

## REVIEWS

Rosalind Marsh, *Images of Dictatorship: Portraits of Stalin in Literature*. London: Routledge, 1989, xiii + 267 pp.

Rosalind Marsh's book is intended to serve two purposes: to develop a historical and theoretical framework to examine literary portraits of twentieth-century historical figures; and to discuss the depiction of I. V. Stalin in literature. The author especially uses A. Rybakov's *Children of the Arbat* and A. Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle* (96-chapter version published in 1978) for this aim. In actuality, however, Marsh is little concerned with the first goal and instead concentrates almost exclusively on the second. Beyond that, this book is really about Solzhenitsyn's image of Stalin in *The First Circle*. Although Marsh writes well and provides a useful summary of Stalin's image in literature published in the Soviet Union in 1986—1988, the monograph contains few fresh insights or interpretations. Marsh would have been better advised to publish the chapters on *The First Circle* as a series of separate articles.

Marsh emphasizes that Stalin's "personality cult" was reinforced by the "poem" or "song" about Stalin — a unique new genre in the 1930s. The folk tale in prose or verse about Stalin played the same role by attributing exceptional human virtues or even superhuman power to him. But Marsh correctly indicates that prose fiction was the most important genre for the inculcation of Stalinist values.

Marsh argues that the treatment of Stalin in Soviet literature did not change appreciably in the immediate post-Stalin period. Yet between the Twenty-Second Congress of the Communist Party in 1961 and N. S. Khrushchev's fall from power in 1964 literature gradually eroded Stalin's image. This process was the climax of de-Stalinization in Soviet literature, at least until the advent of M. S. Gorbachev. The political climate began to change in 1965 when L. I. Brezhnev praised Stalin's war-time record. By the late 1970s and the early 1980s critical analyses of the Stalinist experience were banished from published fiction. Marsh

regards this development as a reflection of neo-Stalinist attitudes in Soviet society.

To Marsh, Gorbachev's *glasnost*' essentially meant Leninist idealism and the honest appraisal of the Stalinist past. In the author's view, *Children of the Arbat* suffers from serious limitations as an examination of historical events in the Soviet Union during 1933—1934. Marsh holds that Rybakov's principal argument, which ascribes the purges solely to Stalin and his assistants, is inadequate. From this point Marsh turns to a study of *The First Circle*. Solzhenitsyn was the first dissident Soviet writer to attempt an extensive realistic depiction of Stalin. But this raises the question, is a historical novel history or fiction? Marsh focuses on *The First Circle* because Solzhenitsyn attempts to be both historian and artist in one work. The novel is a unique combination of historical accuracy, fictional license, and publicist emotion. Marsh interprets Solzhenitsyn's view of history as resembling that of a medieval chronicler rather than of a modern empirical historian.

On one level, Solzhenitsyn's goal in *The First Circle* is to examine Stalin's entire biography up to 1949. But on another level, Solzhenitsyn clearly intends to reinterpret the history of Soviet Russia. He stresses the impact on Russian history of one individual of great evil. In Solzhenitsyn's image, Stalin, by setting himself up as a rival to God on earth, is the personification of Satan (evil). At the same time Solzhenitsyn sees Stalinism as a continuation of Leninism and holds that both Stalin and V. I. Lenin betrayed the original ideals of the 1917 Revolution. Solzhenitsyn believes that he has a "divine mission" to reveal the truth about twentieth-century Russia and revise its moral and spiritual values.

Marsh concludes that *The First Circle* is a fictional interpretation of a historical character, not a historical biography. In the author's opinion, Solzhenitsyn's most important addition to the study of Stalin is not his psychological or historical appraisal but his metaphysical interpretation of the dictator as an evil figure who competed with God for control over humans on earth. This is a compelling argument, but it hardly seems a fresh approach to Solzhenitsyn's writings. While specialists will probably find that the chief message of this book could have been more cogently conveyed in some articles, undergraduates and particularly graduate students will benefit from its lucid summary of images of Stalin in contemporary literature.

R. Craig Nation, *War on War: Lenin, the Zimmerwald Left, and the Origins of Communist Internationalism*, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1989, xviii + 313 pp.

R. Craig Nation has written a richly documented and stimulating study of the origins of international communism during World War I. On one level, this book is a political history of the "Zimmerwald Left" tendency within the context of the international socialist antiwar opposition. On another level, the work is a history of Leninism, that is, of V. I. Lenin's theoretical contributions to the development of revolutionary internationalism. According to Nation, the Zimmerwald Left was not an organization but a "political and international tendency" that formed during the war to attack socialist defensism. Lenin was the Left's main theorist and dominant personality. Yet Nation correctly points out that the schism between moderate and radical socialists that occurred at the Zimmerwald conference on 5–8 September 1915 had its origins in the history of the Second International after 1900. While the International emphasized opposition to war and that socialism would triumph as an international movement, its institutional infrastructure was weak and internationalism was the most abstract of all social democratic causes. Even more significant, the International failed to mount resistance to the war; instead, the leading social democratic parties, suffering from a lack of central direction and without fundamental agreement on goals and methods, chose to support their respective governments in a "defensist" program. Defensism was essentially incompatible with internationalism.

Nation demonstrates that the Bolsheviks, especially Lenin, displayed a spirit of militant opposition to World War I. In contrast to defensism, Lenin opted for "defeatism," which became the most controversial part of his program. He also urged mass action and revolutionary civil war. To Lenin, Marxism was not commensurate with pacifism. He argued that only through revolutionary struggle would the call for peace receive proletarian content. Nation believes that the Zimmerwald conference was a personal victory for Lenin because he succeeded in demanding an International of a "new type." Instead of a new socialist unity, Nation correctly indicates that the conference generated a permanent division between moderates and extremists. The Zimmerwald

Left, which formed on the day after the conference adjourned, was, according to the author, more than Bolshevism but a legitimate political tendency that served as the origin of international communism. Nation convincingly argues that this movement was neither the result of the 1917 February Revolution nor the consequence of the Bolsheviks' acquisition of power in October of that same year but originated from the Left's opposition to socialist collapse in August 1914.

Lenin's *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism* functioned as the theoretical foundation of both the Zimmerwald Left and the international communist movement. As Nation interprets this work, Lenin believed that the transition from capitalism to socialism would occur through world revolution. In Lenin's view, the battle against capitalist imperialism, which was condemned to decline in an era of revolutionary transformation, would be waged as international revolution. Therefore, in Nation's interpretation and in contrast to the main thesis of Piero Melograni in *Lenin and the Myth of World Revolution: Ideology and Reasons of State, 1917–1920* (Humanities Press International, 1989), Lenin's revolutionary strategy was based on the ideal of world revolution. Nation rejects the notion of the Leninist theory of "socialism in one country," at least with respect to Lenin's thinking during World War I. Nation's argument is more persuasive than Melograni's, particularly in light of Lenin's "April Theses," in which he called for the creation of a new International on the basis of the Zimmerwald Left. Lenin's ultimate goal was a cooperative socialist federation.

Nation supports his hypothesis by turning to Lenin's *State and Revolution*. According to Nation, in this work Lenin chiefly argues that socialist revolution can only develop as a global process and that socialist or "extended" democracy can only be achieved in the context of world revolution. To Lenin, the "dictatorship of the proletariat" meant a transition to a "new kind" of state power capable of realizing true democracy. Most conclusive for Nation, Lenin's justification for the October Revolution was the visionary internationalism of the Zimmerwald Left — a call to arms that would initiate world revolution.

