

litical Characteristics of the Socialist System of the States of Central and South-eastern Europe." The expression "states of Central and Southeastern Europe" occurs nineteen times in the table of contents alone (the author must have earned a good many extra złoty in royalties from this and other lengthy expressions used in the text). By Muszyński's own admission, this is not a historical study; he does not, however, make clear what it is. It certainly is not a piece of research in political science, comparative government, political theory, or jurisprudence. The volume "covers" all socialist states of the area, including Yugoslavia and Albania, but no particular importance seems to be attached to the fact that the latter two are not in the Comecon or the Warsaw Pact. These two states, plus Poland, are described as still "building the foundations of socialism"; the others, already past this stage, are constructing a "developed socialist society." The author follows a wonderful methodological principle: "The judgment whether and [if so] what stage has been reached in socialist construction belongs to the political leadership of the socialist state concerned" (p. 257).

This may work for the present, but there are problems about the past. What is one to do with the Cominform, the "mixed companies," Gomulka's "right-wing nationalist deviation" of 1948, Stalin's conflict with Tito, the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, Gomulka's return to power in 1956, and so forth? The Cominform is ignored. According to the author, the Soviet Union was helping Eastern Europe economically after the war; but he does not give any specifics. The Polish crises of 1948 and 1956 are disregarded; Gomulka is an unperson in the study; the Twentieth Party Congress appears only in the bibliography; and Khrushchev is not even there. The conflict with Yugoslavia in 1948 is treated in one meaningless phrase. The 1956 revolt in Hungary and the Czechoslovak reforms of 1968 came about because bourgeois influences in those countries had not been successfully controlled under the "cult of personality." ("Cult of personality" is thus mentioned, but the personality which was its object appears to have had little impact on how socialism came to power, or how it was understood and built, in Eastern Europe after 1944.)

If any political tendency is detectable in this volume, it is to downplay the importance of intrabloc organizations and to stress the ideological sovereignty of each state and party. One looks in vain for any intimation, generally included in comparable Soviet works, that these states may already be forming, or moving toward, an international "Socialist Community" with the USSR.

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THE NEW ECONOMIC SYSTEMS OF EASTERN EUROPE. Edited by Hans-Hermann Höhmann, Michael Kaser, and Karl C. Thalheim. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975. xxiv, 585 pp. \$22.50.

This is the type of book that a few reviewers and insomniacs will read all the way through, while other interested readers will be content to sample or draw on it for reference. All too frequently in this collection of seventeen essays, the blandness of an author's style, whether original or in English translation from the German, matches the colorlessness of his ideas. The book does, however, have a worthwhile purpose. It is very useful as a handy reference, for it covers the broad features of contemporary industrial and agricultural systems in all the East Euro-

pean nations including Albania and Yugoslavia, and it contains much information, particularly on laws, decrees, and regulations, that is not readily available elsewhere.

Most of the essays shed very little light on cause and effect—economic or political—in the reforms, but Oldrych Kyn's essay on Czechoslovakia is an exception. Kyn breathes life into his subject with a more or less systematic effort to explain the economic and political background and some of the more manifest consequences of the changes in the rules by which the Czech economy has been managed since the mid-1960s. On the other hand, one of the least informative essays is the one on Hungary by Gabor Révész of the Institute of Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This is unfortunate because the Hungarian experience with administrative decentralization is crucial to the issue of whether or not it is possible to loosen input and output controls over producers in a hierarchically structured economy and still maintain minimum standards of plan fulfillment and coordination, under conditions where not enough price flexibility is allowed by the authorities to rectify supply-demand disequilibria. Since Révész limits himself to a noncontroversial overview of the "new mechanism" and dispenses with any deep analysis of its effects, I suppose he cannot be faulted for failing to mention Janos Kornai's observations regarding the stabilizing properties of supplier-client linkages among enterprises and, offsetting the latter, the undermining effects on reform of the persistence of a sellers' market due to excess macroeconomic demand.

The second part of the book compares system change across the East European economies in specific areas, including pricing, capital finance, planning models, agriculture, and foreign trade. Although some overlap with the earlier chapters on system change and reforms in individual countries was unavoidable, there would have been far less had the authors not divided their functional chapters by sections devoted to individual countries as well. It is characteristic of this approach that every table in the chapters on capital formation and agriculture refers exclusively to a single country. In the chapter by Henry Matejka on foreign trade systems, there is one table showing the change in the number of trading enterprises in the seven European CMEA member countries. That is about the extent of cross-country quantitative comparisons in the book. (The synthetic chapter by Karl C. Thalheim, which is meant to be a "balance sheet" of reforms for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as a whole, contains no comparative data at all.)

The chapter on planning models by Alfred Zauberman fits about as awkwardly in the book as the models he describes fit in planning practice—which is, of course, no fault of Zauberman. His essay contains the results of much useful research in contemporary Soviet, Czechoslovak, and Hungarian economics. If I have something to carp about, it is that he discusses too many models elliptically, and that he does not have enough to say about the institutional prerequisites that might enable some of the models' features to be introduced into planning practice. The concise, frequently opaque style of discourse of the mathematical economists is perhaps not the most appropriate for an article designed to unravel and explain theoretical ideas to scholars not primarily concerned with abstract models.

This book, the fruit of English-German cooperation, may serve as an up-to-date factual and legal complement to the more theoretical compendium on East European reforms edited by Morris Bornstein (*Plan and Market: Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973]). What neither of these volumes contains is a quantitative analysis of the

reforms and their effects. Given that at least partial reforms have been introduced, off and on, in the area since 1957–58, enough observations should be available to make possible at least a stab at intercountry comparisons of the effects of reforms on factor productivity. One statistical technique to explore this problem is multiple regression. It would be interesting to see whether the introduction of a dummy variable, standing for reform in the system, into a multiple-regression equation purporting to explain variation in factor productivity through time or across centrally planned economies would help to reduce significantly the variance otherwise unaccounted for in this dependent variable. We are not sure at this point whether partial reforms make a sufficient difference in the routine management of the economy to show up in *any* statistical outcome of the economic process.

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THE "SICK HEART" OF MODERN EUROPE: THE PROBLEM OF THE DANUBIAN LANDS. By *Hugh Seton-Watson*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1975. xii, 76 pp. \$4.95.

Hugh Seton-Watson's fundamental point, that the Danubian lands have been the sick heart of twentieth-century Europe, depends on his threefold analysis that World War I grew out of the "clash of conflicting nationalisms in Central Europe," that World War II grew out of "the national and social conflicts . . . in the Danube lands," and that the current situation in Eastern Europe is one of "national humiliation" for eighty million Europeans. One can appreciate the historical realities that lead Professor Seton-Watson to this conclusion, and one can admire the erudition and learning that alone can produce a mature synthesis such as this, but one need not agree. World War I can be understood as a conflict between the modern principle of nationalism and the medieval one of *kaisertreue*, but today many would say that the Central European powers entered the war to expand or preserve their international position. World War II grew out of the wreckage of that first war, but its causes were linked with German policies more than with Danubian conflicts, severe though they were. Few Western specialists will disagree that Eastern Europe under Soviet domination is not a desirable or encouraging situation, but whether the problems there are analogous to those of two generations ago is doubtful. Agree or disagree, however, this brief book is a small miracle—how many books are of equal interest to both the specialist and the beginner, as is this one?

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