

There is quite a lot to debate and to contest in these historical chapters. To state, for example, that "the War-Communism period extended from the October Revolution to 21 March 1922" and that "the NEP lasted from then until December 1927" (p. 7) is to invite criticisms from historians. Another statement which traces the lamentable state of the Soviet economy by 1920 to the nationalization of the banks in 1917 (p. 11) without mentioning the civil war which ravaged the country in the meantime is passionately anti-Leninist but quite contestable. Jasny always was a polemical spirit, and his writings never let the reader remain indifferent. One finds himself constantly provoked either to agree or to jump up in protest—but this is his forte.

One limiting factor is the narrow source material which Jasny managed to bring in, and especially the place he gave to the transcript of the "Menshevik trial" of 1931. Jasny knew well that this trial was a display of concoctions, but he nevertheless relied on it in some important points. He seems to have believed that the persons he respected did in fact belong to such organizations as the "Menshevik Bureau" (allegedly headed by Groman) or to the "Labour-Industrial Party" under Kondratiev. Jasny would probably have preferred them to have actually organized something to fight the system, but though these people did in fact fight for their opinions, the "parties" and "bureaus" and other counterrevolutionary activities ascribed to them were mythical. On the other hand, Jasny—besides having initiated this research—was personally acquainted with the main figures described, and this firsthand knowledge will help us in further study of the whole theme.

To sum up, this is a stimulating book for the scholar and for advanced seminars on Soviet industrialization and planning.

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SOVIET PLANNING TODAY: PROPOSALS FOR AN OPTIMALLY FUNCTIONING ECONOMIC SYSTEM. By *Michael Ellman*. University of Cambridge, Department of Applied Economics, Occasional Paper 25. New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1971. xv, 219 pp. \$10.00, cloth. \$4.45, paper.

The revival of Soviet economics after 1954 is the topic of Ellman's book. Western economists have often quarreled about the importance of the literary and mathematical components of their discipline. The Soviet experience seems to show that a country with a strong mathematical tradition can overcome an almost total lack of a literary economic tradition in a period of fifteen years. But the situation is a little more complicated than that.

A planned economy both prepares and executes plans. Both "phases" of this economy take place in the context of an environment (physical, political, and international) lying outside the control of the planners. The observer of a planned economy is interested in the reasons for discrepancies between plan and performance, and in the manner in which plans are corrected in the light of such discrepancies, as well as in the impact of environmental changes upon plans. In contrast, the economists whose work is summarized by Ellman are so caught up in the planning process that their attention is centered on a technical problem: how to prepare that vast array of numbers which makes up a Soviet plan. Im-

portant as this question is, it is not the only question which students of planned economies must answer.

The Soviet economist has today recognized that there may be a discrepancy between actual Soviet prices and the "separating hyperplane" which mathematically represents the alternatives from which planners choose when they select a "best" plan among those available to them. This discrepancy—which does not exist in a competitive market economy—makes it impossible for Soviet economists to interpret money values of Soviet aggregates like "consumption" and "investment" as Western economists can interpret corresponding Western aggregates. Recognition of this discrepancy has been a major step in the revival of Soviet economics, and constitutes an important theme in Ellman's discussion. But the Soviet economy continues to operate despite the peculiar nature of Soviet prices, and Soviet economists have done little to elucidate the consequences of their actual price system. In part, this is because "planning" in the Soviet context is institutionally distinct from the formulation of fiscal and monetary policy. These topics, which are an important part of Western economics, are still neglected in the Soviet Union.

Ellman's readers will find a fascinating mixture, here, of rapid Soviet progress in the recognition of the usefulness of mathematical programming in solving some quantitative planning problems, and of general Soviet neglect of other questions which are now regularly asked about the operations of other economic systems.

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COMECON AND THE POLITICS OF INTEGRATION. By *Henry Wilcox Schaefer*. Praeger Special Studies in International Politics and Public Affairs. New York, Washington, London: Praeger Publishers, 1972. xiv, 200 pp. \$15.00.

This book is the "story" of Comecon as reflected in official pronouncements and press commentaries of member countries, chronologically covering the 1968–71 period. The purpose of the study is to compile a partial record of intrabloc relations.

Though the reader will encounter few surprises, he will find occasional insights—for example, on the operation of the Comecon Investment Bank (pp. 98–101, 187). The study confirms that integration has not yet been defined, much less achieved, in Comecon. It also shows that the USSR, Bulgaria, and Poland tend to be the most enthusiastic supporters of closer economic cooperation within the bloc, as long as it does not lock them into positions as suppliers of raw materials. The USSR's chief concern is to reap the political benefits of economic integration; Bulgaria and Poland hope to enhance their role as suppliers of manufactured goods. East Germany and Rumania occasionally find themselves on the same side of issues—one resisting attempts to encroach on a foreign trade position already achieved, the other protecting its freedom to pursue its own industrial development program. Post-1968 Czechoslovakia is marking time, and Hungary's main concern is to keep its domestic options open.

The book provides a good perspective on the significance of the Complex Program adopted in July 1971, whose main achievement is a consensus on what integration steps should be tried in the next ten to twenty years. In the author's