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## ABSTRACTS

### COMMITTEE DECISION MAKING IN THE SOVIET UNION

By E. JONES

Most Soviet committees, from Politburo to local government executive committee, use procedures designed to encourage broad organizational participation in policy making. These procedures help to minimize capricious policy making and ensure the cooperation of officials responsible for implementing policy. Most importantly, the broad representation of institutional interests in collegial forums reflects the need for institutional checks and balances. The cost of committee procedures is inefficiency. Committee decision making also tends to produce policy that works well in an era of economic prosperity and international stability, but less well during periods of economic shortfall or foreign crisis.

### SOVIET POLITICS AND STRATEGY TOWARD THE WEST:

#### THREE CASES

By T. N. BJORKMAN and T. J. ZAMOSTNY

Western observers remain fundamentally divided on the motives behind Soviet policy toward the West. An examination of these motives must be based on understanding elite opinion in the U.S.S.R. on East-West issues, as well as the scope of political conflict and consensus. The writings and public comments of prominent Soviet foreign policy officials over the last decade reveal a broad spectrum of views and persisting signs of political tension on issues of arms control policy, foreign trade and economic ties, and competition with the West in the Third World. Reform-minded officials have pressed for expansion of cooperation with the West as a matter of practical self-interest in the age of nuclear weapons and advanced technology. More conservative officials have resisted efforts to mute competition and have sought to preserve more insular policies. Proponents of expanded ties to the West openly pressed their case when détente flourished in the early 1970s, and many of their arguments found reflection in statements by the Soviet leadership. The arguments of conservative spokesmen have resonated anew, however, as East-West tensions have mounted since the late 1970s.

### FIRMS AND TARIFF REGIME CHANGE:

#### EXPLAINING THE DEMAND FOR PROTECTION

By T. J. McKEOWN

Although it is commonly argued that there is a connection between tariff levels and business conditions, this hypothesis has not been subjected to systematic empirical analysis or given any theoretical basis. The author presents two complementary theories of the movement of tariff levels in response to changing business conditions. Both explain tariff changes in terms of the changing political demands of business firms, and both rely on the business cycle to drive these changing demands. One theory is a conventional argument about changing opportunities for entry and exit; the other treats firms as satisficers. The theories yield similar predictions. Preliminary empirical analysis, while consistent with both, does not differentiate between them.

## SOME CONVENTIONAL ORTHODOXIES IN THE STUDY OF AGRARIAN CHANGE

By R. H. BATES

The paper presents a critical review of two major approaches to the analysis of agrarian societies in light of evidence taken from the scholarly literature on Africa. The first approach posits the existence of "natural" societies; the second, of "peasant" societies. The existence of such "precapitalist" societies is often invoked to account for patterns of change in contemporary rural societies. The author argues that these approaches are overly culturally and economically determined, and that they undervalue the importance of the state. Many of the so-called precapitalist features of these societies are themselves found to be products of the societies' encounter with agents of capitalism. Moreover, many result from the efforts of states to secure domination and control over rural populations.

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT:

### COMPLEMENTARY OR COMPETING CONCERNS?

By J. DONNELLY

The conventional wisdom of the sixties and early seventies held that, except in the very long run, rapid development and human rights are competing concerns. Needs satisfaction, income equality, and civil and political rights were regularly held to be luxury goods. An examination of the development experiences of Brazil and South Korea, however, shows much of this conventional wisdom to have been mistaken. Rapid growth and development can be achieved without sacrificing social and economic equity. Furthermore, theoretical considerations suggest that even civil and political rights are more compatible with sustained rapid development than is frequently recognized.

## THE STUDY OF CHINESE POLITICS:

### TOWARD A THIRD GENERATION OF SCHOLARSHIP

By H. HARDING

Research on contemporary Chinese politics can be divided into two distinct generations since its initiation in the early 1960s. The first, produced before the Cultural Revolution, was characterized by general description rather than systematic comparison or sophisticated conceptualization. The second generation, which appeared in the late 1960s and early 1970s, assigned greater attention to describing the variation of Chinese politics over space and time, identifying the informal norms and mechanisms by which Chinese politics operates, and developing general theories of the Chinese political process. In a third generation, which is just now beginning to emerge, we should see efforts to absorb the new sources of information now available about China; to sort, test, and amalgamate the competing models produced by the second generation; to integrate the analysis of Chinese politics with the rest of comparative politics; and to study Chinese politics in an interdisciplinary fashion.