

The book can also be read by specialists as a horrible object lesson. Even granted that Russia's last seventy-three years do not outweigh the importance of other centuries, it is unfortunate that Koslow's view of the peasantry appears to have been influenced by a conclusion in *The Peasants of Central Russia* by Stephen P. Dunn and myself (p. 155). Basing our opinion on pre-1965 data, we wrote that fifty-some years after the Revolution the peasant remained a man in transition. I would not make such a categorical statement today, mostly because I have more data at my disposal—some of which were surely available to Koslow, too, if he made a conscientious effort to produce a book to be read in the 1970s.

Unfortunately, this book seems aimed at a passive mass market, and specialists have every reason to be ashamed of the slowness with which current data filter out to the lay public.

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THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN SOVIET AGRICULTURE. By *Karl-Eugen Wädekin*. Edited by *George Karcz*. Translated by *Keith Bush*. 2nd rev. and enl. ed. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1973. xviii, 407 pp. \$17.50.

This volume is a considerably revised and enlarged English translation of the author's *Privatproduzenten in der sowjetischen Landwirtschaft* (Cologne, 1967). Three chapters have been added which bring the historical account of Soviet policy toward "private" agriculture down to 1971. To make room for the new material, some of the appendixes in the original German edition have been omitted.

The book represents a monumental task carried through with Wädekin's usual high competence and thoroughness. If it receives the attention it deserves, it will lift the discussion of Soviet agriculture among Western scholars to a new level and make obsolete the assumptions which have been common up to now. The first three relatively brief chapters set forth the "ground rules" under which the private sector operates in the Soviet agricultural economy. The next four chapters assess the performance of Soviet private agriculture and explain its connection with the rest of the economy. These are followed by a historical survey of policy toward the private sector from the death of Stalin to 1971 and a chapter of summary entitled "Conflict and Uneasy Coexistence."

The reviewer's first and most important task in this instance is to urge his readers to study Wädekin's work with due care and attention as soon as possible, learn from it, and then build further on what the author has accomplished. Having said this much, however, I must add that I have some reservations about Wädekin's theoretical stance and general approach. To begin with (although this seems an odd comment to make on such a massive and detailed work), it seems to me that Wädekin takes too restricted a view of his subject. The performance of the Soviet "private agricultural economy" is assessed almost entirely in straight economic terms; except for a perfunctory nod or two in the direction of my own work, the social aspect of the matter is neglected. The new section, carrying the historical account from Stalin's death down through 1971, is written throughout in terms of policy rather than its consequences, which may lead unwary readers to assume (consciously or otherwise) that the Soviet regime, unlike others, is omnipotent, and that its intentions are always flawlessly implemented. Finally, even within the limits of the discussion of economic matters and of government policy in regard to

them, Wädekin's treatment of factors which could be expected to affect the private agricultural economy is curiously incomplete. As far as I can discover he makes no mention at all of the guaranteed annual cash wage for kolkhozniks, which was introduced, in formal terms, as far back as 1966 (although there is room for doubt about the actual efficacy of this measure, even today). The expectation of Soviet experts is that this cash wage will reduce the importance of the private plot to the kolkhoz family, but Wädekin's figures lend scant support to this idea. Such a result in a setting like the Soviet countryside presupposes the presence of a smoothly recurring supply system of adequate capacity, which does not yet exist.

It should be noted that although this volume represents an improvement over the German text in clarity and ease of handling (even making allowances for linguistic problems), it is still not an easy book to read or use. The immense size of the bibliography, the use of extremely small print for footnotes and extended quotations, and the large number of tables—all set up a kind of psychological barrier between the book and the reader, but one for which the author is not responsible. The Soviet economy, particularly its agricultural portion, represents an uneasy blend of planning and spontaneity, of rational and irrational elements, of bold innovations and concessions to external conditions and ineradicable human needs, which makes it an unwieldy object for analysis. After the first four chapters, which are admirably clear and concise, the nonspecialist may feel a little lost in a mass of statistics and detailed reports coming from widely separated parts of the Soviet Union. A fold-out map would have been helpful.

To sum up: this is an important book and should be carefully studied by anyone concerned with the Soviet economy, but the reader should be prepared to make a considerable effort if he expects to use it to the best advantage.

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SOVIET AGRICULTURAL TRADE UNIONS, 1917–70. By *Peter J. Potichnyj*. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1972. xix, 258 pp. \$12.50.

THE COLLECTIVE FARM IN SOVIET AGRICULTURE. By *Robert C. Stuart*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, D. C. Heath, 1972. xx, 255 pp. \$12.50.

Soviet data relating to agricultural production have improved in quality and quantity, especially in the last fifteen years. Serious gaps have remained, however, in our knowledge of the structure and functioning of agricultural institutions. Each of these books makes a useful and welcome contribution by describing several of these institutions in detail.

Peter Potichnyj focuses on agricultural trade unions and the role they play in Soviet rural society. After presenting an historical survey of agricultural trade unions, Professor Potichnyj examines their organization and structure, memberships, finances, conditions of labor, and aspects of social insurance. He has set out to document the significance of agricultural unions in Soviet rural life. In documentation he has left no stone unturned—a twenty-five-page bibliography complements the book's six-hundred-odd footnotes. The descriptive analysis lacks an explicit theoretical framework which would give some guidance through the maze of facts presented. The reader is uncertain whether data presented are for descriptive pur-