Agrarian Reform in Russia

The Road from Serfdom

This book examines the history of reforms and major state interventions affecting Russian agriculture: the abolition of serfdom in 1861, the Stolypin reforms, the New Economic Policy (NEP), the collectivization, the Khrushchev reforms, and finally the farm enterprise privatization in the early 1990s. It shows a pattern emerging from a political imperative in imperial, Soviet, and post-Soviet regimes, and it describes how these reforms were justified in the name of the national interest during severe crises – rapid inflation, military defeat, mass strikes, rural unrest, and/or political turmoil. It looks at the consequences of adversity in the economic environment for rural behavior after reform and at long-run trends. It has chapters on property rights, rural organization, and technological change. It provides a new database for measuring agricultural productivity from 1861 to 1913 and updates these estimates to the present. This book is a study of the policies aimed at reorganizing rural production and of their effectiveness in transforming institutions.

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For Nancy, Larry, and Claire
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