

The Innovation Decision in Soviet Industry

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Abstract

In the nineteenth century, skeptics wondered whether socialism could succeed at all. After the Bolshevik Revolution launched a first great experiment in building socialism, it was conceded that a socialist economy could indeed allocate the nation's resources with reasonable effectiveness and could promote a high rate of growth. But in the 1970s, technological change emerged as the chief topic of interest in economic circles, and socialism's potential for generating technological change commanded attention. In a capitalist system, where changes occur with breathtaking speed, no sooner does a product need repair than a new one superseding it has been invented. The Soviet economy, in contrast, did not stress innovation, by and large; instead, it encouraged the production of established products by means of established processes. When this book was written, the question being asked about the Soviet system was "What are the implications of this for the socialist future?" This book is a detailed study of the role of innovation in Soviet industry. While focusing on this specific factor, it also considers the other crucial features that feed into the decision to innovate: planning, purchasing and marketing, money and finance, labor relations, wages and salaries, costs and profits. The author explains how these elements function within the socialist economic

structure, then examines their individual effects on the overall process of innovation. With its broad overview, this book provides a solid understanding of how the Soviet economy worked in general as well as an in-depth analysis of the role of innovation in Soviet industrial enterprises.

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