Russian Prehistory

Archaeology in the USSR. A. L. Mongait. Translated and adapted by M. W. Thompson. Penguin Books, Baltimore, Md., 1961. 320 pp. Illus. $1.45.

The Russian original of this work is authoritative both as a document of what Soviet archeology is like and as a description of its findings down to the early 1950's. It has been reviewed elsewhere [*American Anthropologist* **59**, No. 1, 183 (1957)], and critical comments by the translator are included in the Pelican edition. Mongait's volume is an excellent synthesis. Its principal faults are nationalistic bias and bombast and an almost total lack of concern with concepts and methods (as opposed to techniques). This latter failure is frequent in Soviet archeological writings and probably stems from a desire to avoid "formalism"—that is, a preoccupation with problems seemingly far removed from the ultimate objective, in this case "the proper understanding of historical development."

Thompson's translation, while not always elegant or even idiomatic, has the great merit of always being clear in meaning. The translator's foreword (pages 15–31) explains the conception of the book, provides environmental and ethnographic information on the Soviet Union, and outlines the growth of archeology in Russia since prerevolutionary times. Parenthetical remarks by the translator within the text are also, for the most part, helpful, though a few seem trivial and unnecessary. In dealing with the eternal and vexing problem of finding the correct nominatives of Russian proper names (often present in the original only in declined or adjectival forms), Thompson did not always look hard enough. In addition, some misrenderings—such as Kazakhistan, Khvoika, Varakhsh, and Saltov (for Kazakhstan, Khvoiko, Varakhsha, and Saltovo)—can be explained only by carelessness, since the correct unmodified forms occur in the Russian original.

As stated in Thompson's foreword, this is not a complete translation. Omissions include politically motivated passages, enough of which have been retained, however, to preserve the flavor of the original. In addition, Thompson also chose to drop a fair number of specific mentions of sites, individuals, and publications, "to reduce the burden of foreign names." This decision does not consider the fact that the reader always has the choice of ignoring information when it is provided, but not of supplying it when it is omitted. In the present case, this sort of trimming seems a poor move, because the original is already a rather simplified presentation of a vast subject.

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Policy Questions

Structure of Higher Education. William O. Penrose. Van Keulen, The Hague, Netherlands, 1961. 208 pp.

Because they fulfill new functions and have accepted fresh responsibilities, universities are everywhere changing very quickly. They are also growing at a fantastic rate: it seems possible that, at least in the more advanced countries, tertiary education may be universalized and nationalized during the next 50 years, just as secondary education has been during the last 50. As a consequence of rapid evolution, perplexing problems of policy arise, some of which can be usefully elucidated by comparative analysis. While it is unlikely that the educational practices or institutions of any country can be simply transplanted into another, confrontation of two or more systems may help us to identify, isolate, and understand the forces which shape policy as well as the historical and social factors which have to be taken into account by policy makers.

In his new book, William Penrose, dean of the School of Education at the University of Delaware, describes and analyzes the organization and administration of higher education in the United States and the Netherlands. He begins by dealing, in a general way, with the United States: listing the aims and purposes of education; describing the administrative and organizational structure of typical universities as well as the powers and duties of officers such as the president; considering the legal status of institutions of higher education; and so forth. Then comes a very interesting and informative chapter on "Super-institutional" controls: the influence of the state and of other official and nonofficial bodies upon public and nonpublic institutions. Penrose then discusses governing boards; their nature, powers, and functions; selection and appointment of staff; committee organizations; the role of professional administrators; academic structure; and other related topics. From all this emerges a clear and detailed picture of the ways in which American universities and colleges are run and organized. One begins to see who, in fact, makes the important decisions and how these key individuals are themselves controlled. One understands to what kinds of pressures the institutions respond and why institutions seem to be so cautious and conservative in some respects, so bold and progressive in others.

The 40 pages which Penrose devotes to the Netherlands seems to me much less interesting and valuable. He, himself, gives the explanation. He worked with an official of the Dutch government and relied entirely upon interviews with administrative and academic leaders. It is noteworthy that, while many American books and papers are listed, there is not a single reference to any material available in the Dutch language. As a result, we have, in the author's own words, "a description, analysis and tentative evaluation of higher education in the Netherlands which may seem less scholarly, in the usual sense, than the section on the United States." With these reservations, it can be readily admitted that the careful "studies of selected institutions," which cover the administrative and organizational structure of Leyden (State), Delft (Technological), Amsterdam (Municipal), Amsterdam (Reformed Church), and Rotterdam (Economics), are an exceedingly useful and exact summary of the existing situation.

All this is valuable. In addition, Penrose's statements of general principles of administration as well as his suggestions of topics where research is needed are helpful. Nevertheless, three criticisms of fundamental importance must be urged. First, the analysis seems somewhat superficial. Administrative and organizational forms have not usually been designed simply to serve present-day purposes and aims, especially not those explicitly stated in documents. They are usually adopted simply because no one could think of anything new, or else they are invented because they seem to be the only ones that can possibly deal with the conflicts of interest, with the social and individual problems existing at the time of their adoption. We inherit them from the past, and they are not always well adapted to the problems which arise at the present. In other words, I am convinced that the analysis of university