

SOVIET POLICY TOWARD BLACK AFRICA: THE FOCUS ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION. By *Helen Desfosses Cohn*. Foreword by *John N. Hazard*. Praeger Special Studies in International Politics and Public Affairs. New York, Washington, London: Praeger Publishers, 1972. xvii, 316 pp. \$17.50.

Soviet writers on Africa, like all social and historical analysts in the Soviet Union, have to maneuver carefully among the tenets of Marxism-Leninism, the current policy line, and reality. During the 1950s, when the Soviets first discovered tropical Africa, Russian authors were busy reconciling Khrushchev's optimistic prospects for Africa, and his rapidly changing policies, with ideological orthodoxy. However, since they knew little about Africa and discredited non-Soviet works, reality was of little concern. Subsequently, disappointments about African progress toward closer Soviet ties, the restrained—almost retiring—politics of Brezhnev toward Africa, and the continued decline of Communist ideology have changed the parameters of Soviet writings. There is now much more room for reality, freer appraisals, and even debate, as this volume by Professor Cohn makes clear. Cohn's study is one of a number of bibliographical essays analyzing Soviet works on Africa. The emphasis is on the Brezhnev period and usefully brings some of the earlier studies up to date. A wide variety of Soviet works are covered, and each chapter takes up in detail the crucial social and political issues dealing with nationalism, culture and education, political organizations, economic development, and the social strata. The volume is well organized and readable. The author has thoroughly documented her basic thesis that pragmatism has replaced ideological considerations and that Soviet writers are increasingly less optimistic about the immediate future of Africa. However, on some points where the attitudes of Soviet writers are of particular interest or appear unexpected the evidence is weak or missing—for example, the Soviet reactions to the Chinese racist arguments (p. 112) and the alleged admission by Soviet writers that on the surface capitalism provides results that are as good as (or better than) those that socialism can produce for the underdeveloped world (p. 181).

In surveying this whole genre of works analyzing recent Soviet historiography on Africa one is led to speculate on their value. That Soviet authors have to twist and turn within the boundaries set by the regime is well established. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Soviet scholarship has added significantly to scholarship on Africa and that its findings need to be brought to the attention of the non-Communist world. There is also no evidence that the views of these Russian authors influence policy. Except for some circumstantial evidence that Potekhin, the late dean of Soviet Africanists, may have influenced Khrushchev, no one has been able to calculate the effect of writers on policy-making. Although the author sets as one of her aims to relate events and policies to the views of Russian authors, that part of her analysis is not developed. Thus as thorough and as objective as this and other studies on Soviet works on Africa may be, the purpose they serve is rather limited. Surprisingly the actual Soviet behavior and policies in Africa have not received the same thorough treatment by any recent author. One hopes that the next books on the Soviet Union and Africa will fill this gap.

DAVID T. CATTELL
University of California, Los Angeles