

of Soviet sociology because this is a discipline whose existence, as the author correctly points out, is precarious. Sociology eventually becomes social criticism, and social criticism early becomes political and ideological criticism. Thus sociology, perhaps more than almost any other social science, lives under a constant sword of Damocles. As long as the regime calculates that sociological research can be useful (both at home and abroad), it will give it conditional support and legitimacy. But a hardening of the Soviet ideological line (of the type that has been building up under Brezhnev) means a tightening of controls over sociology. As the author correctly states: "Given the fact that sociology was one of the last disciplines to gain recognition . . . it would hardly be surprising if it were not one of the first to be curtailed" (p. 112).

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ÉDUCATION ET SOCIÉTÉ EN RUSSIE DANS LE SECOND TIERS DU XIX^e SIÈCLE. By *Alain Besançon*. École Pratique des Hautes Études, Sorbonne. Sixième Section: Sciences Économiques et Sociales. Civilisations et sociétés, 40. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1974. 168 pp. Paper.

Scholars are still grubbing at the diffuse root system of the Russian Revolution. One source of its lush violence fascinates academics in particular—the tsar's minuscule corps of university students. This French study, begun as a thesis, *Intelligentsia russe dans les années soixante*, was substantially completed in 1962. The author was allowed a few peeks at Ministry of Education and Third Section archives. In addition to standard printed sources he makes good use of memoirs written by "old grads" looking back with wonder and distortion at school days passed in the sunrise of student politics.

Martin Malia's course, removed from Berkeley to Paris in 1970, convinced Alain Besançon that the world-wide student unrest of the 1960s was conceptually linked to the empire-wide "*affaire des étudiants*" of the 1860s. Transfused by light from across the sea, the essay was published in 1974. Presumably the current generation is interested in precursors of its own malfunctions. "*Hélas*," to borrow the author's phrase, I suspect that student protest, past or present, has become one of the least important worries of the twentieth century. The audience for this graphically attractive book has shrunk to the handful of eternal students who make a living sifting the debris of the Romanov disaster.

What the professionals want to know is: Has M. Besançon found anything new; or has he at least put familiar pieces into a fresh pattern? The decade after 1962 was a boom period for English and German-language research into tsarist schools. None of this output got into Besançon's manuscript. Bibliographically, the book is out of date. Intellectually, it is very much alive. For one thing, it breathes Gallic spirit into the Miliukov-Malia judgment on tsardom's impossible marriage with German philosophy and science. Besançon generously avows his debts. But he is too modest. The man has a swift, sensitive, cultured intelligence. His language is clear, totally devoid of social science sludge. With quick grace he demolishes the Leroy-Beaulieu-Gerschenkron chestnut on radicalism and pov-

erty. His best formulations stretch the mind. "Comme les libertins du xvii^e siècle français, les étudiants russe ne rejettent pas Dieu sans l'avoir interrogé avec passion." It was worth waiting for that.

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INSIDE SOVIET SCHOOLS. By *Susan Jacoby*. New York: Hill and Wang, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974. vii, 248 pp. \$8.95.

This book would have been better titled *Personal Impressions of Some Soviet Schools*, for in it Ms. Jacoby recounts her impressions of several formal educational establishments in the European part of the USSR and a few in Tbilisi. Jacoby, a former reporter for *The Washington Post*, spent 1969–71 with her husband, a *Post* correspondent, in Moscow. Unfortunately, she tries to make out of the book something more than just her impressions. She mentions statistics and/or studies about pupils and education in order to verify these impressions, but many of these citations are carelessly done and some of her readings of the literature cited are hopelessly superficial. For example, the author states: "The Soviets do not take part in international testing programs designed to compare the results of secondary schooling in different nations. We know from these studies that Japanese high school graduates display a higher level of proficiency in math than students in other countries . . ." (p. 204). I assume the reference here is to Torsten Husen's *International Study of Achievement in Mathematics: A Comparison of Twelve Countries* (New York, 1967). Actually this study did not test graduates of high schools at all. Most of those tested were thirteen years old. In another instance, Ms. Jacoby asserts that "a disproportionate number of Central Asians . . . rank lowest in educational achievement among the Soviet nationality groups . . ." (p. 24). Here, she is confusing educational achievement with educational attainment. She does not offer any cross-national achievement test scores comparing Uzbeks, Tadzhiks, Turkmen, and Kirghiz students with other ethnic groups in the USSR. To my knowledge these test scores, if they exist at all, have not become publicly available. The author is also in error when she states that "it is understood that native-language secondary schools can not lead to a higher education, since all university classes are conducted in Russian" (p. 159). In fact, at least in Central Asia (and by Jacoby's own discovery in Tbilisi), one can get any university degree without proficiency in the Russian language. There are, of course, other factors at work that push the Russian language to become the *lingua franca* of the USSR, but these cannot be elaborated here.

Ms. Jacoby is apparently correct in observing that "Educational opportunity in the Soviet Union is influenced by three major factors: social class, geography and national and ethnic origin" (p. 135). These, she explains, are the same factors affecting educational opportunities in the United States. However, when citing the literature concerning the United States (recent works on equality by James Coleman and C. Jencks and their colleagues), she exhibits little understanding of the materials beyond what one might gain from reading a book review or a press release from the publishing house. She does not offer any documentation of her generalizations about the USSR. (My own work in higher educational attainment of national minorities in the USSR and the United States shows a much higher percentage of national representation for the major non-Russian peoples of the USSR than for national minorities in this country.)