



# Review Article

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# **Economic Ideas Crossing Borders:**The Transnational Turn in Soviet Economic History

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#### Abstract

This review examines four new works that explore how economic ideas crossed the borders of the Soviet Union. Historians are increasingly realizing that Soviet economists participated in substantial exchanges of ideas with experts from other countries, and that these exchanges shaped Soviet intellectual and political history. Via formal and informal exchanges, new ideas from other countries played a major role in Soviet thinking. Soviet economists used foreign ideas to legitimize and mobilize support for new policies that they were advocating. From planning to taxation, from enterprise reform to economic development, people in the Soviet Union—and not only economists—were regular participants in a broader economic conversation that included economic experts from the West, from other socialist countries, and from the Third World.

### **Keywords**

Soviet Union – economic history – economic development – modernization – transnational history – intellectual history – economists

Yakov Fegyin, "Reforming the Cold War State: Economic Thought, Internationalization, and the Politics of Soviet Reform, 1955-1985," PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2017.

Kristy Ironside, "The Value of a Ruble: A Social History of Money in Postwar Soviet Russia, 1945–1964," PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2014.

Artemy Kalinovsky, Laboratory of Economic Development: Cold War Politics and Decolonization in Soviet Tajikistan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 316 pp., \$42.95 (hb), 9781501715563.

Kyung Deok Roh, Stalin's Economic Advisors: The Varga institute and the Making of Soviet Foreign Policy (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018), 235 pp., \$94.00 (hb), 9781784536930.

McGeorge Bundy and Dzhermen Mikhailovich Gvishiani lived parallel lives, one might think, on different sides of the Iron Curtain. Bundy, the youngestever Dean of Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences, was an archetypal Cold Warrior, serving as John F. Kennedy's National Security Adviser, where he supervised the Bay of Pigs invasion and the ramp-up of the Vietnam War. Gvishiani occupied a similar position in the Soviet Union's postwar hierarchy. A leading academic, Gvishiani was married to the daughter of Council of Ministers Chairman Alexei Nikolaevich Kosygin. Gvishiani's first name, Dzhermen, was a combination of the last names of two heads of the Soviet Union's secret police, Dzherzhinskii and Menzhinskii. These two scholars exemplified the academic elites in their countries at the height of the Cold War.

Yet to see Bundy and Gvishiani as living parallel lives misses an important point: at times, their scholarly work intersected, and they participated in transnational discussions of economic ideas. Bundy and Gvishiani supervised a series of five seminars between Soviet and American economists and planning experts, held between 1970 and 1975 in Kiev, Boston, Sochi, Turin, and New York. The aim, Bundy and Gvishiani explained, was that "the need for more effective planning and management on the global, national, and enterprise levels is becoming evident as societies and economics become more complex and interdependent...until recently, however, there has been little systematic communication on these subjects between American and Soviet scholars and practitioners."1The conferences brought together Soviet academics who studied

<sup>1</sup> Gvishiani and Bundy, "Forward," in Dill and Popov, ed. Organization for Forecasting and Planning: Experience in the Soviet Union and the United States (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1979), vii.

the economics of planning, American scholars who taught management at business schools, Soviet officials who worked at Gosplan, the state planning agency, and American business executives who worked on long-term planning for firms such as IBM and General Electric. Iron Curtain or not, participants in these seminars believed, there were similarities between Gosplan and GE that were worth exploring.

Historians are increasingly realizing that planning was far from the only topic about which Soviet economists exchanged ideas with experts from other countries. Transnational exchanges played a major role in the development of Soviet economic thinking and economic policy. Via formal and informal exchanges, new ideas from other countries played a major role in Soviet thinking. And Soviet economists cleverly used foreign ideas to legitimize and mobilize support for new policies that they were advocating. From planning to taxation, from enterprise reform to economic development, Soviet economists were regular participants in a broader economic conversation that included economic experts from the West, from other socialist countries, and from the Third Word. This article will explore four recent books and dissertations on the history of economic ideas in the Soviet Union. The studies in question are representative of a new wave of historical research that is already reshaping how we understand the links between economic thought in the USSR and abroad. A key theme uniting this new literature is that economic ideas are not only the purview of economists—and that understanding the history of economic thought in the USSR requires intellectual histories not only of economists, but also of planners, enterprise managers, political leaders, and others who thought about economic problems but would not have described themselves as economists.

