

THE SOVIET PREFECTS: THE LOCAL PARTY ORGANS IN INDUSTRIAL DECISION-MAKING. By *Jerry F. Hough*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969. xiii, 416 pp. \$12.50.

In the recent succession crises in the Soviet Union several analysts have hypothesized that the Communist Party is losing and will continue to lose its grip on the bureaucracy. The decline of party control is associated with the end of Soviet totalitarianism, and the growing complexity of the economic system and the loosening of the political system are seen as gradually undermining the party's ability to command. The deductive logic of this analysis is persuasive. But Professor Hough, who is not content with this logic, has made an exhaustive (and sometimes exhausting) empirical analysis of the actual day-to-day role of the party at the middle and lower levels in the economic and political structure over the last two decades. He concludes that it is much too premature to predict the death or the paralysis of the CPSU. Its capacity to adapt to changing situations is considerable, and it continues to be an indispensable part of the local scene. The first secretary of the oblast is still not only the local "boss" but he and his staff are also the primary coordinators, arbitrators, and expeditors in his region. City and raion party organs have less authority but still have a comparably powerful role. Party organs insure their prefectural position by closely controlling the assignment and promotion of key personnel through the party *nomenklatura* in industry, government, agriculture, education, and culture. And to guard against becoming overawed by the expertise and growing seniority of the bureaucracy, the party has professionalized and raised the education and experience standards of its own cadres. Only in the area of indoctrination has the effectiveness of party work significantly declined, and even in this area it has been showing adaptability and innovation.

Although this study reveals little that is new about the role of the party at the local level, and although the evidence presented is not conclusive because most of the vital statistics and the key materials on the party are not available, the evidence is sufficiently overwhelming and the study persuasive in showing a persistent vitality in the party. It follows from this general conclusion that the shift from the rigid totalitarianism of Stalin and the end of widespread terror has not significantly altered the command position of the party at the middle and lower levels. This in turn seems to imply that terror was not an essential element of totalitarian control at least in the middle and lower levels of society. As tantalizing as it might be, however, it would be dangerous to accept this deduction without further investigation. Hough unfortunately does not address himself to this question.

Of particular interest to political scientists are the last three chapters of the study, in which Hough puts his research into the broader perspective of comparative government. He concludes that Soviet administration is a classic model of the prefectural system as opposed to the "pluralistic system of local-based coordination" exemplified by the United States. France, he finds, is an example of a mixed system. The author further concludes that the model derived from Max Weber of a rational-technical society has limited use in measuring and analyzing political development. As applied to the developmental situation in the USSR, it is meaningless. He feels the key variable is the power relationship.

In sum, this volume represents one of the better studies on current politics in the Soviet Union. It uses detailed research to reject hypotheses based on clever

speculation and takes care in relating the research of a particular area to the broader questions and concerns of political science.

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SOVIET PENAL POLICY. A Background Book. By *Ivo Lapenna*. Chester Springs, Penn.: Dufour Editions, 1968. 148 pp. \$3.50.

Dr. Lapenna, a reader in Soviet law at the University of London, intends this book to be "a basic guide to Soviet penal policy" (p. 12). About half of it is devoted to a summary and evaluation of the main features of present-day Soviet criminal law and procedure, and about half to their historical and theoretical background in the period from 1917 to the death of Stalin.

The summary, though very short, is excellent. The evaluation, on the other hand, is almost entirely one-sided. Only toward the end does the author say a word in favor of Soviet penal policy—namely, that the "tremendous attempt to mobilise society [for the eradication of crime] certainly represents a positive approach to the problems of crime prevention" (p. 136). But in the few pages where this approach is discussed, the emphasis is on its limitations rather than its achievements. Lapenna finally concludes (pp. 145–46) that there is lacking in the Soviet Union a genuine system of law, a system of guarantees for the correct implementation of law, and the minimum legal standards recognized by civilized nations.

In reaching these conclusions, the author makes a considerable number of doubtful, or at least controversial, assertions without giving any supporting evidence; for example, he states that "important legal texts," including the latest edition of the Criminal Code, "are simply not available" even to lawyers (p. 53), that sentence by collectives of workers under the 1961 antiparasite law "in practice meant [sentence by] the local party officials" (p. 63), that Soviet advocates have "very poor professional standards" (p. 112), and that the procuracy is "itself a source of illegalities on many occasions" (p. 145). Some other statements are not only doubtful but simply incorrect: 19.1 percent of all professional judges are "without legal training" (p. 108) (the correct figure is something like 1 or 2 percent); "until recently" the doctrine of analogy "was defended by all who wanted to conform to the official political line" (p. 34) (in fact, it came under severe criticism by leading Soviet jurists in the late 1930s and again in the immediate postwar period).

Published in the Dufour Background Books Series, *Soviet Penal Policy* does not cite sources of data and does not attempt to be comprehensive. That being so, it would seem to this reviewer—perhaps because he does not share Lapenna's low opinion of the Soviet legal system—that the author should at least have discussed alternative evaluations of the materials he presents.

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