



The Political Economy of Stalinism: Evidence from the Soviet Secret Archives

Paul R. Gregory

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This book uses the formerly secret Soviet state and Communist Party archives to describe the creation and operations of the Soviet administrative command system. It concludes that the system failed not because of the 'jockey'(i.e. Stalin and later leaders) but because of the 'horse' (the economic system). Although Stalin was the system's prime architect, the system was managed by thousands of 'Stalins' in a nested dictatorship. The core values of the Bolshevik Party dictated the choice of the administrative command system, and the system dictated the political victory of a Stalin-like figure. This study pinpoints the reasons for the failure of the system - poor planning, unreliable supplies, the preferential treatment of indigenous enterprises, the lack of knowledge of planners, etc. - but also focuses on the basic principal-agent conflict between planners and producers, which created a sixty-year reform stalemate.

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