

the Supreme Economic Council ("Vesenkha"), which was far more ambitious and politically inspired from the time V. V. Kuibyshev took over its leadership in 1926. Stalin was then able to use the Vesenkha proposals to undercut politically the Bukharin Opposition, while at the same time he was saddling the country with extravagant industrialization targets.

Economists should give particular heed to the evidence marshaled here on industrial progress in the years immediately preceding the Five-Year Plan, inasmuch as the tendency in economic studies has been to regard the NEP as relatively static and to take 1929 as the beginning of the intensive developmental process in the USSR. Across the board the Soviet economy had already begun to grow successfully, and not only in conventional quantitative terms; the socialist sector was rapidly crowding out the last substantial areas of private industry and trade. But this only highlights the problem of explaining why the political authorities had to intervene in 1928–29 with a risky and disruptive command and coercive approach to the economy. The grain-collection problem was hardly sufficient reason for all that followed.

Carr and Davies do not undertake to answer this fundamental question posed by their own data. Rather the contrary: they convey an undertone of self-evident necessity in all the steps that were taken by the Stalinist leadership. This is a cast of mind consistent with the philosophy implicit in Carr's earlier volumes of this history as well as in his *What Is History*—the assumption of a "mysterious world force that he sees as making history without consulting us," to quote Pieter Geyl (in his G. M. Trevelyan lecture of 1963, published in *History of the Low Countries: Episodes and Problems*, London, 1964, p. 26).

*Foundations of a Planned Economy* carries its detailed account just to the point of Stalin's heavy-handed intervention in 1929, without duly appraising this stage, and leaves the impression (not unlike the official histories) that Stalin was to proceed after 1929 in the same style as under the regime of 1926–28. The discussion of the planning controversies, for example, lapses without any consideration of the purge of Gosplan and the virtual demise of scientific economics in 1929 (cf. Naum Jasny, "A Soviet Planner—V. G. Groman," *Russian Review*, January 1954). No systematic appraisal is made of the criticisms and alternatives offered by the Bukharin Opposition, which Carr no doubt regards as one of his "parlour-games with the might-have-beens of history" (*What Is History*, New York, 1961, p. 127). It is no parlor game, but a question of appraising the fundamental forces and possibilities operating on a society and, to put it bluntly, a matter for moral judgment of the alternatives chosen. That Carr's philosophy has precluded his viewing the history of Soviet Russia in this perspective will, unfortunately, ultimately circumscribe the merit of his entire work.

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RUSSIAN PEASANTS AND SOVIET POWER: A STUDY OF COLLECTIVIZATION. By *Moshe Lewin*. Translated by *Irene Nove* with *John Biggart*. Preface by *Alec Nove*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968. 539 pp. \$15.00.

No major event of Soviet history has been more thoroughly obscured by the official historiography than the collectivization of agriculture. As Professor Nove

writes in the preface, collectivization was, in important ways, "more revolutionary than the Bolshevik revolution itself" (p. 7), abruptly, violently, and radically transforming the patterns of rural life. One is therefore especially grateful for a knowledgeable, thorough, and fair-minded work by a scholar whose background and research equip him uniquely for his task.

Dr. Lewin's study is divided into three major parts. The first, "The Régime and the Peasantry at the Close of the NEP Period," comprises eight chapters treating the peasant society and economy, the political system in the countryside, and agricultural policies from the Revolution to the mid-1920s, and concluding with a careful review of the leadership debates on agricultural policy during 1925–27. The author finds the regime deficient not only in its understanding of peasant attitudes and aspirations but also in the development of its own programs and administrative structures: "The Party was fundamentally an urban one, and it failed to learn, from its experience during the NEP period, how to come to terms with the countryside, how to devise more suitable instruments of administration, and how to formulate an original policy which would combine to serve the aims of socialism and the specific character and needs of the peasantry" (pp. 126–27). The shortcomings are accurately described, though they would seem to have little necessary connection with the urban character of the party, but a great deal to do with the fundamental party organization and ideology which Lenin bequeathed to his successors. The primacy of considerations of power and the tyranny of ideological abstractions over empirical economic data and analysis, which Lewin later describes as the essence of Stalin's agrarian policy, are an integral part of the same heritage.