Despite Lenin's belief in revolutionary internationalism, from the beginning Soviet foreign policy faced the conflicting demands of internationalism and national responsibility. Nevertheless, as Nation sees it,

Lenin justified his actions as head of the Soviet government in terms of a larger internationalist perspective. Even though the Third International (Comintern) formed in March 1919 was to support the Soviet state, Lenin regarded Soviet power and Comintern not as goals in themselves but as a means of creating a new international society. Nation analyzes the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918 in the same light. Although during World War I Lenin had advocated revolutionary war in defense of socialism, he insisted that Soviet Russia had to sign a separate peace with Germany as a tactic to ensure the survival of his revolutionary government. Only in this fashion, as Lenin understood the situation, could he preserve the larger goal of international revolution. Thus, Nation does not construe Lenin as a practitioner of Realpolitik, since he did not believe in the immutability of national sovereignty. In Nation's view, Lenin based early Soviet foreign policy on a revolutionary theory of world politics that he had originally devised between 1914 and 1918. The foundation for this theory was visionary internationalism. Even though the failure of the revolution to expand beyond Russia forced the Bolsheviks to abandon internationalism in favor of revolutionary defensism, Nation thinks that Lenin retained his vision of a new international society.

Comintern, defined by "twenty-one conditions" elaborated at the Second Congress in Moscow in the summer of 1920, represented the institutional embodiment of Lenin's concept of communist internationalism. Nation points out that the conditions corresponded to the platform of the Zimmerwald Left. He also emphasizes that in Comintern Lenin championed voluntarism over determinism. To Nation, Comintern was an organization motivated by a faith in humanity's ability consciously to change its social environment. But since Lenin essentially distrusted the masses, Comintern, like the Bolshevik party, was not only to coordinate but, even more significant, to command the movement to world revolution. In part as a result, after 1917 communism and social democracy developed fundamentally different approaches to the issues of social change and historical development. Lenin provided international communism with a third world orientation, which has led to important political victories, by creating an organic link between proletarian class struggle and anticolonial national movements. In spite of profound political changes in Eastern Europe since 1989, Nation is

correct to acknowledge that communist internationalism still has influence in the third world.

In conclusion, Nation has written a thoughtful and challenging book. It is essential reading for specialists and graduate students; undergraduates will have more difficulty with this sophisticated monograph, but advanced undergraduates should certainly be encouraged to read it.

Scott J. Seregny, *Russian Teachers and Peasant Revolution: The Politics of Education in 1905*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989, x + 292 pp.

Scott J. Seregny's book, a revision of his doctoral dissertation, is a superb piece of scholarship. The title is only a modest reflection of the contents, as this monograph actually delivers much more than it promises. On one level, Seregny has written a social history of rural Russia, but one that focuses not merely on the revolution of 1905 but on the Russian countryside from approximately 1890 to 1908. He analyzes rural schoolteachers as "agents of modernization" in the villages and their pivotal role in mobilizing the professions. On another level, Seregny records the failure of Tsarism, since it was unable and unwilling to give teachers appropriate legal and social status and thus incorporate them into official society. In this respect, he joins the "pessimist" interpretation of the collapse of the old regime in 1917 by demonstrating that the autocracy and the gentry-dominated *zemstva* failed to use the rural teachers as mediators between educated, privileged society, which was largely urban, and the uncultured peasants. Seregny blames the government for its inability to reform itself and for its failure to integrate the peasants with educated society. In his view, the teachers could have served as a link between these two increasingly disparate cultures, yet the government's ambivalent, contradictory attitude toward them — on the one hand, it perceived popular enlightenment as a means of economic modernization and national progress, while on the other, it feared them and sought to reinforce their isolation both from the peasants and the urban elites — not only meant that Tsarism had no advocates of official ideology and values in the countryside but that the teachers eventually resorted to political mobilization.

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According to Seregny, the decade before 1905, particularly after the “quiet” 1880s, was crucial in changing educated society’s perception of rural teachers. They came to be regarded as the “advanced guard” in a campaign of enlightenment among the masses. This view enhanced the status of teachers and led to the emergence of their corporate consciousness, at a time when other professions were experiencing a similar phenomenon. Seregny correctly construes the famine and cholera epidemic of the early 1890s as a turning point in educated society’s attitude toward the countryside. These calamities emphasized the need to spread public education and at least narrow the cultural gap between the urban and rural communities. The teachers came to think of themselves as agents of change in the villages, but at the turn of the century their profession was in crisis. The rural teachers, or, as they were popularly called, the “*zemstvo* rabbits” or the “civilized savages,” were neither members of educated society nor part of the rural community; to the peasants, they were representatives of an alien culture — “strangers-outsiders.” The teachers aspired to be accepted by the peasants, but at the same time they did not want to be identified with them.

Seregny stresses that the relationship between the teachers and the *zemstva* was crucial to the development of the teachers’ professional movement. Beginning in the 1890s, the *zemstva* provided material and moral support to the teachers. The *zemstvo* liberals (according to Seregny, a kind of “gentry intelligentsia”) were especially important; they worked with the non-*zemstvo* intelligentsia and the “third-element professionals” to promote mass enlightenment and teachers’ interests. The liberal opposition against autocracy emphasized popular education; the rural school became the battleground between the *zemstva* and the state. The national government, which preferred the church schools over the *zemstvo* schools, competed with the *zemstva* in primary education. But Seregny points out that *zemstvo* liberalism was ephemeral. In late 1905 the *zemstvo* rank and file turned to the right, moving away from an increasingly militant teacher’s union and in support of established political and social institutions.

Seregny concentrates on teachers’ mutual aid societies, essentially associations providing insurance funds, for their significant role in generating political mobilization in the provinces before the formation

of legal political parties. He dates the birth of the teachers' movement from the Ministry of Finance's Industrial Exhibition in the summer of 1896, while the Kursk Education Exhibition of June 1902 was its organizational seedbed. The All-Russian Congress of Representatives of Teachers' Mutual Aid Societies that met in Moscow in December 1902 and January 1903 led directly to the 1905 Union of Teachers. The teachers combined professional association and political opposition because they perceived that the government intended to continue their social isolation and cultural deprivation. The steady erosion of legal means for professional association in 1902–1905 and repression in 1903–1904 only served to radicalize the teachers.

Many teachers came to construe radical political and social change as a prerequisite for cultural and educational progress. Even though most teachers were not revolutionaries, they moved increasingly to the left as they realized that the *zemstvo* rank and file would not support them. On the whole, the teachers preferred the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs) to the Social Democrats (SDs), primarily because the former held that they were part of the "intellectual proletariat," while the latter classified them with the petty bourgeoisie. To be sure, before 1905 the SRs had been more active among the rural teachers than any other revolutionaries. The SRs regarded the teachers, if properly mobilized, as a "natural conduit" of revolutionary socialism among the peasants. For these reasons, the SRs were the major beneficiaries of *zemstvo* indifference toward the teachers in 1905. Seregny notes that already in 1903–1904 the frailty of the *zemstvo*-teacher coalition was apparent, so the activist teachers saw the entire structure of the *zemstva* as undemocratic, based on an alliance between the gentry and the autocracy. In 1904–1905 the teachers sought an appropriate organizational structure to participate in the Liberation Movement.

With the outbreak of revolution in 1905 the Moscow and St. Petersburg city teachers took the initiative to found an All-Russian Teachers' Union, which was established like other political-professional unions. Seregny indicates that while there was fundamental agreement on educational reform on the basis of "freedom, democratization, and decentralization," there was considerable dispute about the union's political role. The "liberationist" strategy hoped to unite all members of the intelligentsia, including the rural teachers, into a broad political

party advocating a constitutional assembly and basic civil liberties. The SRs supported this united front of all progressive forces against the old regime; in contrast, the SDs rejected the union because it, so V. I. Lenin thought, like other unions of the intelligentsia, actually only served bourgeois society. As a result, the SRs had the overwhelming support of the rural teachers.