## New Research on Economic Ideas Crossing Soviet Borders

Recent research has begun to uncover the extent to which Soviet economics was a transnational endeavor. Soviet economists were embedded in international networks of expertise and intellectual exchange, many of which they played a leading role in creating. Some of the major themes in economic policy across the industrialized economies—forging welfare states, debating industrial restructuring, balancing central planning with individual and firm-level incentives—were not only also discussed extensively within the Soviet Union, they were discussed at international forums in which the Cold War divide between communists and capitalists was far from the only, or even the most important, axis of debate. Who were these Soviet economists whose research, policy work, and intellectual life crossed national boundaries? The question

is complicated because the terminology and disciplinary boundaries of Soviet economics were different from other regions. Only a small proportion of the people working with economic ideas would have identified themselves as 'economists.' Yet many people used economic concepts while working in Gosplan or in government ministries, devising tax policy or selecting investment priorities. Others still served as analysts of foreign economic trends, providing insight to Soviet leaders about other countries and about global economic shifts.

In Stalin's Economic Advisors, Kyung Deok Roh examines the Institute of World Economy and World Politics, which was led by Hungarian-born analyst Evgeniy Varga. Understanding the world economy was a key goal of the Soviet leadership, and Varga and his researchers were tasked with advising Stalin on international developments. Varga's Institute of World Economy and World Politics studied other countries and prepared briefings for Soviet leaders, and Varga developed a personal relationship with Stalin, who valued his analysis. The experts that Varga assembled were area specialists rather than theorists or mathematicians. The reports they produced earned them influence with Soviet leaders, providing the institute some security and independence even amid the purges that accompanied Stalin's rule. Varga's analyses described capitalism in terms more complicated than Stalinist propaganda let on, particularly in arguing that Keynesian responses to the Great Depression provided a means of stabilizing capitalist economies over at least the short term.<sup>2</sup> When Varga's institute was attacked and then closed in the late 1940s, Roh shows, it was as much because of domestic politics-many of Varga's researchers were non-Russians and Jews—as it was about interpretative disagreements.3

Most striking about Roh's analysis of the Varga Institute, though, is the extent to which even at the height of the Stalin era—a time when economic analysis was traditionally thought to have been cut off from international trends and crudely subordinated to political goals—Varga was drawing on American economic thinking.<sup>4</sup> Varga was unsurprisingly familiar with European Marxists such as Rosa Luxemburg and Rudolf Hilferding. But he also studied the business cycle theory of American economist Wesley Clair Mitchell, a leading empirical economist in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century United States. Varga's analysis of the Great Depression, Roh argues, was built on Mitchell's *Business Cycles*, the American economist's most famous work. Varga's interpretation of the Great Depression, which suggested that the depression was fundamentally a cyclical

<sup>2</sup> Kyung Deok Roh, Stalin's Economic Advisors: The Varga institute and the Making of Soviet Foreign Policy (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018), ch. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Roh, Stalin's Economic Advisors, 147-148.

<sup>4</sup> For this traditional interpretation, see Petr Cherkasov, *IMEMO: Portret na Fone Epokhi* (Moscow: Ves Mir, 2004), ch. 1.

phenomenon rather than the last gasp of capitalism, in turn profoundly shaped Soviet understanding of European and American politics and economics during the period.

Historians of the Soviet Union have long known that the USSR's research institutes that studied global trends imported and translated foreign ideas into Soviet debates. Yet historians usually focus on the influence of such research institutes during the late Soviet period. For example, during the 1970s and 1980s, the Institute of the Economics of the World Socialist System, led by academician Oleg Bogomolov, examined the socialist states of Eastern Europe, some of which launched innovative experiments in market socialism, which others suffered painful economic crises.<sup>5</sup> Around the same time, the Institute of the USA and Canada (ISKAN) examined topics such as the United States' foreign trade deficit and the spread of high technology.<sup>6</sup> The Far East Institute explored how China sought to boost agricultural productivity and make industries more efficient. Each of these institutes produced valuable scholarly work on the economic policies and theories of the regions that they studied—ideas that filtered into Soviet economic thinking. Roh's research, however, shows that this process of introducing foreign economic ideas into Soviet discourse was not only a phenomenon of the late Cold War. Even during the sharpest period of ideological confrontation between the Soviet Union and capitalist Western powers, economic concepts not only crossed borders, but significantly influenced how Soviet economists and policymakers alike understood the world economy.

