

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

the objectives and activities of the Soviet Union in the Middle East. The main theme of McLaurin's study, that Soviet influence in the Middle East remains quite limited, is one with which I fully agree. Unfortunately, the very brevity of McLaurin's analysis has led him to make a number of sweeping generalizations which not only are insufficiently supported by facts, but which also are often incorrect. Thus, on page 88, he describes Soviet financial aid to Egyptian oil exploration in the Sinai as "stupendous" without citing any figures to support this assertion. On page 38, he even goes so far as to claim that "as time went on, the [Soviet] call for nationalization [of Western-owned oil companies] was silenced." This assertion is at variance with the facts. Soviet advocacy of the nationalization of Western-owned oil companies increased markedly, particularly after the Libyan regime of Mu'ammar Kaddafi came to power in 1969, and reached a high point at the time of Iraq's nationalization of the Western-owned IPC oil fields in June 1972—an event McLaurin fails to mention.

One of the major problems in McLaurin's book, perhaps made necessary by the brevity of his analysis, is his failure to deal with a number of important aspects of Soviet Middle Eastern policy in sufficient depth. Such issues as Soviet policy toward the Palestinian Arabs, Soviet policy toward the Iran-Iraq conflict, the role of the Communist parties of the Middle East (the Communist-supported abortive coup d'état in the Sudan in 1971 is not even mentioned), and Soviet policy toward the Persian Gulf are treated on the level of highly superficial generalization.

An even more fundamental weakness of McLaurin's analysis is his almost total reliance on *secondary* sources of information. This often makes the book appear more like an extended undergraduate term paper than a scholarly research effort, and may account, in part, for some of the errors in the study.

All in all, McLaurin's book is a highly superficial analysis of Soviet policy in the Middle East, one that cannot be recommended either for student or specialist.

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ARMS FOR THE ARABS: THE SOVIET UNION AND WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST. By *Jon D. Glassman*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975. x, 243 pp. \$12.50.

The initial "Czech arms deal" in 1955, when the first Soviet hardware was sent to Egypt, effectively broke the feeble attempt by America, Britain, and France to keep a reasonable "balance of arms" in the Middle East, so that no single state would be militarily strong enough to make war on any other one. In furtherance of the foreign policy in the post-Stalin, anti-Imperialist era, the Soviet Union tried to establish friendly relations with non-Communist regimes, a policy of which Stalin disapproved. Since 1955, in an effort to gain and maintain its influence in the Middle East, Soviet arms have been sent to selected "progressive states," mainly Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, in quantities that have varied from a flood to a trickle. In spite of rebuffs and failures, the Politburo has continued to supply hardware, viewing this policy as the best way to exclude Western influence and to foster its own.

The author, a Foreign Service career officer, has served in Moscow, worked on the SALT talks, and is currently handling Soviet involvement in the Middle East. Thus he has a sound background knowledge of Soviet motives, methods, and