Seregny explains that between April and June 1905 the rural teachers joined the general struggle for political liberation. Their task, as they saw it, was to bring the Liberation Movement to the masses in the countryside. The First Constituent Congress of the All-Russian Teachers' Union, part of the Union of Unions, met in June. In opposition to the SDs, most of the delegates voted for a political program. Seregny is correct in asserting that the teachers turned to political activism to resolve problems of their professional status in Tsarist society. He also points to "pressure from below," a popular demand by the peasants for knowledge, as a significant reason for the teachers' involvement in the Liberation Movement. The teachers became the informed "moral authority" in the villages; local groups of the Teachers' Union provided the teachers with literature and information to impart to the peasants.

As Seregny understands the situation, the *zemstvo* opposition movement peaked in the summer of 1905. Up to that time liberal *zemstvo* activists encouraged the radical activities of *zemstvo* employees, but after October the conservative *zemstvo* gentry openly rallied behind the forces of law and order. As a result, teacher activists became increasingly involved with peasant political mobilization in the All-Russian Peasant Union, the first congress of which met in Moscow on 31 July—1 August. Both unions urged essentially moderate tactics and were nonrevolutionary organizations. In the face of *zemstvo* reaction and government repression, the Peasant Union offered the teachers' movement valuable mass support.

After the Manifesto of 17 October teachers' activities outside the classroom greatly intensified. The government responded with indiscriminate repression, which, according to Seregny, set teachers' professional organization back almost a decade. Still, the Teachers' Union tried to deemphasize spontaneous peasant violence and instead convince the peasants of the value of legal, nonviolent pressure against

autocracy. By this point teacher activists clearly believed that the resolution of their own problems of legal and social status would be possible only in the broader context of the general democratization of education and rural society, including of the *zemstva*, as well as of radical political reform at the national level. But severe government repression made the tactics of the Peasant Union untenable. Therefore, the teachers, even while contributing to rising peasant political consciousness, received little support from the conscious peasant movement. During the first half of 1906 the government conducted a veritable witch hunt against teachers; they were dismissed, arrested, and exiled in such large numbers that there was a crisis in education that lasted until at least 1908. Repression greatly exacerbated the already existing dearth of teachers in the countryside. Beyond that, the post-revolutionary reaction stifled professional association and reinforced a sense of malaise and isolation among teachers.

Seregny challenges the conventional view that stresses the isolation of the peasants and that peasant activism in 1905 and 1917 took "traditional" Russian forms — spontaneous, localized violence without real political goals. Based on his research, the activities of the Peasant Union in 1905 demonstrate an organized peasant movement seeking agrarian reform through legal political channels. He is correct in implying that we need to reexamine Russian peasant society in the early twentieth century. His scholarship, which indicates that the peasants were capable of formulating their own political aims and of displaying genuine political consciousness, is a major step in this direction. In addition, Seregny seems to accept uncritically one of the main conclusions in Ben Eklof's *Russian Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village Culture and Peasant Pedagogy, 1861—1914* (Berkeley, 1986): after the setbacks of 1905 mass education recorded impressive gains until 1914. Seregny's scholarship would appear to present a serious challenge to Eklof's work. As Seregny himself notes, we need new, revisionist research on rural education in Russia between the 1905 Revolution and World War I. One can only hope that in time he will devote his considerable analytical skills to this task.

Elisabeth Heresch, *Blood on the Snow: Eyewitness Accounts of the Russian Revolution*, New York: Paragon House, 1990, xiii + 250 pp.

Despite the attractive title and the promise of a fresh approach to the Russian Revolution, oral history based on Elisabeth Heresch's interviews with eyewitnesses or relatives of eyewitnesses, this book should not have been published. Heresch traveled throughout the United States, Western Europe, and the former Soviet Union to interview a variety of people who had some personal experience with the events of 1917. The eyewitness reports are organized chronologically, but there is little coordination among topics and almost no critical analysis of the accounts. The book is essentially a compilation of anecdotes and disjointed bits and pieces of memoirs. The principal problem is Heresch's inability to be objective, as her study is extremely anti-Bolshevik, and the gross distortion of even the most basic facts. For example, in referring to A. V. Lunacharskii, Heresch mistakenly writes that "after the first few years as education commissar he became the first minister of culture in the Soviet state." (p. 130) And the United States certainly did not grant diplomatic recognition to the Soviet government in 1918. (p. 146) Part of the difficulty is the absence of notes and any semblance of a scholarly apparatus. Heresch's methodology is fundamentally incorrect; she relies too heavily on interviews without any reference to written documents. The use of interviews is indeed an interesting and significant approach, but they should be balanced by the inclusion of traditional primary and secondary sources.

Heresch's monograph has almost nothing to do with history but is really a polemic against Bolshevism. She assumes that the February Revolution occurred because of an "uprising of a people," while the October Revolution happened because of a "putsch carried out by a small group." Recent revisionist historiography has established that the February Revolution may indeed have been "spontaneous," but the Petrograd workers certainly understood the political implications of what they were doing. The revolution, while not centrally organized, was undoubtedly consciously willed. Equally important, revisionist historians have demonstrated that the October Revolution was not, as Heresch argues, the product of V. I. Lenin's machinations but the result of a truly mass revolutionary movement. Beyond that, it is absurd to

state, as the author does, that “German money” brought the Bolsheviks to power and kept them there. Before attempting this project Heresch at least should have familiarized herself with the most recent scholarly literature on the social history of 1917.

In conclusion, the only value of Heresch’s book is as an example of how not to write a history of Russia in 1917. Her study is an embarrassment to Paragon House; it is virtually impossible to imagine why the press agreed to publish the book. In the future Heresch should refrain from writing about events that she does not understand.

Sheila Fitzpatrick and Lynne Viola (eds.), *A Researcher’s Guide to Sources on Soviet Social History in the 1930s*, Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1990, xii + 296 pp.

The essays in this book, in spite of substantial changes in the organization of sources in Russia after the Revolution of 1991, provide a valuable introduction to scholars, especially to young, inexperienced ones, on the principal repositories dealing with Soviet social history between the New Economic Policy (NEP) and World War II. The editors correctly argue that the study of sources is a highly developed discipline in the Russian Republic. In contrast, there is no comparable discipline, particularly concerning historical sources, in Western Slavic Studies. The purpose of this monograph is to fill this gap, at least to some extent, by redressing the “traditional neglect” of the study of Russian and Soviet sources in the West. More specifically, since Western Slavic Studies have only recently discovered social history, this work strives to provide a description of many of the most useful sources, in this case usually located in the Russian Federation, on the Stalin period.

Given the distortions, falsification, and censorship of the Stalin years, the critical appraisal of sources is particularly important for historians of this era. Scholars must first understand the nature and form of sources before they can begin to analyze the content. Having said this, however, it is nonetheless true that Western Slavists have greatly exaggerated the notion that the Stalinist government undertook the systematic and widespread destruction of archival documents to con-

ceal evidence of its crimes. Still, for political reasons, the Stalin period has been less accessible to researchers than either the NEP or the post-Stalin years. The Revolution of 1991 has produced significant changes in the availability and accessibility of key documents from the 1930s, a process which actually started before the events of August 1991, but the need to approach the sources with considerable care has and will remain the same.

The essays in this volume point out that, beginning in the 1960s, Soviet historians published archival documents in special series. While this practice was discontinued during the Brezhnev era, the publication of materials from the archives was resumed in the late 1980s. This trend was accelerated even more during the early 1990s and, barring a major political reversal, will likely continue. Interestingly, professional historians did not initiate the process of historical revisionism. This role was taken up by journalists and novelists, who published politically daring historical novels in “thick” journals.