Trends in the world economy, moreover, also shaped how Soviet experts understood economic dilemmas in the USSR itself. Artemy Kalinovsky's *Laboratory of Economic Development* explores ideas about 'developing' Soviet Tajikistan. Much Soviet thinking about development efforts in Tajikistan were driven by longstanding internally-oriented Soviet discussions, practices, and political struggles. Along these lines, Kalinovsky traces shifts in policy toward industrialization, education, urbanization, and other development themes with which the Soviet Union had extensive experience and long-running debates.

Yet Soviet thinking about Tajikistan, and about Central Asia more generally, was not only the product of discussion within the Soviet Union. As *Laboratory* 

<sup>5</sup> On Bogomolov's influence, see, eg Matthew Ouimet, *Rise and Fall of the Brezhnev Doctrine in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2003), p. 113, 173.

<sup>6</sup> See, eg, Review of I.E. Artem'eva, "Amerikicanskii kapital i peredacha tekhnologii: mezhdunarodno-ekonomicheskie aspekty," Academy of Sciences Archive, Moscow [Henceforth: ARAN] f. 2021, o. 2, d. 10, l. 183.

<sup>7</sup> Eg, Chris Miller, "Economic Take Off or Great Leap Forward: Soviet Assessments of China after Mao," Soviet and Post-Soviet Review 42, no. 2 (2015): 197–221.

of Economic Development shows, ideas about development in Tajikistan were reflected through Soviet understanding of global trends in developing, 'backward' regions. Indeed, making sense of economic development was not only a task for Soviet economists, but also for others in the USSR who worked on topics related to economic development. This included political leaders, who promised economic development to Soviet citizens, and who were judged by their superiors in part by their ability to produce development results. Interpreting the meaning of 'economic development' was also a task for regional officials, health and family planning experts, and industrial managers, all of whom were tasked with implementing Soviet promises to develop Tajikistan.

During the early Cold War period, Soviet officials drew explicit comparisons between Tajikistan and other recently decolonized countries, though by the mid-1960s this comparison had fallen out of fashion, due to shifts in Soviet development thinking more generally.8 At the same time, however, elites in Soviet Tajikistan realized that their efforts to jockey for central support for industrialization and modernization in their region was not dissimilar from the efforts of countries such as India, Ghana, or Mexico to shift their status within the global capitalist system by industrializing and moving away from commodity exports. 9 Tajikistan's international engagement focused on countries in its region, including Afghanistan, India, Iran, and Pakistan. Soviet Tajikistani leaders hosted conferences in Dushanbe and promoted scientific exchanges, investigating topics as varied as "flora and fauna, seismic conditions, and natural resources."10 Yet though the official aim of these exchanges was to showcase Soviet successes in development, such as Tajikistan's heath care infrastructure, its irrigation works, and its agricultural sector, the exchanges often underscored for Soviet participants the similarities between Tajikistan and its neighbors, which were also 'developing countries'. Kalinovsky notes that Tajikistan-India exchanges, for example, convinced one Soviet economist that Tajikistan would benefit from studying poverty, then a taboo topic in the USSR, as did Indian economists.<sup>11</sup> Definitions of development—and ideas about the meaning of 'modernization' and the efficacy of industrialization were interpreted by Soviet economic officials not only through the lens of the USSR's own experience, but also by drawing on concepts pioneered abroad.

<sup>8</sup> Artemy Kalinovsky, *Laboratory of Economic Development: Cold War Politics and Decolonization in Soviet Tajikistan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), p. 202.

<sup>9</sup> Kalinovsky, p. 74.

<sup>10</sup> Kalinovsky, pp. 203-204.

<sup>11</sup> Kalinovsky, p. 214.

