

Ironically, Mironov fell victim to the petty intrigues of local officials which he so disdained. It is an indication of the chaos of the times that a general in the Red Army preparing to report for an important position in Moscow could be arrested and imprisoned on the evidence provided by one unreliable local Cheka agent. The authors suggest that some high officials must have arranged Mironov's arrest and subsequent "execution" in the courtyard of the prison in Moscow. While their suggestion seems reasonable, they are unable to determine which officials might have had a hand in the affair. In addition to Lenin, Kalinin, and Trotsky, Dzerzhinskii and Menzhinskii also seemed unaware of Mironov's fate. It seems unlikely, however, that any more definitive explanation of Mironov's demise will be found.

The authors' argument is that Mironov represented precisely that combination of courage and revolutionary idealism which was needed to preserve the spirit of the Revolution, but it was precisely these characteristics which produced the envy and hatred of petty military and party officials. In the chaos of the period, the corrupt and self-seeking seemed to have had the upper hand. It can be argued that it was Mironov's penchant for independent action which inevitably caused him to come into conflict with the hierarchy. Increasingly, the fragile Bolshevik regime valued the qualities of discipline and obedience in the face of multiple threats to the fragile Revolutionary government. In the end, Mironov was a Cossack loyalist who became a confirmed revolutionary without ever giving up his primary concern for the welfare of the Cossacks. He could never tolerate the destruction of Cossack traditions and society no matter in whose name the campaign was mounted.

Mironov's rehabilitation by a military collegium in 1960 was not followed by a posthumous recognition of his military and political accomplishments. In fact, friends and relatives of those who had been credited with Mironov's achievements formally protested his rehabilitation. Starikov and Medvedev therefore determined to set the historical record straight in this book. Philip Mironov deserves the sensitive treatment that he receives from the authors.

Finally, although the art of translation is usually a thankless one which often goes unnoticed unless the reviewers wish to chide the translator about specific usages, Guy Daniels deserves our appreciation for producing a highly readable and accurate rendition of the original text.

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THE SOVIET AGRARIAN DEBATE: A CONTROVERSY IN SOCIAL SCIENCE, 1923–1929. By *Susan Gross Solomon*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1977. xvi, 309 pp. \$15.25.

Until now, only a few succinct studies have treated the debate which, in the 1920s, brought into opposition the two main schools of thought in Soviet rural economics and sociology regarding the nature of the peasant economy and the social differentiations within the peasantry. Thanks to this work which is praiseworthy for its erudition, clarity, and precision, scholars now have at their disposal a much more comprehensive investigation, allowing them to follow the evolution of the research and the controversies of the principal antagonists. Professor Susan G. Solomon has a talent for summing up the essential elements without deviating from textual evidence. She not only reexamines the theses of the organizational school, led by A. Chayanov, but she finds new perspectives as well. Professor Solomon does this in two ways. On the one hand, she emphasizes the true scientific contribution of the agrarian Marxists, which is not widely known in the West. On the other, she analyzes the debate from a sociological point of view. In particular, the author focuses both on the solidarity and divisions which appear in a specifically scientific milieu and on their impact on the content of rural studies.

Solomon shows that the debate followed a logic inherent to the research problem, at least until 1928, and was not subject to external political pressures, as was already the case in the field of literature (see, for example, studies by Sheila Fitzpatrick). For Chayanov, the dynamics of the family farm were of a biological nature, which led him to believe in the existence of a natural cycle generating stability. For Kritsman, the market was the motor of the peasant economy, which evolved unilinearly and inevitably led to capitalism. His disciples corroborated this thesis by refining the method for detecting dependence or domination criteria among peasant units (see the works by Nemchinov and Gaister) and within the family unit itself (see Kubanin's studies). The controversy, however, was not limited to the scientific. It also put into conflict two generations of researchers who had neither the same ideology nor the same academic prestige. Until 1928, a spirit of tolerance had prevailed over the feeling of division in the *agrarniki* community. But because of the Fifteenth Party Congress, which decided upon collectivization, and the Shakhty trial, the debate changed in both tone and content. Interest became less focused on the peasant economy, centering instead on the desirability of large-scale collective estates. The criterion of truth was no longer scientific, rather, the group-adopted truth came to determine the destiny of the individual researcher. Chayanov's destiny was grim, and even Kritsman was eclipsed by the young wolves of the party.

Despite the merits of the work under review, I have a few minor reservations. First of all, the sociological approach overlooks certain aspects of economic theory or policy—namely, the links between the Austrian marginalists and the curves of Chayanov and especially with respect to the problems of land rent and taxation. A study of the latter would have allowed the author to establish connections between the agrarian and the industrialization debates. This connection is suggested by the title of the work (in apparent reference to A. Erlich's earlier book). Moreover, the chosen framework of Professor Solomon's study limits the debate to the 1920s. It is cut off from earlier debates, in particular from the argument within the Agrarian Reform League which placed a wide range of trends in opposition as early as 1917. The framework similarly isolates the debate from its external connections (Chelintsev and Makarov were engaged in editing *Krest'ianskaia Rossiia* in Prague, S. Prokopovich and Petrim Sorokin were also there, and Brutskus was in Berlin). In other words, the discussions among the *agrarniki* were more wide-ranging than merely opposition between Soviet Neo-Populists and Marxists, as is suggested in Susan Solomon's book. Because the last phases of the debate were made known solely through publications unfavorable to the organizational school, Chayanov's arguments carry less weight than they should. Chayanov began as an agronomist on a practical level. Solomon's depiction of him as a conservative economist ignores the fact that, as early as 1918, in *Osnovnyia idei i metody raboty obshchestvennoi agronomii*, it was Chayanov the sociologist who highlighted problems (overcoming resistance to technical innovation and determining the motivating factors which dictate peasants' decisions, for example) which, even today, preoccupy Western experts who are trying to aid developing countries.

To sum up, Professor Susan Solomon's work should capture the attention not only of historians of Soviet Russia, but also of everyone engaged in studying the theory of peasant decision making.

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LEON TROTSKY. By *Irving Howe*. Edited by *Frank Kermode*. New York: The Viking Press, 1978. x, 214 pp. \$10.00.

Irving Howe's *Leon Trotsky* is a sympathetic but frankly critical study of a man who combined brilliant insight with stubborn intransigence, who readily saw the errors of others but simultaneously became a prisoner of his own assumptions, who was a "mixture of the rigid and the flexible." Trotsky is shown anticipating the danger of the