

**POLITICS & GOVERNMENT**

Americans; tax archives have 205 million entries more; and the U.S. Army has computerized files on every active political group in the United States.

Taking their information entirely from U.S. sources, the Soviet authors observe that the United States regulates little of this data bank activity. There is no precise definition of what kinds of information must legally be considered absolutely private. Worse, charge the Soviet analysts, U.S. data-collecting agencies ignore those few regulations that do exist.

Meanwhile, the Senate has been wrestling with the most important question of all: Should the existing pyramid of public and private data banks be capped by a *national* data bank? If it is, the Soviet authors contend, the American "bourgeois state" will be able to plug into the telephone conversations, credit ratings, and political affiliations of all Americans. The result would be an "authoritarian state" that would repress "bourgeois law and order," constitutional rights, and liberal elements.

Apparently, say the authors, the only political force "consistently and on principle" opposing Big Brother in America is the Communist Party of the United States.

### *John Smith's Tall Tales*

"Captain John Smith and Romania" by Radu Florescu, in *East European Quarterly* (vol. 11, no. 4, 1977), Regent Hall, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo. 80302.

Historians have long questioned the veracity of Captain John Smith's personal account of his role in the establishment of the Jamestown colony in Virginia in 1607. That being so, says Florescu, a historian at Boston College, it is not surprising that Smith's earlier exploits in Romania—recounted in his *The True Travels, Adventures, and Observations* (1630)—have also raised scholarly eyebrows. Nevertheless, contends Florescu, Smith's tall tales ring true.

Smith claimed that, in the heat of battle in Eastern Europe, he had slain three Turkish military commanders in quick succession. Later, in 1602, he wrote, he was sold in captivity to Lady Charatza Tragbigzanda, a Greek living in Istanbul. When Smith explored the coast of Virginia and New England, he named what is now the Cape Ann peninsula "Cape Tragbigzanda"—in honor "of the woman who perhaps had loved him." Likewise, three islands off Cape Cod were christened "The Three Turks' Heads."

Smith badly wanted "to be the hero and darling of the gentle sex," Florescu concedes. But to assume that, while Smith was making his New World discoveries and struggling to found his Virginia colony, he was at the same time scheming to publish imaginary exploits, seems far-fetched. *The True Travels* may contain gross inaccuracies. But his major exploits "fit marvellously well within the context of Elizabethan adventurism."