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Geyer, Dietrich, ed. 1991. *Die Umwertung der sowjetischen Geschichte*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. 256 pp.

This book about the reappraisal of Soviet history during the perestroika period (1987–91) moves on three levels: (i) the role of Soviet *history* in public debate; (ii) the role of Soviet *historians* under perestroika; and (iii) *Soviet* history in itself. The first level is continuously present, but never becomes the subject of focused analysis. The second level is the basis of the introductory chapter by Dietrich Geyer on 'perestroika in Soviet historical scholarship'. Without moralizing, he demonstrates the conservative or dilatory attitude shown by Soviet historians. Demands for a rupture with old dogma came from journalists and writers, but rarely from historians, who depended for their livelihood on the old system (there were no less than 12,000 salaried *party* historians). In a remarkable chapter on collectivization under Stalin, Stephan Merl divides Soviet historians into three categories: (1) the conservatives, who resisted revision of the established truth; (2) the truth-seeking empiricists, who rarely expressed themselves in public, but used the opportunity for doing real archival research and meeting with Western specialists; (3) the critical reformers, who demanded drastic reinterpretations and mostly came from outside the historical guild. However, the structure of the book has been built on the third level. Each of the big issues in Soviet history receives separate treat-

ment: the October Revolution by Manfred Hildermeier; the Lenin myth by Benno Ennker; the Civil War, war communism and NEP by Eberhard Müller; collectivization and the extinction of the peasants by Stephan Merl; the social basis of Stalinism by Hans-Henning Schröder; the big patriotic war by Bernd Bonwetsch; the Russian intelligentsia by Dietrich Beyrau; the nationality question by Uwe Halbach; and the Russian diaspora by Karl Schlögel. Hildermeier, Müller, Schröder and Bonwetsch offer little more than annotated summaries of what was said about their subject under perestroika (and before), but Ennker's treatment of the Lenin myth has more to offer, also because Gorbachev's attempt to draw a wedge between Lenin and Stalin played such a crucial role in the ideology of perestroika. Merl really succeeds, both in updating the reader on the most recent research concerning collectivization and in analyzing the big debate about the issue in the Gorbachev period. Beyrau offers a chronological discussion of the role of the Russian intelligentsia from its disgust at the October 1917 coup to the writings of the dissidents in the 1970s and 1980s (Beyrau never gets as far as perestroika), and Schlögel describes how the Russians in Russia rediscovered the 'other Russia': the emigrants and their culture(s). In addition to Merl, Halbach deserved special praise. With constant leaps forwards and backwards in Soviet history, he offers an instructive discussion of the nationality conflicts – that unintended, unforeseen and still quite predictable effect of Gorbachev's reforms. Geyer, the editor, expresses the cautious hope that 'die historische Zunft nach der Entzauberung der alten Dogmen sich der nationalistischen Aufwallung nicht widerstandslos ergeben wird'. Since national mythology has not been developed among the Russians as much as among other nations of the former Soviet empire, Russian historians may still have a real choice between contributing to national mythology and developing a cosmopolitan historical scholarship. Those who opt for the latter may count on benevolent support from Geyer and his German co-authors.