

sions cautious. The story is not only told well, but it is also conscientiously documented. The book should be read in conjunction with Ezra Mendelsohn's excellent brief study *Class Struggle in the Pale*. In Mendelsohn's study, some of the same problems are seen from a different perspective through the eyes of individual members of the proletariat, who take a critical look at what political leaders have in store for them. Another work (hopefully it will become generally available) to be read in conjunction with Tobias's book is Jonathan Frankel's massive and masterly dissertation *Socialism and Jewish Nationalism in Russia 1892-1907* (Jesus College, Cambridge University, 1961). Frankel delves deeper into the relationship between Jewish nationalism and Jewish socialism in Russia and thus throws additional light on the question of why the Bund emerged, why the Bund grew so rapidly when it did emerge, and why the Bund developed the way it did.

LADIS K. D. KRISTOF  
Portland State University

NICHOLAS II: THE LAST TSAR. By *Marvin Lyons*. Edited by *Andrew Wheatcroft*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974. 224 pp. Photographs. \$16.95.

From a fund of 35,000 unpublished photos in personal and public archives Lyons has selected 350, which, along with a rather sparse text, trace the Romanov family from the youth of Alexander III to Nicholas's final days in Siberian exile. The album naturally focuses on Nicholas and amply documents his absorption with military ritual and domestic life. There are revealing sequences of other figures as well, for example, Alexander III's swift inflation from a slim grand duke to a portly young tsar and father, and the steady deterioration of Empress Alexandra, whose anxious and weary expression deepens in each succeeding picture. Among the most striking single photos are a portrait of the emotionally drained Alexandra at her son's sickbed in Spala and the four grand duchesses in 1917 with their heads shaven.

While carefully identifying each picture, the author fails to provide any analysis of the photos or to say anything about the purpose or method of selection. He shows little awareness of the historical or psychological dimensions of his material. The tendency of the text may be judged by the comments that Nicholas's coronation festivities were "marred only once when a number of people were crushed to death . . . on Khodinski Field." The omitted number was 1,389 killed, plus 1,300 severely injured.

Nevertheless, all those interested in the tsarist family will be grateful for this handsomely printed and extensive photographic account of its final years.

DAVID L. RANSEL  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

"VOENNYI KOMMUNIZM": POLITIKA, PRAKTIKA, IDEOLOGIJA. By *E. G. Gimpel'son*. Moscow: "Mysl'," 1973. 296 pp. 1.22 rubles.

Was War Communism a deliberate leap into the Communist utopia, or was it a series of improvisations forced on Soviet leadership by the exigencies of civil war and economic collapse? Repeating current Soviet interpretations, which view War Communism as a product of circumstances, Gimpel'son's synthesis of

secondary works and previously published sources contains nothing particularly new. Yet, as one of only a handful of monograph-length works devoted exclusively to this question, his concise study guides the reader through a systematic, consistently argued, and, at times, imaginative albeit singular interpretation. Whether or not one agrees with Gimpel'son's one-sided conclusions, he provides a careful taxonomy of the major issues which must be evaluated in analyzing the War Communism question.

Arguing that each War Communism measure differed significantly from the policies envisioned in Lenin's theory of transition to socialism, Gimpel'son insists that only emergency conditions could have dictated such a system: Lenin promoted commodity trade with the peasantry instead of forced requisitioning as necessitated by the food crisis; nationalization of only large-scale enterprises and continuation of private market relations rather than total nationalization and prohibition of free trade; perpetuation of differentiated money wages in place of naturalized payments and equalization of distribution; a mixed system of central regulation and local initiative, not drastic centralization and militarization; and material stimulation as a basis for mobilizing labor, not strict labor obligation. War Communism, the author concludes, emerged from separate measures taken in response to extraordinary circumstances, which forced temporary abandonment of Lenin's program for the evolutionary development of socialism.

Why, then, did some believe these measures represented the immediate introduction of communism? Gimpel'son contends that many party members fell victim to the "revolutionary romantic" psychology of the times. In explaining why War Communism was intensified after the end of military engagement, he argues that economic conditions continued to worsen and no new methods of economic construction were immediately available. Gimpel'son analyzes the ideological controversies accompanying the reversal of War Communism in terms of Lenin's remarks stressing circumstantial necessity and mistaken ideas about the introduction of communism.

