Secret Patenting in the USSR and Russia. By John A. Martens. Santa Fe, N.M.: Deep North Press, 2010. 305 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Figures. Tables. $60.00, paper.

This book is based on almost forty years of research by the author, first for a doctoral thesis in the 1970s followed by further work in the 1980s, concluding with a period of study in the Russian patent office from 2006 to 2008. This research has also been informed by insights gained during the author's employment in the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Trade Directorate of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The first three chapters provide a historical background regarding the establishment of a patent regime within the framework of the Soviet socialist economy, focusing on early attempts to launch a patent system during the years of the New Economic Policy and the introduction of central planning in 1929. These chapters highlight the limited rights and benefits allocated to Soviet authors of patents compared to those available in capitalist countries.

These chapters also focus on the conflicting problems of introducing patents alongside other products of advanced technology within the expanding Soviet economy. On the one hand, senior policymakers and administrators were anxious to see success in the industrial implementation of modern technology including patents, while factory directors were averse to the disturbance of production and consequent negation of success in meeting output targets. As the book explains, the compromise was often to focus on process improvement through manufacturing rationalization, rather than on widespread product innovation.

Although the effects of these policy decisions remain as a background to the book, the main focus of the text is the description of the two separate but sometimes connected systems of patenting that were developed as a consequence of the division of Soviet industry into two parallel universes for civilian and defense-related production. This separation is described in chapter 4, together with the establishment and expanding role of the Department of Military Inventions.

The book then focuses on Soviet patent organization over two distinct time periods, namely 1936–1956 (chapters 5 and 6) and 1959–1991 (chapter 7), enlarging on the major policy discussions in the mid-to-late 1930s that focused on the issues of centralization or decentralization, national security and secrecy, and the necessity of implementing novel and advanced technology into the expanding Soviet industrial infrastructure. A major problem arose concerning how to maintain secrecy if defense-related technologies were being evaluated in a civilian organization. As the book explains, the solution was to allocate the assessment of secret patent applications to senior organizations within the defense sector and security apparatus, which helped to maintain security but deprived the civilian industries of many technologies to improve their product designs and process capabilities. Furthermore, the problems of patent implementation in the civilian sectors continued to be hindered by the quantitative pressures of production plan fulfillment.

Several of these problems continued into the 1960s and 1970s, particularly the difficulties of accurately defining the intangible thematic tasks of patent development within quantitative plan targets. Furthermore, the negative impact of secrecy on both defense and civilian industries became exacerbated. In addition, the continuing and accelerating technological competition between the USSR and the west made industrial innovation even more imperative, and the book explains the consequent improvements to patent management. Just before the fragmentation of the USSR in 1991, however, the concept of secret patents was removed from Soviet legislative procedure.

These chapters are then followed by a discussion of the patent system in post-Soviet Russia from 1991 to the present, commencing with the reintroduction of secrecy in patent legislation. This final chapter also alludes to what is one of the major questions for post-Soviet Russia: how can it use its technological assets to compete effectively against other industrially developed or industrializing nations having either higher gross domestic product per capita or lower labor costs?

The book provides a wealth of detail on the Soviet and post-Soviet patent system and will be of interest to all scholars in the field of Russian studies and patent organiza-

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tion, but particularly to those with some knowledge of product and process innovation in planned and post-planned economies. As well as descriptions of the changes in policy and organization, the book also contains useful analyses of the areas and content of Soviet patents, both within the main body of the text and in the appendixes. The book is extremely informative but a concluding chapter would have been useful to summarize the main findings and suggest possible future research: this might include, for example, studies of the relative technological levels (both historical and contemporary) of Soviet and post-Soviet patents.

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Red Autobiographies: Initiating the Bolshevik Self. By Igal Halfin. Donald W. Treadgold Studies on Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia. Seattle: Herbert J. Ellison Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, University of Washington, 2011. Dist. University of Washington Press. v, 197 pp. Appendix. Notes. Tables. $30.00, paper.

Red Autobiographies provides detailed insight into a corner of Soviet life that not long ago, for reasons of access as well as disciplinary focus, would have fallen below the radar of scholarly attention: records at the "grassroots level" (17) of applications to the party, interrogations within, and purges from it at such institutions as the Smolensk Technological Institute, the Tomsk Technological Institute, and Leningrad State University during the 1920s. By focusing on the autobiographical statements submitted during these procedures, this book joins the growing ranks of archival research dedicated to assessing the formation of Soviet "identity" and in particular of the "new theoretical approaches to the self [that] became available just as the Party archives were opened to serious research" (3). What Igal Halfin looks for are moments in the autobiographical statements submitted by various supplicants to the party in which we can see the manifestations of a genuinely Bolshevik self, distinct from the liberal notions of selfhood to which most outsiders to the Soviet world presumably subscribe.

Halfin's insistence—at least on the level of theory—that we set aside our preconceptions in order to understand the radically peculiar "Bolshevik identity" (158) revealed in these documents essentially positions his study as a poststructuralist inquiry into textualité, into the "Bolshevik poetics" (28) whose rhetorical strategies and tropes are taken as meaningful in and of themselves—though this is poststructuralism of a relatively soft variety that does not so much insist that there is nothing *dehors-texte,* as Jacques Derrida would have it, as it warns us against bringing to the analysis what we thought we knew about Soviet lives and experiences.

Halfin has trawled through a wealth of material and opens a fascinating window onto lives captured at the intersection of the personal (the various pasts profoundly affected by the revolution and civil war and now cast into autobiographical form) and the institutional (the need to petition the local party organization to gain admission or avoid expulsion). The entity of the "Bolshevik self," however, remains curiously elusive, and most of the data Halfin presents point toward a very different phenomenon: not the construction of a radically new form of "identity" but an opportunistic repackaging of their past by the petitioners in order to satisfy what they perceive to be the current disposition of the party in their matter. Commenting on the vagaries of class identity in applications to the party, for example, Halfin observes that "putting their wager on peasant identity, students wanted at all costs to remain in the proletarian cohort" (75); or again, discussing one applicant to the party at Leningrad State University who had to defuse the threat of a letter accusing his family of disloyalty to the Soviet government, "skilled in the art of Bolshevik self-fashioning, Ivanov did not think of submitting readily" (79); and so on through many of the examples.

But this is not the language of identity construction, it is the language of coerced or cynical adaptation. It is one thing to instruct us that we cannot pass judgment about the subjective experience behind the autobiography, about the degree to which the charac-

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