

summaries of both the place of trucks in freight transport and the growth of passenger traffic, as Soviet planners, reluctantly but decisively, enter the automobile age.

There is also an attempt to place the Soviet experience in transportation in a world context and to draw lessons for other countries—underdeveloped countries in particular. This aspect of the book may have little appeal to scholars who do not take a comparative or developmental approach. And some economists and students of transportation, for whom this discussion is primarily intended, may find these “lessons” insufficiently rigorous and therefore superficial. In my opinion, however, the author has succeeded in presenting some stimulating thoughts on world transportation possibilities as seen in the light of Soviet practice.

Three related conclusions are particularly important, and are indicative of the book’s method and purpose: (1) Soviet planners have consistently allotted minimal investment to transportation in order to save funds for investment elsewhere, mainly in heavy industry; (2) Soviet railroaders have nonetheless performed very well, because they have learned to make intensive use of the thin railroad system inherited from prerevolutionary days; and (3) many developing countries can conceivably follow this pattern, up to a point. They can minimize expensive transportation projects and use existing facilities, mainly railroads, more intensively.

In short, this book presents an excellent, concise survey that should be of interest to scholars and students in various fields.

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THE CONSUMER IN THE SOVIET ECONOMY. By *Philip Hanson*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968. ix, 249 pp. \$7.50.

Philip Hanson in this volume sets out on one of the most difficult tasks confronting economists who study the Soviet Union. He seeks to measure and compare Soviet consumption with consumption in other countries, especially the United Kingdom. Others, particularly Janet Chapman, have tried before him and have encountered similar difficulties. Both Hanson and Chapman acknowledge the hazards of comparing particular “bundles of goods” that are common in one country but not in another and therefore more expensive in that second country. Still, as long as there are those who insist on asking for such questionable measurements, someone will have to supply the figures, and we are fortunate that specialists like Hanson and Chapman have set themselves to the thankless task rather than others who would too easily claim confidence in their figures regardless of their fragile nature.

Nonetheless, the willingness to make comparisons based on spot observations of the prices and quantities of such commodities as “potatoes (old)” and “lipstick (cheap)” conveys a false sense of thoroughness despite all disclaimers. The fact remains that not only are the theoretical concepts unsatisfactory but the empirical material is equally cumbersome or simply not available. This is true not only of Soviet data but of American and English material as well. The lack of precision in the calculations is acknowledged by Hanson on page 63, when after a series of calculations he confesses, “It is doubtful whether this exercise is any more enlightening than merely knocking an intuitive 10 per cent off the real income estimates straight away.” Notwithstanding the pitfalls and shortcomings, Hanson has written what appears to be the most sophisticated and thorough attempt to apply economic

analysis to the economics of consumption and light industry in the USSR. That he is not entirely successful only illustrates how difficult such a project is.

But Hanson is to be commended for more than his willingness to try. For example, on page 237 he reproduces some turnover tax rates which I frankly did not know were available in the West. Then again on page 24, when discussing the burdens of industrialization under both the tsars and the Soviets, he says, "the Russian people have suffered from non-communist industrialising autocrats, as well as communist ones."

Marring Hanson's work, however, are many oversights and mistakes, which come as something of a surprise considering the overall sophistication of his analysis. Thus while his research is otherwise impressive, a good portion of his analysis of the accumulation of savings and inventory formation has been anticipated in an article in the *Journal of Political Economy* of August 1965, which Hanson seems to have overlooked. Also, Hanson's analysis on pages 60–61 seems incomplete; he suggests that the share of food in total retail sales increased from 54.9 percent in 1955 to 58.3 percent in 1964 and ascribes this increase to the shift from paying peasants in kind to a new system of paying them with money. An equally likely explanation could be that the poor harvest and the rise in food prices caused a poor-man's-good or an "Irish potato" effect—to satisfy his consumption needs amid higher prices the Russian consumer was forced to divert more of his resources to food.

At times there seems to be some confusion over the concept of disposable income. On pages 174–75 Hanson suggests that the rapid rise in excess inventory accumulation and personal savings indicates involuntary savings. Certainly some of the saving that takes place is involuntary; but one has to consider, among other things, that there are also persons who save for a rainy day or for cooperative apartments, facts that Hanson omits to mention in this context, although he does talk about such costs earlier, on page 78.

Hanson also neglects some important aspects of the economic reforms introduced in 1965. On page 177 he states that the introduction of profit as a success indicator was impossible for many enterprises because they were operating at a loss. Of course there was a major price reform in July 1967, which probably occurred while the manuscript was in the proof stages, but even unprofitable firms have been able to use profit as an indicator. Firms operating at a loss were simply judged by how much they reduced their losses. Similarly, he neglects to mention the role that interest charges and rate of return play in the reform. He also neglects to mention the tendency for the factory manager to raise prices while ostensibly making some improvements in the product, whereas the change that takes place is actually a minor one. Such shortcomings mar an otherwise interesting study.

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THE ROLE AND STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE SOVIET UNION. Edited by Donald R. Brown. New York: Teachers College Press, 1968. xii, 139 pp. \$6.25.

This thin volume grew out of a "symposium on Russian women" held at Bryn Mawr College and attended by a distinguished interdisciplinary group of scholars including Urie Bronfenbrenner, Vera Dunham, Mark Field, Nicholas DeWitt, Norton Dodge, and Kent Geiger, to mention those whose previous work seems to have the most bearing on the topic. From this impressive array of specialists and others, the