Gimpel'son's interpretation, while intriguing, is unconvincing. Designed to explain the development and economic impact of large-scale industrial production, Lenin's theory of transition virtually ignored the critical peasant question; and it is at this crucial point that Gimpel'son's framework of contrasting Lenin's theoretical policies with War Communism measures breaks down. Gimpel'son's argument is further weakened by inadequate documentation, for example, his reliance upon a 1954 compilation of nationalization statistics, while ignoring V. Z. Drobizhev's revised estimates which offer a more convincing account of the war's direct impact on nationalization (*Glavnyi shtab sotsialisticheskoi promyshlennosti* [*Ocherki istorii V.S.N.Kh., 1917–1932 gg.*] [Moscow, 1966] pp. 89–95). A more serious problem is Gimpel'son's tendency to slide over critical events and materials which might modify his interpretation—the blanket nationalization decree of November 29, 1920 and the Eighth Soviet Congress's decree on sowing committees are only tangentially treated. Although Gimpel'son is otherwise painstakingly thorough in his survey of financial controversies where the party, the Commissariat of Finance, and various individuals opposed Lenin on questions of ideological interpretation, he offers only a passing reference to the numerous academic discussions in 1919–20 seeking alternatives to money. Gimpel'son's analysis of Lenin's retrospective views on War Communism is also very intriguing. Disavowing any personal responsibility, Lenin referred to the

attempts at ideological explanations of War Communism only as a means to discredit opponents who resisted the introduction of NEP; but Gimpel'son does not explain the reasons for abandoning War Communism or the nature of this opposition. Consequently, his interpretation of Lenin's remarks remains merely interesting conjecture.

In fairness to the author, one should note that he never claims to have exhausted all questions or to have provided final answers. Thus, despite its problems, the easy-flowing question-and-answer style, the comprehensive essay evaluating Soviet studies on the topic, and the succinct coverage of major issues influencing attempts at interpretation render this book a significant contribution to the historiography of War Communism.

H. RAY BUCHANAN  
Southern Methodist University

THE SOCIAL PRELUDE TO STALINISM. By *Roger Pethybridge*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974. vii, 343 pp. \$18.95.

It is time to recognize and deplore the dearth of authentic social studies in our scholarly literature about Soviet history and politics. Most of our scholarship over the years, and even today, is more aptly termed regime studies, focusing on high politics to the exclusion of society and social history. There are various reasons, good and not so good, for this, ranging from the kinds of sources that have been available to Western scholars, to the prolonged (and unfortunate) hegemony of the totalitarianism approach, which tended to explain all Soviet political and social development as a function of the ideological and organizational nature of the Communist regime. Whatever the reasons, the situation is lamentable. Until social history and analysis have taken their place in our scholarship, our factual and interpretative understanding of the Soviet experience must remain elliptical and inadequate.

This perspective is the great virtue of Roger Pethybridge's important, though uneven, study of Soviet political and social development between 1917 and 1929. While not seriously disputing conventional explanations of Stalinism, which he rightly regards as the "main political problem of the Soviet era," Pethybridge argues that these explanations overemphasize political factors while obscuring social ones. Making a persuasive case for social history in the introductory chapter, he centers on the interaction between Bolshevik programmatic ideas and Soviet social reality. His main purpose is to analyze several "social ingredients" that contributed to the coming of Stalinism.

Pethybridge's treatment is most valuable when he deals with specific aspects of social history. Three of his six chapters are particularly noteworthy in this respect. One analyzes the far-reaching impact of the Russian Civil War on the development of Soviet society and the political system, a critically important but virtually unstudied question. Another examines the dimensions of illiteracy after 1917 as they affected Bolshevik programs for social change. The third studies the social origins of the Soviet bureaucracy that grew up after 1917 and became a central feature of Stalinism. Here, and elsewhere, Pethybridge deepens our analysis by inverting the customary focus, as illustrated by his approach to the bureaucracy: "Scholars have dwelt on the coercive impact of Soviet bureaucracy on society once it had reached its peak of power under Stalin's control. Instead