Foreign economic ideas and comparisons not only shaped Soviet thinking, they also affected policy. Kristy Ironside's "The Value of a Ruble: A Social History of Money in Postwar Soviet Russia" shows that policy learning occurred in part via the importation of foreign economic policy ideas. Ironside's research explores several major economic policy debates during the early postwar period in the USSR, including retail prices, income taxes, and government debt. The 'economists' in Ironside's story were not academic experts or theoreticians but officials in the ministries and the Council of Ministers, who were tasked with devising and implementing policy. Like others who worked with economic concepts in the Soviet Union, ministry officials had to balance competing tasks: fulfilling officially-mandated goals, achieving bureaucratic aims, and working within an intellectual context that was at least officially Marxist-Leninist. Yet the challenges faced by Soviet economic experts in the government's ministries—the officials who were tasked with determining tax policy and pension payouts—were in many ways not dissimilar to economy policymakers around the world.12

International conditions influenced Soviet economic policy makers in two different ways, Ironside shows. First, Cold War competition encouraged Soviet leaders to preference living standards, pushing Khrushchev to seek tax cuts and pension increases as a means of showing that Soviet society was both more equal and more effective at providing for the least well off than were capitalist countries. "The end of income taxes is the long-held dream of workers," Khrushchev declared in 1960. "But can it occur under capitalism? Of course not!"13 Yet crude Cold War competition was not the only type of international influence. Soviet economic policy makers also carefully studied tax policy and social welfare programs in Western Europe and the United States. They noted, for example, ways in which England, France, and the United States provided tax exemptions on low-wage work, holding this up as an example that the Soviet Union could follow, and potentially match, as it sought to boost workers' incomes.<sup>14</sup> The project of "keeping up with the West" was not only pursued via famous incidents such as the "refrigerator debate" between Nixon and Khrushchev.<sup>15</sup> It also encouraged Soviet financial officials to undertake detailed comparisons of Soviet wage and welfare policy, drawing lessons from Western practice.

Kristy Ironside, "The Value of a Ruble: A Social History of Money in Postwar Soviet Russia, 1945–1964," PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2014, p. 193.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 254.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 366.

The project of comparing Soviet economic ideas and policies deepened over the postwar decades. Yakov Feygin's "Reforming the Cold War State: Economic Thought, Internationalization, and the Politics of Soviet Reform" examines a group of Soviet academic economists who engaged with international social science debates "to improve the system of central planning to adapt it to the conditions of the Cold War."16 Feygin shows that by the 1970s, a series of international institutions—including the United Nations, the Club of Rome, and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis—served as nodes for exchanging ideas between Soviet and Western economists. 17 These ties began as early as the 1950s via conferences hosted by UNESCO, and quickly encouraged Soviet economists to begin citing Western theoreticians such as Dutch economist Jan Tinbergen. This, in turn, sparked an almost immediate backlash from more traditionally-minded economists who saw a risk of "anti-Marxist relativism."18

Yet political pushback within the USSR about the importance of foreign economic ideas did little to halt these international exchanges. One key reason, Feygin shows, is that economists were able to argue to political leaders that their work was "technocratic" rather than political, and that it was crucial for optimizing the Soviet planned economy.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, a group of Western scholars, including Russian-American economist Wassily Leontief, embraced this concept of technocratic planning, believing it was necessary not only to optimize planning in the USSR but also to expand its use in Western capitalist economies.<sup>20</sup> New research in the u.s. and ussr about "systems analysis" and "operations research" fit this theme, adding to the sense that these international exchanges were about gathering 'scientific' tools needed to perfect Soviet planning.21

# **Economic Policy and Economic Theory as Transnational Debates**

The claim that Soviet economics was influenced by transnational discussion is in some sense not surprising, given the prominent role that economists born

<sup>16</sup> Yakov Feygin, "Reforming the Cold War State: Economic Thought, Internationalization, and the Politics of Soviet Reform, 1955-1985," PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2017, p. 4.

Feygin, p. 7. 17

Feygin, p. 67, 92, 93. 18

Feygin, p. 261. 19

Feygin p. 277. 20

<sup>21</sup> Feygin, p. 284.

in Russia and Eastern and Central Europe played in the economics discipline in the West. Harvard's Economics Department, for example, employed Wassily Leontief, who graduated from the University of Leningrad during the 1920s; Simon Kuznets, born in present-day Belarus; and Alexander Gerschenkron, who spent his childhood in Odessa.<sup>22</sup> On top of the Russian-born economists in the U.S., economists in the socialist states of Eastern Europe worked closely and corresponded regularly with peers in the West. Polish economists Oskar Lange and Michal Kalecki had careers that included work in international organizations, stints teaching in the U.K. and North America, as well as substantial time in post-war Poland. Hungarian economist Janos Kornai became a prominent analyst of the shortcomings of socialist central planning, retaining an affiliation with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences even while teaching at Harvard.<sup>23</sup>