The collection of articles presented here emphasizes that one of the main problems in dealing with the Stalin era is the lack of reliable memoirs and basic biographical data. It is not only useful but imperative to compare different editions of the same memoirs. Scholars working in this period must also be concerned about the authorship of many memoirs. Still, despite difficulties, recent developments have given both Western and Russian historians a unique opportunity to examine previously unavailable information about the Soviet 1930s and produce an accurate social history of these years.

The authors are to be congratulated for having written a useful guide, especially for the novice, about Soviet sources on the 1930s. In this respect, the editors might have referred to *Gosudarstvennyi arkhivnyi fond SSSR — dokumental'naia pamiat' naroda* (Moscow, 1987), a Soviet publication that contributes to this endeavor. More significant, Western researchers, both veterans and beginners, should carefully peruse Patricia Kennedy Grimsted's *Beyond Perestroika: Soviet Area Archives after the August Coup* (Princeton, 1992) for an updated explanation of recent efforts to reorganize the archives in the former Soviet Union.

Daniel Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar*, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989, xx + 220 pp.

Daniel Field's outstanding book has been reprinted by Unwin Hyman as part of the series Classics in Russian and Soviet History. This series reprints seminal studies of Russian and Soviet history that have gone out of print and are no longer available for classroom use or the general public. The series focuses on social history. Field's monograph is a welcomed addition to this collection, partly because it serves as a model for advanced undergraduates and graduate students on how to write good social history, which has only recently "come of age" in Western Slavic Studies.

In essence, Field examines the relationship between the folk, or *narod*, and the educated public, including officialdom, in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian history. He attempts to explain the devotion of the common people to the person of the tsar, a belief in the tsar as the benefactor of the *narod*, a faith which Soviet historians have called "naive monarchism." He asserts that no one really questioned the idea that the masses believed in the tsar as their intercessor against corrupt officials and arbitrary landlords, regardless of their misery and discontent, until Bloody Sunday in 1905. The *narod* was traditionalist and monarchist. Among folk traditions was a faith in the tsar-deliverer to free the peasants from serfdom, from oppressive officials, and from onerous taxes.

Field asks why the peasants believed in the myth of the benevolent tsar, particularly when it was false; the tsar was certainly not the benefactor of the *narod*. Daily experience would seem to deny the efficacy of the myth, yet the masses held on to it for more than three hundred years, even after the 1905 Revolution, although then the regime failed to draw upon it as a source of popular support.

To explain the myth of the tsar, and at the same time the myth of the peasant, Field analyzes the peasants of the Spassk and Chigirin districts as a case study. He discovers that these peasants had an almost universal faith in the tsar and that, as a result, the myth of the tsar had a compelling power of its own. On one level, the myth was useful to the peasants as a rationale and justification for insubordination and rebellion; but on another, by stressing passivity and patience, it contributed

to political and social stability. Yet Tsarist officials could not employ the myth to subdue rebellious peasants and instead had to resort to force and intimidation. As the title of this book indicates, the peasant monarchists rebelled in the name of the tsar. Appealing to the myth, peasant leaders aroused and unified the peasants. Under the banner of monarchism the peasants committed illegal acts of protest with virtual impunity. Since nonpeasants accepted the peasants' profession of faith in the tsar, the rebels were rarely punished for their deeds, or at least not in large numbers or to the extent that they would have been without the myth. Field demonstrates that the myth of the tsar was useful to the *narod* in conflict with the authorities.

This discussion leads Field to an examination of a complementary myth — the myth of the peasant, which, too, was pervasive in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russia. From the perspective of educated society the peasants were characterized by a child-like innocence, naiveté, uncouth behavior, and the need for authoritative guidance. But the author correctly concludes that the peasant monarchists were actually cunning, manipulative, and practical. The myth of the peasant enabled the masses to manipulate their reputation for naive monarchism. In the end, each myth was the product of a wide cultural gap between educated society and the *narod*.

The editors of *Classics in Russian and Soviet History* are to be congratulated for having included Field's pioneering monograph in this series. His work has clearly stood the test of time and deserves to be made available to future generations of Western Slavists.

Seweryn Bialer (ed.), *Politics, Society, and Nationality Inside Gorbachev's Russia*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1989, xv + 255 pp.

Even though events have overtaken the essays published in this monograph, it still deserves a careful reading for a thoughtful, stimulating analysis of the early Gorbachev years. In general, the authors argue that it is misleading to think of Marxism-Leninism, a term which dates from the early Stalin period of Soviet history, as monolithic and unchanging. Gorbachev, like other political leaders before him, added to the "creative development" of this body of doctrine. Therefore, the Soviet

Union did not have a unified political culture but rather a dominant one that drew heavily from authoritarian Russian traditions. There is considerable consensus among the authors that this culture was a greater obstacle to pluralizing reforms under Gorbachev than Marxist-Leninist ideology.

Second, the articles presented here seem to agree that the Soviet political system underwent several fundamental changes after Stalin's death. The use of violence as a normal instrument of politics was discontinued. Equally important, the post-Stalin period witnessed the gradual emergence of an informed public opinion that the political leadership could neither easily shape nor ignore. These as well as other occurrences served as the background for Gorbachev's reforms.

Third, the essays generally demonstrate that Gorbachev faced nearly insurmountable problems. He had to devise a new economic growth strategy if he expected the Soviet Union to remain a superpower into the twenty-first century. More significant, he had to forge a new social contract between the public and the regime. When Stalin died in 1953 living standards were not much higher than they had been at the start of the Five-Year Plans in the late 1920s. Under Khrushchev and Brezhnev living standards more than doubled, although they still fell far below those in the most advanced Western nations. The social contract in the post-Stalin era meant that the state provided certain socioeconomic guarantees in return for the denial of popular political rights and continued public support. This contract largely came unraveled during the last part of Brezhnev's tenure in power. The authors convincingly argue that Gorbachev's principal failure was his inability to reformulate a workable social contract.

The value of this book lies in its critical examination of the early Gorbachev period and its explanation of the background behind his reforms. It should be read as a political commentary on the post-Stalin years and particularly on the mid-1980s. Westview Press should be congratulated for the publication of this collection of cogent, incisive essays.

Edward Acton, *Rethinking the Russian Revolution*, London: Edward Arnold, 1990, viii + 229 pp.

Edward Acton has written an extremely important book on the Russian Revolutions of 1917. His purpose is to provide a fresh examination of the existing scholarly literature on the subject. In particular, he focuses on what he calls "revisionist analysis" — an appraisal of the "revolution from below" based on social history and quantitative methods. He compares this revisionist view with what he describes as the orthodox Soviet view, the liberal view, and the view of the "libertarian" left. Acton's basic theme is that the revisionists — the pioneers include A. Rabinowitch, D. Koenker, W. G. Rosenberg, S. A. Smith, and A. K. Wildman — are essentially on the right path in analyzing the impact of ordinary men and women on political developments in 1917. Acton also holds that the revisionists, while certainly critical of the traditional Soviet view, largely agree that the October Revolution was the product of a truly mass revolutionary movement. He indicates that the revisionists are currently using similar methodologies to examine the sequel to October in an effort to understand the breakdown of the mass alliance of 1917 and the emergence of a Bolshevik dictatorship.

According to Acton, the revisionists have successfully challenged both the liberal view and the standard Soviet view of pre-World War I Russia. As a result of mounting instability, revolution was coming, but it was hardly inevitable. Revisionist economic historians have demonstrated that the intensification of rural unrest before 1905, especially the peasants' demand for the abolition of gentry landownership, occurred not because of a fall in living standards but because of rising expectations and increased peasant assertiveness and that these trends accelerated after that date. This same acceleration was true of working-class militancy; after 1905, the alliance with the liberals was over, as the workers increasingly supported socialist parties. But in contrast to the orthodox Soviet view, the revisionists argue that Bolshevik influence before the war was more a consequence than a cause of working-class radicalism.

