

in the questions we ask and those we ignore. Second, he indicates in several contexts how a fuller understanding of the Soviet system might relieve the ethnocentricity of American comparativists, most of whom, incidentally, preserve remarkably primitive notions of Soviet political realities. Third, he poses, on a theoretical level, several of the questions earlier raised in the more empirically oriented essays of part 1: on kinds of political participation, the distribution of capacity to influence policy, the direction of political change in the USSR, and so forth. Finally, he tenders some wise and sensible advice on research strategy in the study of Soviet politics, which should be taken to heart by all graduate students and their advisers.

There are a few minor criticisms that might be made of the organization and presentation of this book. There is some repetitiveness (one table even appears twice) and the volume would have benefited from more cross references and a fuller index. More seriously, although Hough is more concerned here with raising questions than providing answers, many of the issues discussed might have appeared in fuller perspective if Hough had developed his insights into the *differences* between the Soviet and Western systems. What's sauce for the goose may be sauce for the gander, but there are certain things the goose can do that the gander cannot, and vice versa. If Soviet society is essentially "a corporation writ large," and Western capitalist democracies are not, what difference does this make to the nature of participation, pluralism, and so forth, in the two systems? There are few scholars with a greater capacity to throw light on this fundamental question than Hough.

T. H. RIGBY

*The Australian National University*

POLITICS AND THE SOVIET UNION. By *Mary McAuley*. Harmondsworth, England and New York: Penguin Books, 1977. 352 pp. £1.50. \$3.95, paper.

This book differs markedly in style and approach from the general run of recent textbooks on Soviet politics. Most obvious is the absence of social science jargon, apparently due not to ignorance or rejection of the concepts involved but to an unusual capacity to render the concepts into ordinary English. In addition, there is the large weight given to historical narrative and analysis. Parts 1 and 2 (totaling half of the book) trace the evolution of the system to the late Stalin era, and even part 3, which is devoted to description and analysis of the contemporary political system, conveys a picture both of the flow of major events and the broad changes in the system over the last quarter-century. At each stage, the reader is invited to consider the central issues confronting the Soviet leadership, the alternatives available and visible to them, and the reasons for and consequences of their decisions, including those consequences that generate new problems while constraining their resolution. Dr. McAuley has a sense of the contingent and the unplanned—Brezhnev's regime did not flow with some inexorable logic from Lenin's *What is to be Done?*—and also a sense of the tragic in this story, which comes through despite her no-nonsense style. She sees the present ruling group as "caught in a trap. Its search for support produces conflict, because to meet the demands or satisfy the grievances of one group or section of the community is to provoke opposition from another. To contain the conflict it must use the existing political structures to suppress or deny the aspirations of the different groups . . . The political structures may make opposition difficult but they simultaneously deny the ruling group a social base" (p. 322).

A further feature of Dr. McAuley's approach is that she continually presents and critically evaluates alternative explanations of aspects of the system, including explana-

tions both within the "bourgeois" political science tradition and the Marxist tradition. Her constant readiness to point out rather than avoid analytical issues and to state her own position firmly (but without arrogance) is both one of the great virtues of this book and an inevitable provocation to critics of both the Right and the Left. Apart from a few factual errors, the other most likely object of criticism is the author's decisions about what to cover and in how much detail. Some will regret the omission of serious discussion of nationalities, the scant treatment of governmental machinery (in contrast to the excellent account of the Communist Party), or the "broad-brush" discussion of policy making. My own complaint is that little attention is paid to the informal processes and relationships that play such a large part in the operation of this, as any other, bureaucratic system.

Nevertheless, in my opinion, this is the best introduction to Soviet politics available in English, and its production as a Penguin paperback should ensure its reaching the more general audience it deserves, as well as its wide use in political science and history courses. The specialist will also benefit from reading it, if only by being forced (as I was) to reexamine some of his favorite assumptions.

T. H. RIGBY

*The Australian National University*

CONTEMPORARY SOVIET POLITICS: AN INTRODUCTION. By *Donald D. Barry and Carol Barner-Barry*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978. x, 406 pp. \$8.95, paper.

Authors of introductory texts face the herculean task of rendering mountains of descriptive data in a form palatable to undergraduates, while simultaneously avoiding any analytic angle that would offend the fetishes of potential professorial purchasers. According to several criteria, the Barrys have produced a good textbook: the material is condensed to a manageable three hundred pages, the narrative flows smoothly as catchy anecdotes are interspersed among generalized descriptions, the major subject bases are touched, and none of the primary schools of thought about Communist governments should react with substantial chagrin.

The book begins by sketching the environment in which the political processes in the USSR operate: the historical background, the ideological underpinnings of the regime, and the major characteristics of the Soviet socialization system. Political and economic institutions are then discussed. The formal constitution, governmental structure, and legal system are viewed as being derivative "superstructures" to the central core of "closed politics" in the Soviet Union—the activities and control of the Communist Party. A necessarily speculative consideration of the methods for influencing political decisions, both within and without the accepted "rules of the game," concludes the treatment of political processes. Two chapters on the economy outline the organization of the command economy and describe the Soviet citizen as worker and consumer. Policy-oriented chapters focus on foreign affairs and on the problems associated with nationality and religious tensions and with social deviance. A concluding chapter sketches how Soviet scholars gather and marshal evidence and argues that the general scope of the "totalitarian model" still applies to the USSR.

As is true for probably every text designed for the space limitations of the current market, those deeply interested in many of the topics treated here may feel that relevant details have been omitted. From an idiosyncratic perspective, more attention might have been paid to systematic interpretations of what really constitutes Communist "politics."