The analysis of the main trends in the Soviet agricultural and industrial economies that underlay the policy debates of 1925–27 is mostly familiar, though it contributes significant details and interpretive insights. In brief, agricultural production recovered rapidly after the introduction of NEP, and then leveled off in the mid-1920s, failing to reach the prewar per capita production of cereal grains, and leaving serious shortages of industrial fibers, leather, and other agricultural raw materials for industry. State grain collections remained precariously low, while grain exports had dwindled to a trickle. The debate between Left and Right centered on the questions of how to increase agricultural output, how to transfer resources from the agricultural to the industrial sector, and the kinds and proper pace of industrial growth. Lewin notes that the debate tended greatly to exaggerate differences between the two sides—that both remained fundamentally committed to the *smychka* between the peasantry and the proletariat that underlay the NEP, and that both favored an acceleration of industrialization. However, he does fault the Right for inattention to industrialization needs and favors Preobrazhensky's strategy of industrial growth. Unfortunately his arguments against Bukharin consist more of assertions than of convincing analysis (e.g., Bukharin needed "a more realistic view of industrialization" and needed to recognize that "in Soviet conditions, industry, especially in the initial stages, would have to make a considerable leap forward," p. 141). But ultimately the decision was made not by the more sophisticated economists or political leaders of either Left or Right but by Stalin, a man with enormous power, scant appreciation for the complexities of the economic situation, and a penchant for forceful "solutions."

The most original and informative portions of the book are the chapters of section 2 ("A Two Years' Interlude, 1928–9"), which detail the transition from

NEP to general collectivization. Lewin maintains that the leaders of neither Left nor Right favored the Stalin collectivization plan (indeed neither side had shown great interest in collective farms either in policy or in theoretical discussions). He writes in conclusion: "The spectacular 'great turn' at the end of 1929, and the well-nigh incredible venture of the winter of 1929–30, were the culmination of a chain-reaction which had been set off by the 'procurement crisis' of 1928. This crisis, in its turn, had stemmed from the interaction of three major factors: the overthrow of NEP, the structure of the Soviet State and the personality of its leader" (p. 516). Lewin illustrates in detail Stalin's arbitrary exercise of power during 1928 to secure peasant grain and financial contributions to the state. Lewin contends that the procurements crisis of late 1927 and early 1928 might have been handled by raising prices and/or by imports (measures adopted later anyway), and that the forcible procurements initiated by Stalin, accompanied by a reign of terror in the villages reminiscent of the Civil War, engendered a still more serious production crisis, along with widespread social and political upheavals, which then "committed [the government] to policies which went far beyond anything that even its most determined leaders would have wished" (p. 250).

The *smychka* had indeed been the precarious foundation of both economic and social stability in the 1920s, and once it was shattered it seemed—at least to Stalin—that there was no alternative but to proceed with forcible collectivization, a policy to which Stalin was committed anyway as the sole means of securing independent grain supplies for the government to relieve it of dependence upon the peasantry. What followed, then, was a brutally applied policy of collectivization that was ill-advised economically and almost wholly unprepared for administratively. Lewin adds a good deal to our specific understanding of that process and its consequences in the final section of this excellent volume.

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THE RUSSO-GERMAN WAR, 1941–45. By *Albert Seaton*. New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1971. xix, 628 pp. \$15.00.

This thorough study by a British colonel professionally familiar with both German and Soviet military establishments may well be the best one-volume account of the Soviet-German campaigns and the strategic thinking on both sides of the front. The lay reader will often be more interested in the author's suggestive opinions regarding the reasons for successes and failures than in the abundant technical detail; he will also do well to read the political sections with some caution.

One finding implicit in the account is the extent to which every one of the major protagonists—Germany, Russia, Britain, the United States, and Japan—suffered from grievous miscalculations and poor intelligence. In the Nazi case, to be sure, Hitler probably would not have been deterred from attacking the Soviet Union even if better intelligence had been at his disposal. In essence Seaton finds that Hitler lost the war when, by political misjudgment, he embarked on a two-front war. Though he was not alone in underestimating the enemy and therefore engaging in unrealistic planning and in attacking with inadequate forces and resources, Hitler alone was responsible for the defeat at Stalingrad and for the rigid insistence on holding the ground, which cost Germany the initiative in the war. More questionable is the author's inference that both Britain and the Soviet Union