

data. His discussion of the *mir*, for example, is highly suggestive. Far from dying out toward the end of the century, as contemporary Marxists were arguing, the *mir* was actually flourishing, Volin asserts. This and the related issue of peasant stratification, or the lack of it, cast further doubt on the validity of the contemporary social-democratic and later Soviet conventional wisdom.

The treatment of the collectivization process is fairly orthodox, except perhaps for the high estimate of the number of victims of dekulakization (5,500,000, p. 221). The discussion of the policy is extremely poignant, however, and provides the occasion for Volin to enunciate a major underlying assumption of his critique of Soviet agriculture: the importance of the farmer's personal qualities to the success of any agricultural system. Dekulakization thus robbed the USSR of its most valuable farm input factor (p. 237). Blind collectivism and the stifling of local initiative were and continue to be the main reasons for the mediocre performance of Soviet agriculture. Not only was Stalin not "really necessary," he was a disaster for the social and economic system. This theme runs throughout the book.

The topical chapters (on Khrushchev, capital investment, incentives and procurements, mechanization, sovkhozes) are generally excellent and contain a wealth of information and sensitive commentary that will be of particular interest to more specialized readers. The skiminess of the treatment of the post-Khrushchev era is certainly understandable, but it does render the intensive treatment of institutions such as the kolkhoz wage system somewhat obsolete. Also, the repetition of background information—an inevitable tendency with the topical format—occasionally reaches annoying proportions. Some cutting would probably have been useful. The only important gap in the book is in the treatment of political and administrative questions. Volin's customary talent for condensation seems to have failed him here, particularly in chapter 21, where the brevity of treatment promotes confusion and some inaccuracy.

These minor criticisms in no way detract from the magnitude of Volin's contribution. He has left us a true magnum opus—the product of a combination of prudent scholarship and strong personal engagement. It is not a combination that is often successfully achieved. That Volin has done so is a fitting monument to his lifework.

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AN EVALUATION OF THE SOVIET PROFIT REFORMS: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AGRICULTURE. By *David W. Conklin*. New York, Washington, London: Praeger Publishers, 1970. xiii, 192 pp. \$15.00.

By the late sixties the time had come "to talk of many things" in regard to the Soviet economy, and this book—an offshoot of an MIT doctoral dissertation—does so in very small compass. There are brief sections on Soviet chemical fertilizer and chemical machine-building industries, on irrigation and drainage, and on farm machinery. This part of the book, though very compressed, contains concrete material of some interest, but its findings on the whole are not surprising. There is a sketchy discussion of alternative grand systems of organizing and managing a modern economy, and some equally brief theoretical excursions into such rather technical questions as pricing, industrial concentration and competition, and profit-maximizing criteria. Alas, the nonspecialist will not get much from these sections,

and the specialist will be disappointed by their brevity. In a way, the same can be said about the whole book. One may only add that in retrospect the author appears to have been much too optimistic regarding the degree of decentralization introduced (or even presaged) by the Soviet economic reform of 1965. At this writing it is fairly clear, at least to the reviewer, that the reform's effects on the systemic features and efficiency of the Soviet economy have been very close to zero.

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SOVIET ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. By *Raymond Hutchings*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971. xiii, 314 pp. £3.25, cloth. £1.50, paper.

Mr. Hutchings's book covers much of the same material as previous text surveys of the Soviet economic system and its development, but is different in being more chronological and less analytical than most, relying more on the telling detail than on the judicious generalization to develop its message. Indeed, it is a distinctly idiosyncratic book. The concept seems to be to describe some phenomena, illustrate with a few data, flavor with arcana and a little exotica (the errata have been well controlled), and that will convey what is important about the Soviet economy. Some chapters (those on geography and history, for instance) succeed much better than others (those on investment planning and ideology, say). The book is well written, and raises a number of interesting points, but it gives somewhat the impression of a collection of asides to the main flow of discourse in our research efforts on the Soviet system. On one important and complicated problem—the ambiguities in the measurement of growth—the points it makes are unexceptionable, but its treatment of the capital intensity controversy and Soviet practice in this area is badly garbled. There is relatively little reliance for results and analytical approaches on the research done by those outside the USSR, in favor of Soviet assertions and views. This makes it more authentic in a certain sense, but less solid and conclusive than one would like in a book to be used as a text.

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ANNUAIRE DE L'INSTITUT DE PHILOGIE ET D'HISTOIRE ORIENTALES ET SLAVES, vols. 18 and 19. Dedicated to Boris Unbegaun. Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1968. Vol. 18: xxxii, 516 pp. 750 fr.b. Vol. 19: 282 pp. 350 fr.b. Set, 1,000 fr.b.

This two-volume Festschrift, with all but four of its forty-seven contributions from fifteen countries written in French, German, or Russian, represents a happy division of labor with two university presses of the English-speaking world. A companion volume, *Studies in Slavic Linguistics and Poetics in Honor of Boris O. Unbegaun*, with contributions from thirty-one American, British, and Canadian scholars, was published in 1968 by New York University Press and the University of London Press (reviewed in the *Slavic Review*, March 1971). The present collection is prefaced with a biographical note and a bibliography of Professor Unbegaun's scholarly publications from 1923 to 1967; its continuous page numbering and single table of contents indicate that the two volumes (international contributions and Belgian contributions) should be considered one work.