

Lewin, who leans sympathetically toward an abstract socialism, concludes that "democratization" would eventually "clarify the real political potential of Soviet society" (?), allow it to overcome the crippling consequences of its "war model," permit it to "enter an age of political reason," and finally end its "seemingly fatal" swinging between the "mixed" and "command" models (pp. 354–55). All this is well and good, provided one is told what "democratization" could mean in the framework of an economy which, *by definition*, is to be run as an integrated firm by a single all-powerful party—with or without some help from market mechanisms.

One should note, however, that the book is challenging, well written, and of interest for all scholars in the "Soviet field."

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SOVIET INDUSTRIAL IMPORT PRIORITIES: WITH MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS FOR EXPORTING TO THE USSR. By *Christopher E. Stowell*, assisted by *Neal Weigel*, with chapters by *Edward Maguire* and *Erast Borisoff*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975. xxxii, 508 pp. Tables. Charts. Appendixes.

The sudden expansion of Soviet-American trade in the early 1970s not only caught the U.S. Commerce Department unprepared, but found only a handful of American companies capable of in-depth understanding of the Soviet market. Thus, to most American businessmen, the Soviet system represented an unfamiliar and complex business frontier. Certainly, one of the most common complaints has concerned the lack of readily available market information on the Soviet Union. As specialists know, a great variety of direct and indirect data is available concerning the motivation and mechanics of Soviet foreign trade policy and practice. The real problem is how to "translate" this information into a form that is both accessible and useful to the U.S. businessman. It is safe to say that most American scholars do not intentionally write articles directed to the needs of U.S. businessmen. Likewise, it is equally safe to say that most U.S. businessmen do not read scholarly journals.

How then does the information get transmitted? Some of it surely does, and U.S. business is best served in this regard by works like the one presently under review. The authors are all associated with WJS, Inc., a well-known export management and consulting firm dealing primarily in Soviet and Chinese markets. None of these men is a professional academic scholar, and it is clear from the outset that this volume is directed at one principal public only—U.S. businessmen interested in the Soviet market. Nonetheless, there is a considerable amount of information here for scholars as well.

The title of the book implies a promise of perhaps more than is delivered. Initially, scholars may be inclined to dismiss this volume as little more than a practical handbook or guide to doing business in the Soviet Union. It is a great deal more than that, however. Naturally, the idea of being able to predict what will be on a Soviet bid list next year, or in the next five years, is most attractive to American businessmen anxious to plan their production with the Soviet market in mind; and, undoubtedly, this had something to do with the construction of the title. But although the authors understandably fall short of that goal, they have done an outstanding job of packaging information available through Soviet and American sources, as well as from their own commercial experience. The interpretation of the data has resulted in a compendium of pertinent information which can provide

the busy executive with the kind of support that he has so far thought nonexistent. Part of the book is certainly in "handbook" form, particularly the second half, entitled "Marketing Considerations for U.S. Exporters." But the material contained in chapters on Soviet oil and gas development, the Kama River Truck Plant, the chemical-petrochemical industry, the computer industry, and pollution control is first-rate scholarship, often based on data supplied by companies deeply involved in Soviet projects. In addition, the authors have constructed an overview and analysis of the present Five-Year Plan which provides a useful (and largely faultless) summary of the relevant Soviet material. All of this information—found in part I, titled "Industrial Import Priorities in the USSR"—should be of significant interest to academic specialists.

A few scholarly weaknesses should be noted: the authors provide a good, but too short, bibliography, while the lack of a suitable index is an important omission. The volume does not provide complete systematic coverage of the topic. For the reader interested in hypothesis generation or testing, this work will be disappointing; it is more a series of case studies or articles. Nevertheless, the businessman or scholar interested in description and analysis of selected facets of Soviet technology will find this a valuable resource.

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DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME: EAST AND WEST. By *Peter Wiles*. Amsterdam and Oxford: North-Holland Publishing Company. New York: American Elsevier, 1974. xvi, 136 pp. Dfl. 30.00. \$11.50.

If Lord Peter Wimsey had been an economist, he surely would have been Peter Wiles as he appears here. This book is lucid, discerning, and entertaining. It also is a detective story. The volume consists of five lectures sponsored by the F. de Vries Foundation and delivered at the Netherlands School of Economics in November 1973. To deliver these lectures honors the author; it also honors his subject. Income distribution theory is disdained by economists, probably because of its intractability. Wiles advocates a change in our attitude and proceeds to dissect the intractability with great zest, obvious pleasure, and authority.

The first lecture is the detective story. Its plot is straightforward: Soviet authorities want to hide their income distribution data and Wiles wants to find it. Sifting clues with the sagacity of fine scholarship, he sorts and analyzes, reconciles inconsistencies, and emerges with decile data. He also discovers the reason for its concealment: "Since . . . Eastern Europe is more equal, including its peasantry, than the U.S.S.R. without it . . . we can hardly wonder at the Soviet embarrassment" (p. 23). However, the Soviet Union has become more egalitarian since 1953; inequality was part of Stalin's legacy.

Wiles then compares Soviet achievement with British performance. He probes the problems of determining regional inequality, chats about the incentives of reducing executive salaries, and simulates the effects on distribution of the development policies of revolution, confiscation, capitalistic adaptation, and planning. He confirms some prior notions—Swedish distribution is most equal; he advances some new considerations—how emigration affects distribution; and he rejects others—the venerable Gini coefficient tells us nothing we want to know.