

nored in the West. Some Western analysts with inadequate knowledge of the internal situation have dismissed Soviet ritual as ineffective and as not having taken root. The absolute necessity of working with Soviet sources becomes acutely apparent if the West is to have a realistic understanding of the dynamics of Soviet life.

If the interaction of conventional religious ritual with the new socialist ritual in Estonia and Latvia is an indication of future patterns, it bodes ill for religious ritual. In these Baltic republics there has been a sharp decline in participation in religious rituals. However, the road is not completely clear for the purveyors of the new socialist ritual. There is resistance, for example, in Catholic Lithuania and in the Muslim regions, where conventional religions are still strong. Just as in their research on religion, so too in ritual development the Russians' national bias hampers their work. The dates, timing, and patterns for the new rituals are frequently derived from the Western, especially the Orthodox, traditions and their pagan antecedents. This either brings them into conflict with Muslim traditions or simply empties them of significance. Here there has been minimal acceptance of the new rituals.

Lane's book is a true counterpart to Fletcher's. Where one evaluates the strength of religion among the various populations, the other evaluates the strength of socialist ritual among them. At the moment, the combat seems to be even. Lane notes that Christian and Muslim ritual, often overlaid on earlier pagan practices, has become ingrained in the cultures over centuries. The new socialist rituals are scarcely twenty years old. Time, the increasing secularization of modern societies, and the power behind Soviet cultural management would seem to favor the growth in significance of socialist ritual.

Lane's study concludes with some notes that compare ritual in different types of societies. There are intimations of a new book percolating in this last chapter, and one hopes there *will* be one, since the present volume as well as Lane's earlier study on Christian religions in the Soviet Union are both landmark contributions. [WV]

FROM MY LIFE
by **Erich Honecker**
(Pergamon Press; n.p.; \$24.00)

A. James McAdams

The autobiographies of Communist leaders, and especially those still in power, always have been difficult to evaluate. They are filled with dogmatic pronouncements, self-serving explanations of events, and simplistic conceptions of history and politics. Embarrassing experiences from the past—for example, the Stalin purges—often are treated as nonevents, while contemporary life under communism is depicted in the rosiest of lights. Erich Honecker's autobiography is on the whole no exception to the rule. This self-portrait of the East German head of state is unabashedly flattering: From his early years he is the dedicated Communist, consumed only by a desire for peace and social justice; he struggles against the fascists, is imprisoned, yet survives the war to play a central role in the formation of the East German state; today he yearns only to foster a better, more humane life for his people under socialism. Through it all Honecker can do little wrong.

Nevertheless there is something to be gained from reading such personal statements. Honecker's autobiography provides a great deal of information about life and politics under communism; one just has to know where to look for it. Honecker's account is a good source of impressions about the appeal of communism in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s, about the opportunities for "sacrificial heroism" that the movement provided to scores of idealistic German youth, especially in the struggle against National Socialism. Honecker's story is particularly helpful in capturing the seemingly mystical power Soviet Russia exercised over the international movement and over the minds of its followers, a power so great that communism and the USSR became virtually indistinguishable. "For me too," Honecker writes in recounting his first trip to Moscow, "the country of Lenin was my fatherland, its party my party, its youth organization my youth organization."

He also provides an interesting slant on the growth of communism in his own country after the Second

World War, the challenges of reconstruction, and the problems of nation-building in a divided Germany. Significantly, Honecker is not afraid to address some of the better-known difficulties that East Germany faced in its early years. With regard to the workers' revolt of June, 1953, for example, he even admits that much of the popular discontent that led to the uprising was caused by his own government's errors and weaknesses. Only later was this discontent exploited by "counter-revolutionary agitators." Honecker's treatment of the building of the Berlin Wall is also noteworthy because of his relative frankness about both the social and economic problems that made it necessary to stop the flight of East Germans to the West. His account of the deliberations preceding the barrier's construction is especially valuable. Honecker himself led the battalions that built the Wall, and he puts on record for the first time the day-to-day events and considerations that prompted the East German leadership to risk dividing the city of Berlin.

Honecker's book is also useful for understanding current affairs. We get a strong sense of East Germany's priorities in aiding the country's development. The East German elite, like the leaders of all socialist states, is obsessed with economic and technological growth, with raising productivity, and with—as they put it—"meeting the socialist Plan." Yet what also emerges from Honecker's account is that these are not just ends in themselves but means for bettering the country's international image and proving the efficacy of socialism in action. So much of what the East Germans do, whether in sports, science, cultural matters, or economics, is geared toward raising "the esteem of our socialist state and gaining us respect abroad." To understand this point we must remember that for many years the East Germans were almost totally ostracized by the Western world. Only in the last decade have they been able to assert themselves outside of the socialist camp; and—judging from their achievements in politics, economics, and athletics—they have done this with a vengeance.

