Substance P Edited by Ulf S. von Euler and Bengt Pernow. (Pp. 344; illustrated; \$30.00.) Raven Press: New York. 1977.

Acetylcholine and noradrenaline are so firmly established as neurotransmitters that only recently has serious attention been given to the possibility of others. Of these the polypeptides and especially substance P are firm favourites. Substance P, an undecapeptide, has recently been the subject of intense research, and it is appropriate, therefore, to stop and take stock. This volume, the collected papers given at a symposium in Stockholm in June 1976, does just that and does it admirably. The value of such a publication depends on the quality and the representative nature of the contributions. On those grounds these proceedings are excellent. The series of short articles reflects the work of all major research groups, and the contributions themselves are comprehensible even to the non-expert.

Substance P may be important in the alimentary canal; in posterior spinal nerve roots where it may be the neurotransmitter of the primary afferent nerve fibres particularly those responsible for pain. It is also a powerful vasodilator and may be involved in cardiovascular control, and, finally, substance P is widely distributed in the brain. These functions all have important clinical implications and extend the interest in this book beyond the specialist in physiology, pharmacology, or neurology. To all it may be highly recommended as an excellent up-to-date account of an exciting and rapidly developing field.

J. S. GILLESPIE

Psychiatry on Trial By Malcolm Lader. (Pp. 202; 80 pence.) Penguin Books: Harmondsworth. 1977.

The main part of this book is an examination of the evidence for the alleged abuses of psychiatry in the USSR. Also, and without shirking criticism of named persons, the author describes the controversial involvement of the World Psychiatric Association, whose pusillanimous response to the allegations led to Dr Lader's resignation from a WPA post in 1973. The verdict is unequivocally guilty, and the judgment is that psychiatry everywhere is tarnished.

Evidence is detailed and argument well reasoned, although the style sometimes errs into the journalistic, popular or polemical. The message is for us to employ all reasonable means to end Soviet abuse of psychiatry, but also to put our own house in order if needs be. Dr Lader recommends: (1) psychiatry's restriction to its 'legitimate frame of reference'; (2) clarification of the relationship of psychiatrist to society; (3) the relentless pursuit of research. Are there any dissidents?

ROBIN JACOBY

Schizophrenie Edited by A. W. Sneshnewski. (Pp. 413; illustrated; DDR Mark 79.00.) VEB Georg Thieme: Leipzig. 1977.

Professor Andrei Sneshnewski is the best known living psychiatrist in the USSR. Since 1962 he has been director of the Institute of Psychiatry of the Academy of Medical Sciences in Moscow where he has organised a large-scale programme of research into the clinical and pathogenetic problems of schizophrenia. In 1972 he and eight senior colleagues prepared a monograph which contained the ideas and findings of his group of investigators. Five years later the material has been reissued by a publishing house of the German Democratic Republic in a German translation which renders it more accessible to Western readers. In style and content it proves to be curiously old fashioned. The clinical chapters are neo-Kraepelinian in flavour, much concerned with a complex, private system of classification; the investigative approach is heavily biological, with an emphasis on genetics, immunology, neurochemistry, and pathophysiology. Very little is included about contributions from the social sciences, pharmacology, or therapeutics.

The interest attaching to the book, however, resides less in its content than its implications for what we now have to acknowledge as the abuse of psychiatry in the Soviet Union. As Bloch and Reddaway have recently documented in their book *Russia's Political Hospitals* (Gollancz, 1977), the diagnosis of schizophrenia carries ominous forensic overtones when applied to Russian political dissenters who may be said to suffer from such

'symptoms' as 'paranoid reformist delusional ideas', and 'poor adaptation to the social environment'. As the current Soviet approach to schizophrenia is dominated by the Moscow school, the views of its representatives will, unfortunately, be studied more carefully than would otherwise have been the case.

M. SHEPHERD

Child Psychiatry Modern Approaches

Edited by M. Rutter and L. Hersov. (Pp. 1024; illustrated; £21.50.) Blackwell Scientific Publications: Oxford. 1977.

This book is an excellent and comprehensive up-to-date review of child psychiatry. Its coverage is more complete than most textbooks and its approach is eclectic. It comprises 41 chapters in five sections which deal with influences on development, some developmental theories, clinical assessment, clinical syndromes (20 chapters), and approaches to treatment. The style is direct and easy to follow so that a large amount of research data is reviewed, assessed, and presented in a fully digested form, without turgid and difficult methodology clouding the picture. The layout is good with clear print, effective use of subheadings, and references at the end of each chapter.

It is difficult to offer criticism. There are 23 contributors and the editing provides a good levelling out of style. The chapters on polygenic influences and dynamic treatment are among those that, reasonably enough, have their characteristic styles but even here there is very little use of jargon and the material is easily readable. The chapter on psychoanalytic theories presents potentially difficult material in a very concrete form.

Drug taking and clinical aspects of drug misuse are separated into two chapters and a useful appendix follows the latter giving details of recently described population studies. It would have been in keeping with the rest of the book to incorporate this material into the text of the former chapter.

There is a little inconsistency in the use of subheadings in medical aspects of mental retardation, and the author has a difficult task in knowing what to present as background information and how much to focus on modern trends.