Russian Land, Soviet People. JAMES S. GREGORY. Pegasus, New York, 1968. 947 pp.

Undoubtedly this book is the worst representative of a generally undistinguished line of geography texts on the Soviet Union emanating from the British Isles in recent years. In many ways, Gregory's study is an anachronism, reverting to the days when regional geography could substitute misleading superficialities and aimless description for ideas and methods. This text seems to combine some of the least propitious elements of earlier American treatments of this subject, including the embarrassingly simplistic approach of Cressey, the repetitiveness and isolation from the mainstreams of geographic research embodied in Shabad's Soviet text, and a surprising reliance on grossly oversimplified land-man causations.

The book is divided along conventional lines into an introductory systematic part, accounting for one-third of the 947 pages comprising the text, and a detailed regional section based on the broad regional divisions frequently employed in both Soviet and western studies. The systematic treatment is marred by an unconvincing effort to account for Russian and Soviet behavior in terms of physical-geographic causes, a lack of a problem orientation, and the failure to use important Soviet and western bibliographic sources. Gregory makes almost no reference to Soviet location theory, and also implies that the Soviet economy still is administered by 104 regional economic councils despite the changes in their number in 1961 and their abolition in 1965. The regional portion is a dreary recitation of some of the familiar features of different Soviet areas with heavy emphasis on physical geography and historical evolution. The best section of the book, incidentally, is the chapter pertaining to historical geography.

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A Geography of Europe. JEAN GOTTMANN. 4th ed., Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1969. xii and 866 pp.

The fact that this book has gone into its fourth edition might be cited as evidence that it has been accepted as one of the standard texts on the geography of Europe. It would be reasonable to expect that the new edition would have eliminated certain discrepancies and shortcomings of the previous version; instead, efforts have been expended primarily on an updating of statistics, minor reorganization and expansion of the text, and the addition of a map or two. The basic format remains unchanged. After three introductory chapters on Europe as a continent, the text is then organized by individual countries under the regional divisions of western, Mediterranean, central, and eastern Europe. Each chapter presents a brief introduction to the physical setting and a discussion of socio-economic factors. It is difficult to understand why the author did not include a good physiographic map of each country to accompany the text, why he still uses so many maps without a title, or why he did not sharpen the legends under some of the photographs. It is also disappointing to note his failure to correct certain ambiguities and errors from the previous edition. For example, he really never fully explains the difference between collective and state farms in the Soviet Union. The map on p. 283 showing the reclamation projects in the Zuider Zee does not indicate that the southeast polder is being executed in two parts, and the map on p. 703 still gives the impression that Finno-Karelia is a union republic. Small as such errors or omissions may be, they nevertheless detract from a good textbook and it is indeed unfortunate that a more careful revision was not undertaken before it went to press.

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TRAVEL AND EXPLORATION

The Search for the Islands of Solomon, 1567-1838. COLIN JACK-HINTON. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1969. xxii + 411 pp., 45 maps; index. 25.50 gulden.

The discovery, rediscovery, and mapping of the Solomon Island Group in the southwest Pacific are treated here in minute detail. Although the general facts of the discovery of the Solomons and neighboring islands are widely known, this volume fills in the historical cracks and crannies with material from original sources, and is profusely illustrated by drawings from maps and charts of the periods covered. It begins with Mendaña and the search for the southern continent, and concludes with merchantmen and whalers shortcutting through the narrow waters of the Solomons on voyages from Australia to India.

This is not a book for the general geographic reader; it bristles with latitudes and longitudes, with dates and names, and with excerpts from explorers' reports. Without H. O. charts or *Sailing Directions for the Pacific Islands* the reader is frequently more lost and confused than were the brave captains that it depicts. The volume results from careful and encyclopedic scholarship; it is a sourcebook of detailed information on the area of its title; and a commendable contribution to the story of the exploration of the Pacific.

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PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Grundzuge der Pleistozänen Vegetationsgeschichte Nord-Eurasiens. BURKHARD FRENZEL. Franz Steiner, Wiesbaden. Erdwissenschaftliche Forschung, Vol. 1, 1968. 326 pp., 67 figs., 17 plates.

The contemporary vegetation of temperate and subarctic Eurasia has been much changed since the late Tertiary, when subtropical or tropical genera were widespread at relatively high latitudes. Successive spasms of cold climate during the early Pleistocene, followed by several continental glaciations, disrupted the subtropical and warm-temperate woodlands, eradicating those genera that were not cold-tolerant. The surviving mixed-hardwood forests of western Europe and eastern Asia can therefore only be understood in this historical context. Frenzel's volume documents the vicissitudes of the Eurasian vegetation from the Pliocene to the present, based primarily on palynological and macrobotanical evidence—with an impressive bibliography of 1300 references. Paleogeographical reconstructions, amplified by detailed discussion of ecological factors, are presented for various periods, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of vegetation change.

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Weathering. CLIFF OLLIER. American Elsevier, New York, 1969. (Geomorphology Texts, Vol. 2). 304 pp.

Although there have been monographs on different aspects of weathering, this is the first study to fill a real need in geomorphology, and one that both students and researchers will appreciate. Ollier is particularly fitted for the job, with extensive field experience in many different environments, including time on the Uganda Soil Survey. His book demonstrates close personal familiarity with the subject, and includes many of the basic ideas he has published in a series of fine papers. The presentation remains well-balanced and never deteriorates into an exercise in mechanics or geochemistry. It remains comprehensible at all times and presents different points of view on controversial subjects.

The first half deals with the standard themes of mechanical, chemical and biochemical weathering in seven chapters, tracing a coherent succession of components from mineral weathering and clay minerals to actual rock weathering. The role of hydrology and climate are then discussed, both at the surface and at depth. Next is a remarkably comprehensive but succinct chapter on soils, possibly the best available in any text. The core of the book, however, is an extended outline of the relationships between weathering and the evolution of landforms. Here the student can see how landforms are modified by weathering processes that prepare the surface for erosion and then affect or even control the processes of denudation. The resulting micro- or meso-landforms reflect the forces of weathering and, ultimately, the general physical and biotic environment. The convergence of Ollier's approach and that of geomorphologists on the European continent is quite apparent in this chapter, and the student may find it a stimulating antidote to the mechanistic process studies that now play such a prominent role in American geomorphology. The final chapters deal successively with weathering rates, weathering in the geological past, and some of the basic techniques of observation or analysis.

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