unwilling agitators shirk their duties? Wolfe gives an excellent analysis of the Soviet attempt to rewrite history, but what kind of dissonance, demoralization, or cynicism results from the effort? Does dissent indicate the failure of socialization? All of these questions might be submerged in the long view. It is a matter of emphasis.

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LES BOLCHÉVIKS PAR EUX-MÊMES. By *Georges Haupt* and *Jean-Jacques Marie*. Translated by *Claude Kiejman*, *Nadine Marie*, and *Catherine Reguin*. Glossary by *Claudie Weill*. Bibliothèque socialiste, 13. Paris: François Maspero, 1969. 398 pp. 24.65 F.

The study of the Soviet political order has commonly been neglectful in one respect that is vital to the real understanding of political systems—that is, little notice is given to persons just below the top, who figure more in tables of organization than in personalized headlines, but who have nonetheless contributed in myriads of ways to the shape of this system. This neglect is of course partly attributable to the paucity of detailed biographical information on the lesser lights of the Soviet hierarchy, although there is more of this kind of information available for the early Soviet period than for later years.

One of the most significant sources on the middle-ranking Soviet leadership of the revolution and the first Soviet decade is the now extremely rare *Entsiklopedicheskiĭ slovar'* published by the Granat Institute of Russian Bibliography in Moscow in the 1920s, with a special supplement to the three parts of volume 41 that contains autobiographies or authorized biographies of some two hundred Communist leaders of the pre- and immediate postrevolutionary periods. The high points of this material have now been made more readily available in a fine job of editing by Georges Haupt and Jean-Jacques Marie.

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