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A GREAT NUMBER of books on Soviet Russia have come from the press during recent years—but mainly impressions of the Soviet régime by visitors to or residents in the Soviet Union. Indeed, the lack of really precise and definite information has been as noticeable as the plethora of impressions.

We accordingly requested prominent Soviet officials to prepare a series of books which would *describe* and *explain* the Soviet system and method in the various branches of economic, political, national, social, and artistic life. We have italicised the words *describe* and *explain*; for the intention is simply to tell us, for instance, *how* labour is organised, *how* the problem of nationalities is being dealt with, *how* a collective farm works, *how* commodities are distributed, *how* justice is administered, and so on.

V. G.

## NOTE ON WOLF ABRAMOVICH NODEL

**WOLF ABRAMOVICH NODEL**, thirty-six years of age, is now editor of the newspaper *Supply, Co-operation, Trade*—the organ of the People's Commissariat of Supply in the U.S.S.R., the All-Union Co-operative Association, and the Central Committee of the Union of Co-operative and Trade Workers.

Nodel's social activity began in 1914, when he organised and directed an illegal union of trade workers in Dvinsk.

During the years of the Revolution he carried on active social and political work in White Russia, Turkmenia, Uzbekistan and Moscow. In White Russia he was People's Commissar of Labour, a member of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the White Russian Socialist Soviet Republic, editor of the newspaper *Star*, and president of the Union of Educational Workers.

In Turkmenia and Uzbekistan he was editor of various newspapers and director of a number of publications, simultaneously carrying on important Soviet work as a member of the Government.

At the present time he is a member of the Presidium of the All-Union Co-operative Association and head of the All-Union Institute of Journalism.

He was the editor and part author of the text-book *The Economics of Soviet Trade*, and author of a large number of works on questions of agriculture, supply, trade and the Press. He is a member of the editorial board of the journal *Soviet Trade* and of a magazine devoted to the work of the Press.

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**W. NODEL**

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

**I**N THE U.S.S.R. all industrial production is now in the hands of the State and co-operative organisations, while the greater part of agricultural production is carried on by State and collective farms. Wholesale trade is trade between State, co-operative and collective units ; retail trade is between these units and the individual. The function of trade, wholesale and retail, is therefore not the making of profit but the distribution of products.

This distribution is, in the main, conducted according to a central plan, drawn up by a special committee under the Government. But the plan itself is drawn up on the basis of plans submitted by the actual trading organisations, on the basis of the general plan of production. The trading organisations are : special State bodies, controlled by the People's Commissariat of Supply ; the trade departments of the (State-owned) industrial trusts ; various co-operative organisations ; the collective farms, and the " workers' supply departments " in large factories.

The main purpose of centralising the control of trade is to ensure that the distribution of

#### PUBLISHER'S NOTE

What is produced helps forward industrial production and the general social aims of the Soviet Government. But there is also a "decentralised" field, in which the initiative is left to the local bodies.

The forms of distribution are intimately linked with the general social plan—communal feeding, for example, is organised because it is a step towards the liberation of women. The constant interweaving of distribution with production and with a general social plan gives trade in the U.S.S.R. its special interest.

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