

THE SOVIET UNION 1973: DOMESTIC POLICY, ECONOMICS, FOREIGN POLICY. Edited by *Wolfgang Berner* et al. Translated by *Hannes Adomeit* and *Edwina Moreton*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1975. xx, 190 pp. \$15.95.

This report, edited under the auspices of the *Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien* in Cologne, initiates a series to be published annually. It represents an interdisciplinary effort by thirty-five contributors covering various aspects of Soviet domestic and foreign policy, economic developments, and foreign economic relations in 1973. A brief appendix contains information on the composition of the ruling bodies of the Soviet government and Communist Party, ambassadorial appointments, and the numerical strength of foreign Communist parties. The yearbook conscientiously lists the main events that took place in the Soviet Union in 1973 in a wide variety of fields. The eight editors did a commendable job in integrating contributions pertaining to such heterogeneous topics as defense and dissidents, Comecon integration, and Soviet-Chinese relations. Moreover, each of the four chapters is supplied with a brief introduction summarizing its main themes.

The project's objective is "to provide an up-to-date critical balance sheet for the year 1973" (p. ix). One wonders if an attempt to cut the continuum of complex political and economic processes taking place in the Soviet Union into neat, annual slices is worthwhile or feasible. Even with perfect knowledge, the time horizon of one year may be too limited for striking a critical balance sheet. But our information about Soviet events is far from perfect, and instant understanding and appraisal of the events is often even more difficult to achieve.

It is to the authors' credit that their treatment of a number of topics under these self-imposed limitations still manages to arouse the reader's interest and whet his appetite for more—just as he reaches the December 31 cutoff point and is jolted into the next topic. No wonder that the book's most effective sections are those which break loose from the Procrustean bed of its format and provide background material covering several years (for example, pp. 39–54). It seems to this reviewer that the profession might benefit more from a series of monographs by various authors involved in this project, each covering the topic of his special interest over a longer time period. The yearbook would be most useful if it were limited to chronological listings of events and an expanded coverage of materials now included in the appendix. Nevertheless, the yearbook is still a useful reference work in its present format.

The translation by Hannes Adomeit and Edwina Moreton is competent and readable. Although some contributions to social science read *as if* they were translated from German, the present book does not.

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THE MIDDLE EAST IN SOVIET POLICY. By *R. D. McLaurin*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, D. C. Heath, 1975. xiv, 206 pp. Tables.

Since the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Soviet activity in the Middle East has received a great deal of attention from both government officials and academic specialists. Dr. R. D. McLaurin's brief analysis, written under contract to the United States Defense Department, is one of the more recent attempts to analyze