

postwar political doctrines in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe, and it is here that its strength undoubtedly lies. One particularly welcome feature is an extensive bibliography covering the fields mentioned in considerable detail. All in all, this is a useful introduction.

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BREZHNEV: THE MASKS OF POWER. By *John Dornberg*. New York: Basic Books, 1974. 317 pp. \$10.00.

This book is less a work of scholarship than it is a product of journalistic craftsmanship. Dornberg has skimmed the cream of the best available Kremlinological expertise on the inside story of Brezhnev—how he rose to prominence and gained the position of power he presently occupies in the apparatus of the Soviet party-state. The book is bare of any footnotes whatever. By itself this is no scandal, but there are a number of places in the narrative which cry out for a fuller indication of sources or for some authoritative support for a number of the author's key judgments. Anyone who has read the regular political analyses of Christian Duevel (of *Radio Liberty*) over the years soon recognizes the debt Dornberg owes to this acute observer of the workings of Soviet leadership politics—a debt briefly acknowledged in the book's preface. The chapters dealing with Brezhnev's incumbency since Khrushchev's fall generally follow Duevel's interpretations of Politburo politics and the signs of high-level factionalism that has accompanied Brezhnev's movement into primacy among the leaders.

Dornberg's drawing together of a cumulation of discrete Kremlinological analyses into a single continuous and unified account of the Brezhnev leadership is useful, however. The book shows that the relative stability of the Politburo oligarchy has been the consequence neither of fervent devotion among the leaders to a notion of "collective leadership" nor of formal "institutionalization" of leadership processes, as has been often suggested. Rather, it has resulted from a fluid counterbalancing of the forces at work in the higher echelons of the party-state. Brezhnev has played a careful game of coalition politics in the oligarchy, in contrast to Khrushchev's pattern of maneuvers. The latter repeatedly used "surprise attack" tactics to upset vested interests and to prevent them from congealing into a common front to resist his reform attempts. Brezhnev, on the other hand, has won a steady accretion of power and influence through glacial tactics. According to Dornberg's account, Brezhnev's strength has undergone a series of ebbs and flows, instead of the pattern of dramatic quick advances and retreats that characterized Khrushchev's leadership. Accurately and well-told also is the story of the factional moves and countermoves in the crucial 1970–71 period, as Brezhnev sought to build a platform of decisive strength for the Twenty-fourth Party Congress. The account here probably owes something to Michel Tatu's, as well as Duevel's, analyses of the unsettled situation in the Politburo preceding the postponed and then rescheduled party congress.

Though not a solidly scholarly political biography, Dornberg has written an able account of Brezhnev's career. He has not, by any means, removed all the "masks" of Brezhnev's power. Much remains to be done in deepening our political

and historical understanding of the Brezhnev years within the broader dimensions of Soviet history and politics.

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USSR: THE POLITICS OF OLIGARCHY. By *Darrell P. Hammer*. Modern Comparative Politics Series. Hinsdale, Ill.: Dryden Press, 1974. xii, 452 pp. Paper.

In the past decade the monolithic model of "totalitarianism" in studies of the USSR has been steadily chipped away by a new generation of Western scholars, mostly American, armed with the tools of behavioral science. Rejecting the monistic arguments of ideological or institutional determinism, the new school has sought, beneath the façade of unanimous conformity in the Soviet polity, evidence to support the conception of a "conflict model," the interplay of "interest groups," or in the work under review, "bureaucratic pluralism."

Professor Hammer, a political scientist at Indiana University, has produced in this, his first book-length publication, an unusual work of multiple value. Intended as a text in the "Modern Comparative Politics Series" edited by Peter Merkl, *USSR: The Politics of Oligarchy* is nevertheless a stimulating and original essay on the functioning of the Soviet political system and a useful update, even for the specialist, on a variety of points ranging from the role of Supreme Soviet committees (increasing) to the experiment in "popular justice" (tapering off). As a text, Hammer's approach is novel and refreshing. He begins (after a historical and ideological excursion) with a worm's-eye view of the actual workings of the system from the standpoint of local and regional administrators, and then moves through a discussion of the various bureaucratic structures to a concluding set of chapters on the process of top-level policy making in domestic and foreign affairs. Clear and forceful in style, and enlivened by liberal citation of eyewitnesses and Soviet sources, the work may nevertheless be tricky for the totally uninitiated student because of its sophistication in concept and the controversial nature of its central thesis.

Hammer may be faulted on a number of oversimplifications and some outright errors (among the points, "national districts" are not small, but in area quite large [p. 142]; the Georgians no longer are a power nationally [p. 147]; Stalin did not always desist from expelling Politburo members [p. 193]; candidates for the Supreme Soviet are not limited to nomination in one district [p. 260]). More important, the thesis of "bureaucratic pluralism" as the key to Soviet politics does not stand up persuasively in the face of Hammer's own evidence. Granted that the top leadership is an oligarchy—ten or fifteen or thirty men, rather than a personal despotism—its power over the system is not limited by any institutionalized autonomy for conflicting viewpoints, but simply by the constraints of reality—the limitations of inertia, complexity, and inefficiency in working the will of the leadership through the vast maze of interlocking bureaucratic controls that is Soviet society. Hammer underscores these limits himself in noting in his conclusion the price in bureaucratic rigidity that the Brezhnev regime has evidently paid for an orderly transfer of power.

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