Acton does not deny the growth of a liberal constituency after the 1905 Revolution, but he thinks that the revisionists are correct in asserting that it had little prospect of extracting liberal reforms from the

repressive Tsarist government. The middle classes were thwarted by their inability to unite, by the intransigence of the government, and by mounting peasant and worker radicalism. Therefore, recent scholarship rejects the traditional liberal view of the February Revolution as a fortuitous product of war, in large part because Tsarism was a deadlocked political system drifting toward destruction. Even a gifted tsar, and Nikolai II was hardly that, would have had great difficulty in shoring up the rigidly conservative regime. But revisionist research also repudiates the orthodox Soviet idea that the revolution was the product of a natural, inevitable process.

Acton uses revisionist literature to understand why the intelligentsia participated in the revolutionary movement. He agrees with the revisionists that their motivation was more than personal heroism or psychological maladjustment, as the liberal view has it, yet at the same time also not because of restrictive employment opportunities for students in official society. The revisionists, Acton believes, are correct to concentrate on the student protest movement, since it encouraged the students to challenge the conventions of Tsarist society. In addition, the revisionists assert that revolutionary ideologies were not the creation of intellectuals isolated from the masses but the result of an interaction which compelled the intelligentsia continually to rethink and rework their ideas to promote mass appeal. Most important, according to the revisionists, the *intelligenty* may have founded the principal revolutionary parties, but they were soon outnumbered within them and certainly did not set the goals for the masses. Therefore, mass political militancy was generated from below rather than whipped up from above. In 1917, the socialist parties commanded the support of most peasants and workers.

Acton adheres to the revisionist conclusion that the February Revolution may indeed have been "spontaneous," but the Petrograd workers were well aware of the political implications of what they were doing. The revolution, while not centrally organized, was undoubtedly consciously willed. Even though the revisionists accept the standard Soviet interpretation that the Tsarist government suffered from a profound internal crisis, they renounce the claim of Bolshevik leadership and the notion of proletarian hegemony in February. In Acton's opinion, the revisionist explanation for the behavior of the moderate socialists is

particularly significant. The moderate socialists on the Executive Committee (EC) of the Petrograd Soviet urged the Duma leaders to form a new government not because, as the liberal view puts it, their doctrinaire ideology held that bourgeois politicians must take power but because they feared military intervention from the front and because the EC had little control over its own constituency. In the end, the famous "dual power" of February was less between the Provisional Government and the EC than between the former and the insurgent masses.

In applying revisionist scholarship to the actions of the Provisional Government, Acton postulates that it was not inhibited by a lack of will and absence of foresight, as the liberal interpretations suggests; instead, the government at best had only limited ability to use force because of an increasingly strong reaction by the rank and file in the army against their officers' authority. Since this was the case, why, then, did the government continue to fight World War I? Referring to the revisionists, Acton stresses that its liberal goals were unrealistic in the circumstances of 1917. On the one hand, it counted on the support of the middle and upper classes, who fervently favored continued participation in the war. Yet on the other, the masses prohibited the government from preventing them to transform relations with management, end the war, and seize gentry land.

In analyzing the actions of the moderate socialists in light of revisionist research, Acton attributes their decline in popularity among the workers and soldiers, evident from July 1917, to flawed policy, not poor organization, inadequate leadership, or doctrinaire belief in bourgeois revolution. In his interpretation, the major mistake of the moderate socialists was the attempt to implement their program with the support of the upper and middle classes. The moderate socialists continued to advocate this alliance — and in so doing seriously miscalculated the peasants' impatience for land reform, the soldiers' desire for peace, and the radicalization of the workers — because of their fear of counterrevolution and the patriotism of the soldiers. The moderate socialists also ruled out a separate peace because they believed that Germany would then win World War I and quickly crush revolution in Russia. Beyond that, they were concerned about the isolation of the workers by the unification of all the upper and middle classes. As

Acton points out, the more the moderate socialists urged patience, the more they lost influence, particularly after they supported the June offensive. They failed to reconsider their basic political assumptions formed in the early months of the revolution.

The revisionists examine the October Revolution from below: the peasants wanted land and the transformation of the atmosphere in which they lived; the soldiers wanted peace but were unwilling simply to abandon the front to the enemy; and the workers, especially the more sophisticated, clearly connected their economic problems with political power. The masses — not one grey, uniform whole — made an increasingly decisive impact on the political struggle in pursuit of their economic and social objectives. But the workers, soldiers, and peasants acted on the basis of their own experience; there was no close correlation between their demands and a Bolshevik presence.

In the revisionist version, the Bolsheviks benefited from the soldiers' mounting pressure, evident from September 1917, for a soviet government to arrange an immediate peace. At the same time, the workers with even greater militancy also demanded a soviet government to uphold the collapsing economy. Once again, they gave their support to the Bolsheviks. As a result, by October, the Bolshevik party was hardly a clique of radical intellectuals, as the liberal view demonstrates, but a truly mass workers' organization. While it is true that the Bolsheviks were better organized than the other extremist groups, their victory over the Provisional Government was because of policy, not organization, and was political, not military. Instead of being centralized and disciplined, at that moment the party was internally relatively democratic, tolerant, and decentralized. The Bolsheviks emerged into a popular mass party because the masses identified it with the policies they wanted. Bolshevik propaganda might have articulated the workers' aims, but it did not cause their radicalism or create their goals for them. As the revisionists understand the situation, the growth of Bolshevik popularity in 1917 happened because of the party's considerable sensitivity of shifts in public opinion. This acute perceptiveness was precisely the result of the party leadership's inability to impose its will on the rank and file. The leaders had to consult with the rank and file and in turn were greatly influenced by them.

One of the most interesting sections of Acton's book deals with

revisionist analysis of V. I. Lenin's role in 1917. According to this interpretation, Lenin's personal leadership was important but not crucial. Although his personal radicalism enabled the party to respond to mass radicalism, he could not dictate policy to the Bolsheviks. Equally significant, Acton thinks that Lenin's political strategy in 1917 was not cynical demagoguery and that his faith in the creativity of the masses and their capacity for self-rule was articulated in *State and Revolution*. According to Acton, Lenin misjudged the magnitude of the Soviet government's problems after the revolution. Therefore, in early 1918, Lenin abandoned much of his program and reverted from a "semi-anarchist vision" of Soviet power to alternative models within Marxist thought and his own thinking to establish Bolshevik authoritarianism. He was convinced that the party knew best and was determined, above all, to maintain power. If this interpretation is true, then the divisions that eventually split the mass alliance of 1917 occurred not because the Bolsheviks were originally positioned against the masses but because economic collapse ended the tacit union among peasants, workers, and soldiers. Beginning in 1918, hostility was especially evident between the cities and the countryside.

In the end, if the revisionists are correct, the October Revolution was much more than a conspiratorial coup d'état. The central political issue was power to the soviets. The Bolsheviks prevailed primarily because the masses identified their party with the cause of a soviet government. Revisionist scholarship has shown that there was considerable discontinuity between the popular revolution which brought the Bolsheviks to power and the highly authoritarian regime which eventually emerged. In 1918, the autonomy and democratic processes of the popular organizations that grew up during the revolution were steadily undermined. The new Soviet government survived largely because in the chaotic circumstances of the immediate postrevolutionary period a coherent popular movement against it could not emerge. During the Russian Civil War the party gathered decision-making power and became increasingly centralized and much less democratic. In addition, Acton stresses that, by 1922, two-thirds of party members were administrators, not workers. The party had shifted its power base from soviet democracy to administrative and military coercion.

Acton concludes this stimulating book with the observation that the

revisionists now need to focus on the Civil War and the early Soviet government to understand the formation and consolidation of the Bolshevik dictatorship. Even though this analysis has already begun, he correctly argues that we need much more revisionist research about the emergence of Bolshevik authoritarianism. He should be applauded for the publication of this splendid study; it will ably serve both students and specialists for a long time.

