

misunderstood the role of the *zampolit* (p. 264) and to those who “have tended to accept Soviet clichés about the political role of the MTS too much at face value” (p. 194). Perhaps. Yet two lines later we read: “Nevertheless, it is certainly true that the MTS were centers of substantial Party activity, especially in comparison with other institutions in the village.”

In the author’s attempt to provide a historical background, Lenin’s views are seriously distorted. There is no appreciation of his profound post-1905 realization of the peasants’ role in any future (e.g., 1917) revolution.

The author has not totally ignored economic reality. However, he never seems really to appreciate that the MTS-kolkhoz system was essential to Stalin’s resolve to steal as much as possible of the peasants’ produce to finance the rapid construction of industry. Similarly, could Khrushchev really have abandoned the MTS in 1958 had there not been the bumper grain harvest of 1956, and a hope for a repeat performance in 1958? Although the weather was bad in 1957, at that time total grain production was second only to the 1956 record.

On the political side, Professor Miller did not discover that when Khrushchev called for thirty thousand party member volunteers to offer themselves as candidates for kolkhoz chairmen in the early 1950s (p. 81), only some twenty thousand volunteers actually came forth. Moreover, later in the book, these volunteers (still thirty thousand) are described as primarily technicians and managers (p. 314). They were mainly trusted *apparatchiki* who would assure a new party presence on the farms. The twenty thousand, plus the amalgamation of the smaller farms into new Leviathans, guaranteed a party member chairman and a party unit on every farm, and the MTS became redundant as a center for controls over the kolkhoz peasants and their produce.

Nowhere is there a full appreciation that the peasant response to forced collectivization required controls of a kind made possible by the MTS. True, enough MTS to serve all the farms were not created in the beginning, and their full potential for control over the villages was not realized for a number of years. But Professor Miller completely misses the important fact that instead of having tractors many of the early stations *depended mainly on horse power*. Stalin, however, knew that control over the “means of production” put the kolkhozes at the mercy of Moscow.

In sum, the book ignores the work of pioneers in the field, much is out of focus, and what is new is largely detail. Most Russian Research Center Studies have made a significant contribution to the field. Unfortunately, this book does not meet the Center’s usual standard.

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SOVIET COMMUNISM AND AGRARIAN REVOLUTION. By Roy D. and Betty A. Laird. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970. 158 pp. \$1.25, paper.

The Lairds are neo-Malthusians, like many of us these days. They also believe that Soviet-style agricultural organization is disastrous for agricultural productivity, and suspect that many Communist misconceptions about agriculture—unqualified faith in bigness and mechanization, and mistrust of peasant initiative—are shared by urban bureaucrats and intellectuals the world over. They fear that developing countries may follow the Soviet example, thus aggravating world food problems.

One may respect the authors’ intent to write a rousing tract against collectiv-

ization, but the way they have framed the argument is anything but persuasive. They say that Communist controls over agriculture were "enormously successful in fulfilling Stalin's main purposes" (p. 39) but have proved unable in the long run to provide satisfactory yields, largely because farm size and structure inhibit efficient decision-making. The first point is conventional wisdom that may not be true: even Soviet scholars have begun to hint over the last decade that collectivization as implemented was unnecessarily (and enormously?) costly in terms of economic efficiency as well as human suffering; and it is not obvious that the marketings, manpower, and savings required for industrialization could not have been mustered by other means more effective in the short as well as the long run. The Lairds cannot be blamed for accepting the economic rationale that numerous Western students (including this reviewer) have advanced in the past, with varying degrees of caution, for the system that emerged in the 1930s. It is unfortunate, however, that an interim judgment based on incomplete evidence should be reiterated in its least cautious form at a time when economists have begun to re-evaluate the evidence now available, and to have second thoughts.

That Soviet yields of food products today are less than they might be is true, but farm size is not the heart of the problem. The formidable difficulties reside in the unsatisfactory incentives at every level, and not only within agriculture. The Lairds assume that manufacturing is a less delicate child than farming, that "there seems to be no fundamental reason why communist urban production cannot be run as efficiently as any Western corporation" (p. 70), and that the industrial reforms introduced since 1965 have basically altered enterprise motivation: "Profit is supplanting plan fulfillment as the prime measure of industrial success" (p. 84). If they suppose that Soviet enterprises are now energetically competing (like Western enterprises) to provide new and more productive inputs to farms and more appealing goods for farmers to buy, they are mistaken. There is a profit plan too, which may be an even greater deterrent to the kind of support industry should give agriculture than the old indicators were.

Come to think of it, maybe the best way to dissuade urban bureaucrats and intellectuals from following the Soviet example in farming is to remind them of the problems plaguing Soviet industry. No one has ever wanted to socialize agriculture by itself.

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LES MARCHÉS PAYSANS EN U.R.S.S. By *Basile H. Kerblay*. *École Pratique des Hautes Études, Sorbonne, sixième section: Sciences économiques et sociales. Études sur l'histoire, l'économie et la sociologie des pays slaves*, 10. Paris and The Hague: Mouton, 1968. 517 pp. 82 F.

The conglomerate of institutions known as a market is viewed ambivalently by economists. On the one hand, the market is an impersonal behavioral mechanism which induces predictable responses from consumer-demanders and producer-suppliers; on the other hand, the market is a functional economic entity which distributes goods from producer to consumer and which may itself respond as a producer-supplier of a service. Professor Kerblay notes the ambiguity concerning markets at the beginning of his rich and colorful book. He chooses to emphasize the distribution (functional) aspects of the Soviet peasant market and its changing role during the course of Soviet economic development vis-à-vis producers,