Yet the presence of émigré Russian and Soviet scholars at the pinnacle of Western academia has led many historians to overemphasize the divide between Soviet economic ideas and international trends in economic ideas more broadly. True, especially during the mid-20th century, many of the émigré economists had few if any formal contacts with the Soviet Union. But exchanges with Eastern Europe and with developing countries were important transmission mechanisms for economic ideas. The absence of formal exchange programs did not mean that ideas did not cross borders, as Varga's study of American economists shows.<sup>24</sup> At no point during the 20<sup>th</sup> century was there a fully operative "iron curtain" that kept separate either economic ideas or individual economists. Even at the height of terror-enforced ideological orthodoxy under Stalin, Roh's new research shows, the outcome of economic analysis was not always particularly 'orthodox,' nor was it fully cut off from international trends. Moreover, by the 1970s, as Feygin's work shows, formal scholarly exchanges between the Soviet Union, Western European countries, and the United States were in full swing.

Transnational discussions about economic policy can be broken roughly into three categories. First, long-running conversations with other socialist states about ways that socialist planning mechanisms and other institutions could be improved. Second, discussions with economists and policy makers in Europe, the United States, and other advanced economies about shared

See, eg, Nicholas Dawidoff, *The Fly Swatter: Portrait of an Exceptional Character* (New York: Vintage, 2003); Johanna Bockman, *Markets in the Name of Socialism: The Left-Wing Origins of Neoliberalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Pres, 2013).

Janos Kornai, *By Force of Thought: Irregular Memoirs of an Intellectual Journey* (Cambridge: міт Press, 2008).

<sup>24</sup> Roh, pp. 110-118.

domestic dilemmas. Third, efforts with economists across the world to boost levels of economic development in the Third World and to assess why these efforts at times produced disappointing results.

Perhaps the most important transmission mechanism for economic ideas and certainly the most commonly discussed in earlier scholarly literature—was exchanges with the socialist world. One reason for this was that institutional similarities meant that economists at times believed they had more to discuss in socialist context than with colleagues from very different institutional settings. It was also far easier for Soviet scholars to get permission to travel to, say, Budapest than Boston. Perhaps most important, though, were institutional links the Soviet Union had regular, organized exchanges and conferences with other socialist countries, especially the six countries of the Warsaw Pact and other allies such as Cuba, Mongolia, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Formal exchanges between socialist states were managed both by academic institutes and by research institutes. For example, Gosplan's Committee for the Study of Productive Forces (Sovet po izucheniju proizvoditeľnikh siľ) held regular meetings with colleagues from other socialist states on topics such as regional planning, managing urban/rural divides, and migration.<sup>25</sup> Soviet economists wrote reports with scholars from socialist countries, and provided advice for socialist countries whose economic achievements—and presumably also capabilities of economic analysis—lagged the USSR.<sup>26</sup>

The exchanges often brought new ideas into Soviet economics. Even the experience of visiting countries such as East Germany or Czechoslovakia forced Soviet economists to confront differences in policy and outcome between the USSR and its Eastern European neighbors. Often, the effort to learn from other socialist countries was deliberate. Intra-socialist learning made sense for two reasons. First, it was easier to justify new ideas if they were already in use in a friendly socialist country. Second—and no less important—the similarities between Soviet institutions and those of other socialist countries provided useful natural experiments for Soviet scholars looking to understand how new economic policies might work in Soviet context.

Indeed, the effort to learn from other socialist countries was not unique to the USSR. Soviet analysts, for example, tracked China's efforts to study Hungarian

Eg, "Otchet o mezhdunarodnikh nauchnikh svyaziakh sops pri Gosplane sssr v 1981 g," State Archive of the Russian Federation [Henceforth: GARF] f. 399, o. 1, d. 2003, l. 1–10.

