documented, according to the author, because complete data on this important matter are missing. Thus all those organizations and the kulak terroristic actions remain still curiously problematic, although they are the main argument used in justification of Soviet policies. But Ivnitsky tells enough for us to agree with him that the situation in the countryside in those years was "strained to the limit" (*do predela nakalennaia*).

One regrettable omission is the lack of a social analysis of the "rural bourgeoisie," which is, after all, the book's central theme. This omission may have something to do with the attitude which takes for granted both their character as avowed class enemies and the need to destroy them in order to build Soviet socialism. It may well be that such a social analysis could endanger the orthodox Soviet interpretation of their rural policies, to which Ivnitsky seems fully committed. It is amazing, though not totally unexpected, to see these crucial events of the early thirties presented in 1972 as if they were taken directly from Stalin's *Short Course*: collectivization was well prepared in advance, dekulakization was launched only when the time was ripe for it, and once the kulaks were destroyed as a class, a real socialist stage could begin. Whatever difficulties arose in the course of events, they are laid at the doorstep of the kulaks. Their stubborn opposition, or their contacts with foreign agents, "imposed on us" whatever was done; they are even accused of having trapped the local cadres into committing all those well-known "excesses."

The top leadership is exempt from any responsibility; Stalin's "general line" comes out of it in almost virgin innocence. If the peasant masses were so genuinely interested in the kolkhozes and flocked into them with enthusiasm—that much is claimed in the book—why did they listen to the "kulak agitation" and slaughter their cattle, dealing a terrific blow to themselves and the country's economy? Why did the party have to engage in the well-known orgy of coercive action (*peregiby*) in order to force people to join who so dearly wanted to join the kolkhozes anyway?

Asking such questions is already sufficient to show that orthodoxy is no substitute for history. The whole story still remains to be written, but Ivnitsky's contribution toward the advancement of our knowledge is considerable.

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WITNESS TO HISTORY, 1929–1969. By *Charles E. Bohlen*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1973. xiv, 562 pp. $12.50.

Charles Bohlen's death removed from the American scene not only one of the leading diplomats of his time but also an outstanding connoisseur of Russian history and culture. Instructive and delightful as this autobiographical account of his career is, one who has known him is bound to feel that it still does not do full justice to his charming personality or his great services to his country. Part of the explanation must be sought in the requirements of today's publishing: the book, we are told, represents about one-third of the original notes. Yet it is precisely for details that a scholar looks in his search for an explanation of historical events; it is through a wealth of incidents and observations—even if some or most are in themselves inconsequential—that the general reader is brought to the threshold of understanding a subject as complex and as susceptible to distortion by passion and mythology as the story of American-Soviet relations. There is also another

factor: discretion, a shining virtue in a diplomat, is hardly so in a writer of memoirs.

With all those self-imposed handicaps, *Witness to History* is still an important book. We do get glimpses of the author's gift as raconteur; and his modesty (also not entirely desirable in autobiographical writing) cannot obscure the fact that beyond being a brilliant diplomat he was at various crucial points in recent history a sagacious counselor to our policy makers. It is concerning this last point that the reader must experience a sense of sadness and of lost opportunities. Mr. Bohlen and his friend George Kennan were not only among the most brilliant members of the diplomatic service of their time, but were also—in the true sense of this often abused word—experts on Russia. Having read the book, one sees that on many occasions their advice was sought by their superiors and occasionally acted upon. But the main impression must remain that they were given little opportunity to do what they were so superbly equipped for: to *educate* the American policy makers in the true dimensions and complexities of the problems of Russia and communism (the two are far from being synonymous). Whether under Roosevelt or John Foster Dulles, that breezy pragmatism—excessive alertness to the internal political needs of the hour, the "practical man's" impatience with the "buts" and "ifs" of the expert—was allowed to dominate our official attitude toward the Soviet Union. Bohlen is characteristically self-effacing when he argues that a more realistic assessment of the Soviet Union by our policy makers, such as urged by himself and Kennan, could not have made a great deal of difference whether in 1944–45 or in the late fifties. Yet the reader might well disagree. It also speaks for itself that with the Soviet Union by far the No. 1 problem of our foreign policy, Bohlen was assigned during some crucial periods in Soviet-American relations to Manila and Paris, posts which he occupied with distinction but where he could hardly be as useful as in Washington or Moscow. And so in addition to throwing new light on many great historical moments of the last thirty years, this book holds some lessons for today.

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THE POLITICS OF SOVIET AGRICULTURE, 1960–1970. By *Werner G. Hahn*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972. xix, 311 pp. $12.50.

Hahn's study is one that should prove of considerable interest to students of both Soviet politics and Soviet agriculture. It is a work whose objective, the author states in the preface, "is to examine the agricultural issues over which Soviet leaders have been divided during the decade 1960–1970. It does not encompass all agricultural policies or problems—only those which have given rise to disputes among prominent Soviet politicians. Nor does it encompass all political disputes—primarily only those involving agriculture" (p. xi). Hahn, therefore, provides one of the most informative and readable accounts available in Western literature of the unfolding of some of the more important agricultural problems of the decade and the role played therein by certain leading Soviet officials either in complicating the problems or in attempting to resolve them.

Hahn traces Khrushchev's career from the agricultural failures of 1959 and the opposition that emerged in 1960 to his fall from power in 1964 and the subse-