*Department of History*  
*University of Northern Iowa*  
*Cedar Falls, IA 50614*  
*USA*

TIMOTHY E. O'CONNOR

Boris Kagarlitsky, *The Dialectics of Change*, London: Verso, 1990.

This book is particularly timely, given the current events in the Soviet Union and other socialist societies. Clearly Marxist governments have begun to change, but the intricacies of this process have eluded most Western commentators. The average citizen is simply told that left-wing progressives are more democratic than conservative bureaucrats. But such muddled information can hardly lead to sound analysis and prudent policies. Kagarlitsky remedies this situation by providing insight into important themes related to the democratization of socialism.

First, he illustrates that Marxist philosophy is not necessarily antagonistic to democracy. His point is that Stalinism was repressive, but that this viewpoint does not encompass Marxism. Kagarlitsky documents that not all Marxists have been dogmatic, and, in point of fact, many of them have argued that mature socialism would become increasingly democratic. Democratic planning, in short, would become the cornerstone of advanced socialist societies.

Second, he emphasizes a crucial distinction that is made by many modern Marxists, not to mention Marx, between cultural democracy and parliamentary activities. Central to this differentiation is that democracy does not consist of simply a few civic practices, such as voting. Much more important, the proper social conditions must be established that will allow democracy to flourish. The free flow of

information, proliferation of ideas, and open discussions, for example, must be encouraged. As opposed to making merely technical changes in the government apparatus, true democratization requires that these and other cultural issues to be addressed.

And third, a key means of instituting democracy is discussed. This strategy is referred to as self-management. For quite some time this idea has been discussed in Marxist circles, most notably in Yugoslavia. As Petrovic states, self-management is a way of existing, as opposed to merely an organizational style. Therefore, essential to self-management are profound changes in how social relations, human needs, and production are viewed.

What Kagarlitsky reveals is the depth of the reforms that are currently underway in many Marxist societies. To the consternation of many Westerners, pursuing democracy is not necessarily synonymous with installing capitalism. This very prevalent misunderstanding is corrected by Kagarlitsky. In this regard, he details how socialism is refined through democratization.

Kagarlitsky does an adequate job in summarizing the recent trends in Marxist thought. And toward the end of the book, he concentrates specifically on the reform movement in the Soviet Union. Accordingly, the reader is greatly assisted in understanding the recent attempt to overthrow Gorbachev. In sum, this book should be read by those who are interested in Marxism or East European history.

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Vol. 2, London: Verso, 1991.

In this volume, Sartre expands on a theme that he introduced near the end of the first book of *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. This idea is "collective praxis". As should be noticed, understanding *praxis* in this way has significant social implications. In fact, Sartre devotes most of Volume Two to clarifying how order should be conceived following this theoretical demarche. He is particularly interested analyzing Soviet society.

Typically order is not thought to emanate from *praxis*. Most often social structures are portrayed as constraining persons, thereby preserv-

ing the integrity of society. Durkheim's claim that reality exists *sui generis* exemplifies this tendency. Anyway, once order is supplied with such autonomy, persons are viewed gradually to be merely parts of an inviolable system. Primacy is given to the system, while everyday life is completely formalized.

Among other things, this is what Sartre believes occurred in the Soviet Union. Because realism was never jettisoned, but instead was reinforced in many ways, Soviet society was easily bureaucratized. Persons were enslaved by the institutions they created, due to the recognition that was given to natural and historical laws. Hence what Sartre calls the "serious attitude" was engendered throughout society. And instead of demanding responsive institutions, rules and regulations are treated almost as sacrosanct. This attitude results eventually in the evisceration of *praxis*, for human action contributes nothing to the maintenance of reality.

What Sartre illustrates, however, is that institutions represent nothing more than accumulated *praxis*. His point, similar to that made by Marx, is that the value of capital is derived from labor. But contrary to the official position of the CP, Sartre claims that even in socialist societies workers may become alienated from the production process. As in capitalist societies, this alienation may extend also to government affairs.

According to the CP, the usual remedy for any social problem is to increase production. Nonetheless, this solution has culminated in an intractable technocracy. Similar to many of today's reformers throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, Sartre contends that social conditions will improve only when *praxis* is unfettered and allowed to invent order. In this way, institutions that are flexible and meet the needs of persons can be created. With personal and collective interests and ambitions unleashed, the development of a satisfying mode of order is at least feasible.

The key phrase of Sartre's that pervades this volume is "everything is *praxis*". All forms of knowledge and order are mediated completely by the human element. He is particularly intent on illustrating that if this thesis had been accepted, many of the repressive practices inaugurated in socialist societies could have been avoided.

As always, Sartre's work is quite revolutionary. In this case, order is

stripped of its usual seignorial status. On the other had, nothing really new is revealed in this book. Traditional existential concepts are simply discussed in sociological terms. Of course, every serious social philosopher should take a look at this volume. But many of the ideas that are presented have been in circulation among Marxists and others for quite some time.

Anthony Brewer, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism: A Critical Survey*, London: Routledge, 1990.

The aim of this book, according to Brewer, is to “survey the Marxist writings on imperialism” (ix). To this end, he attempts to tie this activity to the “development of the world capitalist economy” (ix). Accordingly, chapters are devoted to the work of Marx, Luxemburg, Hobson, Hilferding, Lenin, and Baran, in addition to the most modern theories of imperialism. Brewer’s survey is both thorough and broad.

As Brewer writes, imperialism cannot be easily defined. The purpose and rationale for this phenomenon shift from time to time. But basic to this process are expansionism and exploitation. What changes are the historical context the theory of these activities. In one case imperialism may be motivated by under-consumption, while in another the need for investment may be its driving force.

Brewer says he has tried to maintain a “sympathetic but critical” position throughout this book. Each topic is thus addressed from a variety of perspectives. Readers may find his approach to be tedious, for they are inundated by a plethora of information. Thoroughness may be a virtue, except when the key points tend to be obscured. At times, a reader can become easily lost in the midst of a chapter.

Most disconcerting, however, is that this book seems to lack a soul. Although Brewer warns the reader that he wants to be evenhanded, his portrayal of imperialism is quite sterile. Keynes might say that the discussion of imperialism is hydraulic. Imperialism, in short, is analyzed mostly in economic terms. Little attention is paid to the human costs of the economic policies and practices that are adopted by imperialists. As Marx made abundantly clear, economics cannot be properly understood divorced from human relationships.

In general, Brewer's book is informative. A reader better be prepared, however, to wade through a somewhat technical analysis. A spirited examination of the social consequences of imperialism is not presented in this book. In other words, this is not a study of the actual process of imperialism.

*Department of Sociology*  
*University of Miami*  
*Coral Gables, FL 33124*  
*USA*

JOHN W. MURPHY

John Sallnow, *Reform in the Soviet Union: Glasnost and the Future*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.

In view of the astonishing and largely unexpected events in the Soviet Union during the very recent past, any book appearing before this time and addressing the course of reform there, as is the case with the volume under review, will have run the risk of being seriously outdated by now in its conclusions and projections. Prescience, to be sure, cannot be invoked at will; and some forecasters are right for the wrong reasons. Yet, although Sallnow could hardly have been expected to anticipate, in their specific forms, the dramatic changes presently taking place in the Soviet Union, he does emphasize that, even without the strong leadership of Gorbachev, reform would doubtlessly continue.

