

tional identity is one of the strongest human values. Familiarity with their views is crucial for understanding Eastern European nationalities.

The sections on national literatures are uneven in length. The number of writers included reflects the international status of a given literature. The shorter the section, the more emphasis there is on the social role of the writer.

There are also writers here whose concerns and quality deserve much more international recognition than they have got. In spite of a sprinkling of Nobel laureates and winners of other international literary prizes, the volume may serve as a reminder that a writer's chances to influence our way of looking at the world depends a great deal on the language in which he writes.

Excerpts from critical essays usually range between two and four hundred words. Their number (from three to seven or more) depends on the status of the writer. In spite of their brevity they are well rounded; they usually deal with one issue rather than being overviews. The critics come from East and West, and they vary considerably in quality and outlook. Eastern European critics of the 1940's and 1950's tend to be much less interesting than those of the 1960's and 1970's owing to ideological rigidity that prevailed in the earlier period. Some of the critics of the 1930's seem outdated: apparently certain kinds of criticism age rather quickly. Many Western critics marvel over the brutality and violence in some of the stories and novels they read (e.g., those of Miodrag Bulatović, Miroslav Krleža, Marek Hlasko); since Western literatures are likewise perceived as full of violence by Eastern European critics, I wondered at the differences in sensibility which make one pass over the familiar forms of violence and be shocked at the unfamiliar ones.

This is a successful enterprise. It gives a better idea about the quality of a writer than traditional surveys, and it provides an insight into the intellectual and artistic climate of Eastern Europe. It also rescues from oblivion some excellent criticism which would otherwise be forgotten. About the only thing I missed was structuralist and post-structuralist criticism which has been quite strong in Eastern Europe but which is skimpily represented.

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Adam Zwass, *Monetary Cooperation between East and West*, White Plains, N.Y., International Arts and Sciences Press, Inc., 1975, pp. 265.

This valuable addition to the fast growing literature of the East-West economic relations was originally published in 1974 as *Zur Problematik der Währungsbeziehungen zwischen Ost und West*. Neither the original title nor its translation do justice to the content of the book which actually is a more comprehensive treatment of East-West Trade. In fact, only the last two chapters deal directly with the topic suggested by its title, while throughout, the discussion is broadened to include the examination of East-West and intra-CMEA trade relations.

This approach makes for a well-integrated discussion of the cause-effect relationship between the monetary problems and the underlying real processes in the Eastern bloc. In so doing, the author stresses the implications of inconvertibility of the CMEA currencies for the formation of prices domestically and, therefore, the limited role of exchange rates in East-West trade. This point of circular causation, i.e., lack of rational pricing, meaningless exchange rates and inconvertibility in the CMEA countries is of central importance in the book. And while it serves the purpose of providing the basis for the better understanding of East-West monetary problems, this is done at the expense of considerable repetition and some lack of

organization of the material. The author finds it necessary to backtrack quite frequently and insert brief historical reviews that take the reader from the pre-WW II years to the early seventies on problems and reforms in trade and finance for both the East and the West.

Similar treatments of international trade and finance problems in the Eastern bloc can be found in the works of Western writers on the socialist economy. Dr. Zwass' book, however, carries the seal of first-hand, rich practical experience which he acquired in his capacity as a representative of Poland in the Moscow secretariat of the CMEA and with the International Bank for Economic Cooperation (IBEC) between 1963 and 1968. This is especially noticeable in the discussion of the institutional arrangements for the handling of money and credit matters in the CMEA countries. The role of the IBEC and the International Investment Bank is discussed in detail and these institutions are contrasted to their counterparts in the West.

This comparative approach is also used throughout the first part and helps to bring into better focus the discussion, in the last two chapters, of "monetary steering instruments of East-West" and the potential of monetary cooperation of the two trading blocs. In these chapters, after a detailed discussion of the payments procedures involved in clearing and switching operations and credit for East-West settlements, the author points to the trend towards multilateralisation of payments between the East and the West. These developments seem to be "pressing towards the integration of the monetary system". But this would require modification of the present international monetary system as well as substantial reforms in the CMEA countries.

In summarizing his outlook for the future, Zwass sees that a great deal of work and concessions from both sides will be necessary in order to capitalize on the "lively monetary and credit relations that have emerged between the CMEA countries and the West" in recent years.

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V. Mehta, *Soviet Economic Policy. Income Differentials in USSR*, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 134.

The analysis of economic conditions and of economic achievements in the Soviet Union faces tremendous difficulties because economic data are treated as classified material. It follows that Mr. V. Mehta who is Indian, could not check what an information he got but this did not prevent him as long as he knows Russian (he is referring to books and articles published in same) to present a picture of income differentials in the Soviet Union. Everybody, and particularly those who have had the opportunity to visit the Soviet Union, knows that income differentials are substantial, particularly when including in comparisons goods and services supplied in *naturam*, to those who get preferential treatment. If these differentials increase or decrease is a matter of minor importance as long as those who do not belong to the group with privileges face tremendous difficulties to satisfy vital needs. Mr. V. Mehta is supplying well-known data about income differentials in cash without mentioning, however, what is offered "in *naturam*", and what it is impossible for the man in the street to get. Queues, black market deals even if openly carried out in the streets of the big cities, strenuous efforts to get admission to the shops accepting only western currencies where prices are 80 % lower than in the shops where payments are carried out in rubles and the desire to buy abroad even in the Eastern bloc countries, constitute proofs that 60 years after the October revolution and despite