Here and there Honecker gives us a good idea of some of the major problems the East Germans face, at

least from their own perspective. One of these, excessive economic dependence on the West, is especially salient in light of Poland's recent trouble repaying its foreign debt. Thus Honecker cautions that his state should be extremely careful in its dealings with the West and should try to maximize its independence by developing its own resources and technologies. On occasion he also seems to concede that the East German regime still has a way to go in establishing its authority on the domestic front. In recent years the government has been troubled by outbreaks of dissidence among writers and artists, and Honecker has built up a reputation for being quite tough with these critics. Here he states his views unambiguously: "In the class struggle, one has to make up one's mind: the revolutionary movement here, reaction there; socialism here, capitalism there. There is no third way."

Finally, Honecker's work is useful for what it fails to say and especially for whom it fails to mention. It is provocative, for example, that Nikita Khrushchev is never mentioned, even though the Soviet first secretary was one of the most influential figures in shaping the course of East Germany's development. Khrushchev was undoubtedly left out because the East Germans were always ambivalent about his policies and never could determine just how serious he was about their cause. The Polish leader Wladyslaw Gomulka is also missing, presumably because of Honecker's intense dislike of the kind of "national communism" that Gomulka was supposed to represent. But most striking is the omission of Willy Brandt, the creator of West Germany's *Ostpolitik* and one of the founding fathers of East-West détente. Undoubtedly Brandt is left out because Honecker himself was one of détente's principal opponents in the late 1960s. Only in recent years has the East German leader come to see the virtues of better ties with the West.

To sum up, Honecker's perspective on his personal exploits and experiences offers little that is searching or unexpected. But the events, attitudes, and priorities he describes have shaped his personality and that

of his country over the years, and this makes *From My Life* a useful source for understanding East German interests and impressions.

**CANADA SINCE 1945:
POWER, POLITICS,
AND PROVINCIALISM**

by Robert Bothwell, Ian

Drummond, John English

(University of Toronto Press; 489 pp.; \$24.95)

John W. Holmes

Americans need a more supple understanding not only of the complexities of Canadian politics and policies but even of its forms of government. This has been alarmingly illustrated of late in the outbursts against Canada's so-called "new wave of economic nationalism." Certain Washington officials have charged that Canada's policies are worse than those of the Third World. So soon after those "Take-a-Canadian-to-Lunch" weeks, Canada has become a pariah country. Such is the volatility of American opinion. U.S. objections to the National Energy Policy and the Foreign Investment Review Agency were legitimate; what was dismaying was the faulty analysis of the Canadian scene grounded in depths of ignorance of what makes Canadians tick. The only news out of Canada that seems to interest Americans is its impending disruption. The fact that American attitudes on this disruption are sympathetic does not mean they have got things straight. A prime minister—incredibly labeled a nationalist and a socialist—was said to have devised these actions as an anti-American plot to unite the country against a foreign devil. When even the *New York Times* accepted this nonsense, Canadians realized the need to educate their neighbors.

This spacious survey of Canadian politics, economics, and society was not designed for that purpose, but for Americans it is an excellent introduction to a country that seems deceptively similar, a country that is strange and foreign in important respects yet more important to the U.S. economy than the whole European Community or Japan.

"Canadian history is a success sto-

ry," is the defiant opening sentence. It is designed to grab the Canadian reader because the authors, three highly respected economic, political, and diplomatic historians, have set out to cut through much of the encrusted legends of Canadian history. They must first blast the so-called "myth of victimization"—the tendency of Canadians to exaggerate their failures and to look skeptically at their achievements in the shadow of great powers or mythical kingdoms. Since the American people, for all their kindness, find it hard not to see Canada as a failed United States and tend to judge it by standards of size and unity that are not Canadian values, they should profit from this many-faceted account of the extraordinary expansion of the economy and the arts, the reorienting of old patterns, the vitality of a preposterous land. It is described in no boasting mood but with the sardonic note that Canadians prefer and with weaknesses disclosed.

The authors have not written a defense of Canadian economic policies, but they do undermine popular simplifications. They have, in fact, an admitted bias against the more doctrinaire Canadian nationalists and illustrate the modest and intermittent nature of their influence on policy. By describing the various challenges to the Canadian economy and culture over the past few decades, however, they give rational reasons for why recent Canadian governments, whether Liberal or Conservative, have regarded it as necessary to establish protections against continental free enterprise. If that means more government intervention than is needed in a super economic power, the rationale is not doctrinaire socialism. This so-called new wave of nationalism, as this history shows, began as a response to the new economic nationalism of the Nixon regime, and it has a great deal wider support in the business and political community than the *Wall Street Journal* likes to think.

Without setting out to do so, the authors, by their detailed and well-informed account of the vagaries of politics and government, make clear the essential differences between the U.S. and Canadian forms of government. Their lively attention to the characters, convictions, and whims of prime ministers and influential mem-