To lend credence to this conclusion, Sallnow succinctly marshals an array of evidence, focusing first upon the failed legacy of the Brezhnev years. Whereas these years, earlier on, showed some economic growth, they were subsequently characterized by deceleration (*zamedlenie*) and stagnation (*zastoj*). In presenting this case, the social analyses of Aganbegyan and Zaslavskaya, in particular, are drawn upon. Next, the impetus for acceleration (*uskorenje*) and then perestroika in society, both stimulated by the initiatives of Gorbachev, is traced. Around the time of the inception of Gorbachev's leadership, the Soviet Union, it is pointed out, was a first-world country in terms of its military, a second-world country in capital goods, and a third-world country in its consumer sector. As Sallnow sees it, there are three phases of perestroika:

1985—1987, which was distinguished by increasing public self-analysis and self-criticism, along with considerable optimism; 1987—1990, which has anticipated moves toward self-financing, reduction of bureaucracies, the beginning of price reforms, but which also has seen the emergence of explicit opposition to perestroika, together with overt disenchantment; and the period to begin in 1991, when the various components of the new economic mechanism are to be developed even further.

Usefully catalogued is Gorbachev's reformist vocabulary, which, in addition to such familiar terms as *uskorenje*, *glasnost'* and *perestrojka*, comprises the following: intensification (*intensifikacija*) of productivity, accountability (*khozrasčët*) on a self-supporting basis, self-financing (*samofinansirovanie*) that must be profitable, radical reform (*radikal'naja reforma*) that dismantles the centralized command economy, attention to the human factor (*čelovečeskij faktor*) of motivation, social justice (*social'naja spravedlivost'*) that distributes values consistently according to the quality and quantity of work, new thinking (*novoe myšlenie*) in international relations, and democratization (*demokratizacija*).

In addition to a historical overview of the processes of glasnost (a promising development) and perestroika (a development beset by irresolution and recurring difficulties), Sallnow examines, on the one hand, the challenge posed by the upsurge of nationalism [whose effects are currently being felt in a most problematic manner] and, on the other hand, Gorbachev's attitudes toward, and relations with, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, the United States and Asia. Included in the latter account is a summary of the summit meetings held by Gorbachev and Reagan between 1985 and 1988.

Having established a fair amount of background, Sallnow discusses prospects for the continuation of perestroika, noting both problems and opportunities. Among the former is the fact that political reform is proceeding much faster than economic reform. The glasnost associated with political reform is generally more popular, it is recognized, with writers and intellectuals than with ordinary people [though this assessment may now require some correction]. On the economic front, reform must deal with the issue of prices, the presence of inflation, the increase in foreign debt (including debt service), and the role of the shadow economy based upon *blat* and *nalevo*.

As a way of tracking reforms in the Soviet Union, three categories are identified: policy reforms, which can lead to the redistribution of resources; organizational-administrative reforms, which affect the decision-making process; and structural-institutional reforms, which alter the very nature of the system itself.

Supplementing this typology, Sallnow furnishes a short biographical account of each of the personalities who were, at that time, key figures in the unfolding of perestroika, figures ranging, for example, from the obstructionist Yegor Ligachev through Nikolai Ryzhkov to progressives such as Vitaly Korotich, Tatyana Zaslavskaya and Boris Yeltsin.

If one needs a very serviceable handbook of developments in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, then Sallnow's work is recommended, not least for its many helpful maps and charts. The book's historical narrative and analysis, while tightly compressed and sometimes interlarded with disconcertingly acerbic quotations from journalistic commentary, is nevertheless insightful and instructive. Incidentally, I might observe that an occasionally uneven style suggests that the manuscript may have been prepared in some haste. If, however, one requires a more substantive treatment, where questions are dealt with at greater length and in more depth, then some other work will probably be preferred.

*Department of Philosophy & Humanities*  
*University of Central Florida*  
*Orlando, FL 32816*  
 USA

JOHN RISER

David Bakhurst, *Consciousness and Revolution in Soviet Philosophy: From the Bolsheviks to Evald Ilyenkov*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 292 pp.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and presumably as well the end of the ideological reign of Marxism-Leninism we can at last longingly speculate not only as to how philosophy will develop in Russia and the other new nations of the former Soviet Union but also look back on the accomplishments of that ideology. For the most part

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the record presents a dismal picture. Bakhurst's book, however, is neither a simple historical account of that reign nor unduly concerned with its frequently embarrassing moments. Consciously unlike most if not all Western treatments of Soviet philosophy Bakhurst analyzes in depth the work of one individual — Evald Ilyenkov, whom the former considers "one of the most important of contemporary Soviet philosophers." Bakhurst sees Ilyenkov as somewhat of an Hegelian Marxist, who fundamentally rejects Cartesian epistemological dualism in favor of a "radical realism" in which thought serves as the means by which an individual comes into immediate cognitive contact with the surrounding world in itself. Furthermore Bakhurst traces Ilyenkov's framework back to Lenin, Vygotsky and Deborin. Thus we have the word "consciousness" in the book's title. How "revolution" fits in is more of a mystery.

Despite an overall appreciation for Ilyenkov Bakhurst clearly is not an uncritical, sycophantic admirer. He chides Ilyenkov for his dogmatic language, which hardly served the cause he allegedly espoused, viz. a reform of Soviet ideology. Clearly trained in the analytic tradition Bakhurst makes a number of telling observations, many of them at Ilyenkov's expense. Fundamentally Ilyenkov remained a Soviet Marxist, and as such one for whom the veracity of Marxism-Leninism is a given. All too often in Ilyenkov reference to a Marxist classic is sufficient to justify one's standpoint. Never for a moment does Ilyenkov consider that his state's ideology can itself be incorrect. All too often Ilyenkov simply refuses to entertain the possibility that skepticism and solipsism are anything but absurd, rather than showing why they are. All too often Ilyenkov couples a theoretical critique of an opponent's position with a claim concerning its "pernicious" political ramifications, as if the latter is to be considered in adjudicating the position's veracity. Most but not all of this Bakhurst realizes. For those seeking an examination of Ilyenkov's thought, and thereby an analysis of one of the best products of the Soviet era in philosophy, one can hardly do better than to turn to Bakhurst's treatment. Yet it will not do to excuse, even if only partially, Ilyenkov's lack of appreciation for formal as opposed to dialectical logic to his ignorance of English. Bolzano, Frege and Husserl were linguistically accessible.

Given, however, Ilyenkov's significant deficiencies, coupled with his uncritical, indeed dogmatic, acceptance of a Soviet variant of Marxism,

why should one study Ilyenkov at such length? Has Bakhurst made a case for it, particularly in light of Soviet Marxism's abject failure to achieve any of its stated goals? The answer is rather difficult to determine. Indeed Bakhurst himself in effect tells us that on his interpretation Ilyenkov's philosophy is "vindicated" if and only if Marxism is able to "transform human life." Given the recent events in the former Soviet Union, with its own leaders confessing the ideology has failed, can we not therefore say that Ilyenkov's philosophy, as rooted in and *an* expression of that ideology, is wrong or failed? Has Bakhurst made a case for studying a "failed" philosophy, "failed" by its own admission and standards, not ours?

