

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-

poses only, or whether the author is attempting to prove some point. Although his description is exhaustive, it is overly narrow in scope. Factors which bear on agricultural labor policy and the agricultural labor markets but which are not directly related to unions tend to be underemphasized or neglected. For example, the author concludes that in recent years the trade unions have facilitated the channeling of pressures for better living conditions from workers to policy-makers. In order to gauge the relative importance of the unions in this respect, we need to study the economic and demographic realities which have brought about changes in official agricultural labor policy.

On balance, the agricultural trade unions have played only a limited role as an instrument or "transmission belt" of agricultural policy. Control over labor has been exercised in more efficient ways—for example, by using the kolkhoz. Yet there is a need, as Potichnyj concludes, to enlarge the scope of trade union activity in order to give workers greater opportunities to express themselves, and to promote efficiency in production. During the fifties and sixties economic imperatives and social pressures forced the government to pay closer attention to the needs of rural people. This state of affairs should continue during the seventies, and agricultural trade unions could begin to play a more active role.

Robert Stuart's study concentrates on the structural and operational characteristics of the kolkhoz in the period after 1950. The book contributes to an understanding of many institutional aspects of collective farming. Data from diverse sources are pieced together to give a fairly complete picture of kolkhoz structure. Of particular interest are data on educational attainment of kolkhoz managerial personnel, the source and type of family income on kolkhozes, the structure of labor inputs to agriculture, and production costs and sales receipts of kolkhozes.

Stuart gives principal attention in his analysis to the reward structure motivating kolkhoz managers and characteristics of the decision-making process. Other institutional features which have a significant influence on the efficiency of resource allocation within the kolkhoz are touched on briefly but are not analyzed in any depth. Examples include the effects on internal resource use of the lack of appropriate charges for capital and land, the peculiarities of the supply of labor for collective as opposed to private farm work, and the distortions in resource allocation caused by the various pricing systems (regional prices, state purchase prices, and kolkhoz market prices). Economic theory could be applied in analyzing these despite data limitations.

In order to make a complex subject more manageable the author excludes from his analysis administrative and policy changes external to the kolkhoz. This would be an acceptable procedure if it were not for the conclusions he attempts to draw from his study. In the final chapter he rejects the hypothesis that collective agriculture has moved from a rigidly centralized system to a more decentralized, market-oriented system. He concludes that the kolkhoz of today is "almost wholly subservient to the planning apparatus" and ill-suited to the needs of intensive agricultural production. But the shortcomings of Soviet collective agriculture are more complex than this, and irrational agricultural policies rather than defective kolkhoz organization are primarily to blame. Indeed, collective farms in Czechoslovakia and Hungary have in recent years recorded substantial gains in agricultural output thanks to more rational pricing and input supply policies.

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