

one of his most convincing sections the author argues that the policies of "war communism" amounted to an attempt to put theory into practice. Later the Stalinist economic organization renewed the attempt, although it was never carried to the same extreme.

At this point the other main theme of the book is introduced—that since true central planning of a system as complex as a national economy is a theoretical and organizational impossibility, the ideologically motivated attempts to introduce it failed. Recalcitrant reality responded by evolving into a polycentric system, in which the initiative in resource allocation rests with individual producers, as it does in a market economy. But the difference is that individual initiatives are guided by "signals" that are woefully irrational compared to those of a price system.

In this reviewer's opinion, the greatest value of the work lies in its insistence that studies of the Soviet economy which focus on the process of central planning are detached from reality, and they obscure rather than advance our understanding of the system and its evolution. Fortunately an increasing amount of research is being devoted to the development of models of the Soviet economy that are explicitly or implicitly polycentric and are based on analyses of individual decision-making behavior. As it progresses this work will increasingly vindicate Roberts's insights into the nature of the system.

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SURVEY OF A THOUSAND YEARS OF BEEKEEPING IN RUSSIA. By  
*Dorothy Galton*. Introduction by *Eva Crane*. Foreword by *R. E. F. Smith*.  
London: Bee Research Association, 1971. 90 pp. and insert. Paper.

Beekeeping is an industry little understood by the general public and of marginal significance to the world's economy. However, as Dorothy Galton emphasizes, it was of major importance in Russia and elsewhere in Europe before cane and beet sugar entered commerce. She also emphasizes that the decline in its importance after the time of Peter the Great was general and not confined to Russia.

The book's factual information on beekeeping procedures, techniques, and statistics is well presented and should be of interest to students of the Russian agricultural economy, whether modern or historical. It is difficult, however, to evaluate Miss Galton's book by the usual criteria. She has combined a presentation of excellent and detailed information on the technical aspects of beekeeping with a discussion of the derivation and interpretation of a number of Russian words—an admittedly speculative philological treatment, and one on which this reviewer must defer to others who are more suitably qualified. One ventures to suggest that few readers will be adequately proficient in both of the topics dealt with in this small volume. It seems unfortunate that the linguistic discussion could not have been treated separately, perhaps at greater length, in an appropriate journal. Its inclusion here mars an otherwise useful presentation of this specialized topic.

Presbyopic readers will be distressed by the book's tiny print.

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