The overall strengths of his presentation notwithstanding Bakhurst makes several unsubstantiated claims in his "Introduction." Presumably his answer to the questions in the above paragraph is contained in the opening sentences of his study. That is, that by studying Ilyenkov and Soviet philosophy "philosophy itself will benefit," since we thereby enlarge "the compass of philosophical knowledge in general." Surely, this reviewer will agree that if philosophy will benefit from studying a school or a particular individual's thought, that thought should be studied. In this way one could make a strong case for studying logical positivism in general and, say, the early A. J. Ayer in particular. The trouble here is that Bakhurst has failed to specify how and in what way philosophy will benefit from studying Ilyenkov. That is, what points did Ilyenkov make that cannot be found in, for example, the analytic tradition with far greater rigor and insight? Bakhurst's failure to bring this out and emphasize it, at least to this reviewer's satisfaction, is all the more surprising in that he chides authors closely associated with this journal for not showing how Soviet philosophy has made "a contribution to philosophy as a discipline." Unfortunately Bakhurst finds that "philosophical sovietology is written almost entirely from the perspective of the external observer." Such a method is inadequate, and Bakhurst rejects it in favor of what he calls "philosophical ethnography," the attempt "to convey how Soviet philosophical culture appears from the inside." It is truly unfortunate that he spends so little time enunciating his methodology and substantiating his portrayal and criticism of those closely connected with this journal. Aside from these introductory remarks Bakhurst has nothing more to say on these issues

in his text. This reviewer, for one, is at a loss to see how his study presents its subject matter from the inside, while Bochenski and Wetter studied Soviet philosophy from the outside. Is it a matter of sympathy? Bakhurst tells us that his sort of study "is required if one is to understand a philosophical culture that appears so distant from our own." Why? Bakhurst presents no arguments in support of his statement. Moreover, what precisely does Bakhurst mean by "understand"? If one does not sympathize with that culture, does one thereby not "understand" it? In what way is the Soviet culture so distant from our own that it requires a particular methodology presumably other than that which is required in a study of our own? Wetter, for one, points out certain similarities between Soviet philosophy and Thomism. Another Western scholar might wish to point out the rise in recent years of Hegel in both Soviet Marxism and in the West. Moreover, Marxism itself could hardly have a more Western pedigree.

The reader can find other rash, unsupported assertions in Bakhurst's book. For example, in his discussion of the Deborinite-Mechanist controversy Bakhurst states without elaboration that unless we take the philosophical arguments of the 1920s seriously, we will be unable to "understand fully" how the Stalinists were possible. What is it to "understand fully" and to take something "seriously"? If I were to offer an explanation of the victory of the Stalinists in philosophy, say a purely political one, that makes no causal reference to the pre-1930 philosophical discussions and debates, do I necessarily fail to "understand fully"? Yet does Bakhurst himself take the arguments "seriously"? After all he does claim that the Deborinites won institutional superiority by levelling the charge, and having it officially endorsed, that the mechanists were a political danger. So much for all the philosophical arguments. Indeed some pages later Bakhurst, apparently drawing back from his earlier unequivocal language, now says that the philosophical stalemate between the two rival camps *helps* explain how the Stalinists in philosophy were possible.

In tracing the influences on Ilyenkov Bakhurst discusses both Lenin's epistemology and Vygotsky's psychology. Interestingly Bakhurst attempts to make a case for seeing in *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* an ambiguity between what he terms a "conservative realism" and a "radical realism." As interesting as this is in itself the essential point for

the present work is that Ilyenkov saw in Lenin the latter realism and attempted to develop it while many of his opponents saw in Lenin the conservative form. Surely Bakhurst is correct in seeing Lenin's text as a political intervention in a now almost forgotten Bolshevik dispute, although I doubt many Western scholars disagree. What this reviewer finds puzzling is that if Ilyenkov is right in seeing *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* as the philosophical counterpart to Lenin's *What is to Be Done?*, how could Lenin have adopted a copy theory of knowledge? With its notion of an elite, conspiratorial revolutionary party bringing truth and happiness to the masses, Lenin, on this model, should have adopted an elitist theory of knowledge. That is, would it not have been consistent, if this analogy is to be upheld, that the high priests such as himself had the truth and that they must now come down from the mountain to instruct the masses? Bakhurst regrettably does not raise this issue.

Bakhurst is correct in his conclusion saying that the study of Ilyenkov and others "is crucial to understanding the character of *glasnost*' itself." The reason, however, may lie not where Bakhurst locates it but in the poverty, perhaps even bankruptcy, of Ilyenkov's philosophical position that made Gorbachev's reforms so necessary. To rephrase de Tocqueville's famous statement somewhat we might say there is no more dangerous time for a bad ideology as when it tries to reform itself.

*1 Hastings Road*  
*Old Bridge, NJ 08857*  
 USA

THOMAS NEMETH

Mikhail M. Allenov et al., *Moscow: Treasures and Traditions*, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1990, 282 pp.

Alexander Lavrentiev, *Varvara Stepanova; The Complete Work*, John E. Bowlt (ed.), Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1988, 190 pp.

These two lavishly illustrated volumes demonstrate once again the persistent fascination of Americans with Russian art and culture,

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especially during periods of Soviet-American alliance, reconciliation, and cultural exchange. The first book is the catalogue of an exhibition in Seattle, Washington, organized jointly by the Smithsonian Institution and the Soviet Ministry of Culture in 1990 in connection with the Goodwill Games. The second is a monograph by the grandson of two well known Russian *avant-garde* artists, Varvara Stepanova (1894—1958) and Alexander Rodchenko. Both reflect the dynamics of cultural *glasnost* and the international art market.

The beautifully photographed Moscow exhibition catalogue was funded by the Boeing Company and supported by both the American embassy in Moscow and the Soviet embassy in Washington, D.C. It includes twelve essays covering Muscovite history, icons, jewelry, *kovsh* vessels, metalwork, armor, orders and medals, textiles, fashions, porcelain, and painting. The 238 color plates alone make this catalogue a jewel. A concluding essay by the enterprising John Bowlt, who had a hand in both these volumes, attempts to link the Moscow *avant-garde* of 1910 with that of 1990, pointing out that innovation and experimentation continue to go hand in hand with more traditional, conventional, and realistic art. A common theme of the essays is that Moscow has for nine centuries remained the cultural heartland of Russia.

Moscow has undergone many historical upheavals, from Mongol occupation and Petrine westernization and secularization, to the Bolshevik Revolution and *perestroika*. What persists in various art forms is the power of the city itself, from Third Rome and New Jerusalem to Soviet capitol; the image of the sacred portrait; lavish color and planar surfaces; the tradition of Russian Orthodoxy; the connection with Russian popular art and folkways. Moscow harbors a culture sensuous in light, sound, and smell, Byzantine and Slavic in origin and deeply rooted in the Russian village. Perhaps the very fact that after 1725 it was an ex-capitol without a court provided the conditions of patronage and production where both decorative and *avant-garde* art found ready markets. Moscow has remained Russia's artistic capitol even when its political role was diminished by Empire.

Lavrentiev's first full study of the life and work of Varvara Stepanova, based on the voluminous family archive and various museum collections, testifies to the enormous range of Stepanova's artistic work: paintings, book covers, fabric and clothing design, textiles, construc-

tions, costumes, drawings, posters, and typography. Like so many Russian *avant-garde* artists, she was not Russian but Lithuanian. Born in Kaunas, she attended the Kazan Art School (1910–1913) and began living with Rodchenko in Moscow in 1916, where both became caught up in the artistic enthusiasms of the revolution. Both were involved in the Constructivist movement, with its abstract geometry of form, and such landmarks as the “ $5 \times 5 = 25$ ” exhibit (1921) and the production of Meierhold’s “Death of Tarelkin” (1922).

This study is a virtual archive of Constructivist and Productivist art, consisting as it does of some 350 illustrations (80 in color), and selected essays and diary passages. Much of this material is published here for the first time. It testifies to the vitality and exuberance of the Moscow *avant-garde* in the turbulent twenties of this century, characteristics which survived among a few artists even under Stalin. Stepanova was one of a number of women artists liberated by the revolution to pursue their art to some extraordinary conclusions and to dream dreams whose order and form masked the real-life disorder, backwardness, and violence of revolutionary Russia.

Both volumes provide colorful evidence of the persistence of Moscow as a center of Russian culture and *avant-garde* experimentation, in opposition to the academies of Europe and St. Petersburg. They will enlighten the scholar and charm the uninitiated.

*Davidson College*  
*Davidson, NC 28036*  
*USA*

ROBERT C. WILLIAMS