On shared reports, see, eg GARF f. 399, o. 1, d. 2224; on advice see, eg, M.B. Mazanova, "Otchet o komandirovke v mnr s 12 po 21 fevralia 1990g," GARF f. 399, o. 1, d. 2022.

economic reforms during the early 1980s.<sup>27</sup> Soviet scholars were no less deliberate about learning from other socialist experiments. During the 1980s, for example, some Soviet analysts carefully tracked Chinese economic policy, visiting Shanghai and Shenzhen to learn about new Chinese efforts to stimulate industry.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Yegor Gaidar assembled a team of economists in the late 1980s to study other socialist countries in Eastern Europe to learn about methods of transitioning to market socialism.<sup>29</sup> Gaidar himself spoke Serbo-Croatian and focused on drawing lessons from Yugoslavia's experience.<sup>30</sup>

Although the existence of these exchanges with socialist countries has been known for some time—and has provided us with a wealth of information about institutional and intellectual exchange—new scholarship about Soviet economic ideas broadens this literature by demonstrating that Soviet academics and policymakers regularly borrowed and redeployed ideas from non-socialist countries, too. Whereas Cold War-era scholarship on the reception of Western economic ideas emphasizes how foreign concepts were interpreted and misinterpreted to fit preconceived Soviet norms,<sup>31</sup> Roh and Ironside's research both explores how Soviet analysts borrowed from Western economic thought and practice, while Feygin shows how these mechanisms were institutionalized during the 1960s and 1970s via transnational networks of economists. Some of this borrowing from Western economics ideas was a straightforward attempt to 'catch up' with the West, a key political goal at the height of the Cold War. But much of the borrowing was more complicated. Varga's use of American business cycle theory, for example, demonstrates that he was not simply regurgitating Stalin-era propaganda. But in using economic ideas developed in the United States and redeploying it, Roh shows, Varga was not simply copying Western economic thought, either.

In addition to discussing dilemmas that the USSR shared with other advanced economies and other socialist countries, Soviet economists also worked across borders to exchange ideas and recommendations about how developing countries in the Third World could modernize their economies, develop

A.G. Yakovlev, "O razvitii kitaiski-vengerskie otnoshenii na covremenom etape," December 8[?] 1983, ARAN f. 1970, o. 2, d. 54, l. 2–9.

<sup>28</sup> Miller, "Economic Take Off or Great Leap Forward."

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Viacheslav Shironin, March 14, 2017.

<sup>30</sup> Yegor Gaidar, *Days of Defeat and Victory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), pp. 10–11.

<sup>31</sup> Alexander Gershenkron, "Samuelson in Soviet Russia: A Report," *Journal of Economic Literature* 16, No. 2 (June, 1978): 560–573.

industry, and improve living standards. Beginning in the 1950s and accelerating in subsequent decades, the Soviet Union sent thousands of economists and development experts across Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the Soviet Union invested heavily in building expertise in the Third World, creating new academic institutes such as the Africa Institute.32 These experiences not only influenced Soviet thinking about how other countries could develop. As Kalinovsky's work shows, these experiences and exchanges also shaped how Soviet officials and theoreticians understood development in the USSR. In a similar vein, historian Alessandro Iandolo's forthcoming research on the reception of the Latin American 'dependency school' in the Soviet Union provides an additional example of ideas from the 'Third World' entering Soviet thought and practice.

One theme that unites the research of Ironside, Kalinovsky, Roh, and Feygin is that understanding the history of economic ideas in the USSR requires looking at least in part at people who would not have called themselves "economists," and who would not have described their work as "economics." Each of the works under review engages to an extent with institutions that had the word 'economics' in their title. But the debates and the discussions that they trace included other institutions—the enterprises that structured the Soviet economy, the policymakers who implemented Soviet economic policy, and intellectuals who focused on themes that were parallel to 'economics'—in exploring shifts on economic debates. One reason that previous historiography has underplayed the transnational transmission of economic ideas to the Soviet Union is because it has expected to find the impact of foreign economic ideas in the work of Soviet economists. That happened to an extent. Yet the new wave of research exploring international influence on Soviet economic concepts is increasingly finding that this foreign influence is visible not only among Soviet economists themselves, but also in the work and thought of Soviet planners, cyberneticians, analysts, and policymakers.

Oded Eran, Mezhdunarodniki: An Assessment of Professional Expertise in the Making of 32 Soviet Foreign Policy (Ramat Gan: Turtledove, 1979).