

Duma. His material, drawn largely from the Central State Historical Archives of the USSR, consists primarily of minutes of meetings, conferences, and congresses (much of it highly enlightening) of bodies of the "ruling circles," of representatives of commercial and industrial organizations, and of the Octobrist and Kadet parties, with brief treatment of the rightists, populists, and Marxists. He does this from a strictly Leninist position. The ultimate, familiar conclusion is that these elements were counterrevolutionary or followed the dangerous counsels of counterrevolutionary—particularly liberal—forces. Hence Chermensky's aim is to present the Kadets—the embodiment of the parliamentary effort—as a negative and weak force which could not prevent the inevitable march toward the Bolshevik Revolution.

Hardly deviating from Lenin's analyses of 1906–8, Chermensky holds that the Kadets "crashed" because they were too "rotten" to take over power and could not solve Russia's problems by parliamentary methods. The latter is yet to be proved. But the Kadets were interested primarily in parliamentary reform, not class struggle, as the way to power. Power would come with the success of the parliamentary system, and its promoters would have their due position in it. For the Kadets it was not a question of striving for control à la Marx but of creating social stability through parliamentary government. The Leninist view holds that the liberals interfered with historical development—the proletarian revolution—by refusing to take power and by leading the masses with them. In this connection it was relatively easy to portray the Kadet defense of the weak parliamentary structure as a betrayal of the popular cause and fear of revolution—to the point of cooperating with the regime. The Leninist argument focuses on the Kadets as the key element in a class struggle. Lenin identified them directly with business management, the classical capitalists; he considered their "democratic" intellectuals petty bourgeois. And both shrank before a peasant and worker revolution. It is demonstrable that as a political element the Kadets thought chiefly in terms of the freest possible political action. In this sense they promoted economic freedom, simply did not believe in the efficacy of a controlled, socialist economy, and abhorred the prospect of a "proletarian" or any other kind of dictatorship. This had been the broad "anti-Jacobin" position since the 1870s at least.

The loose structure of the "bourgeois" parties and their organizational weakness in the localities are presented as evidence of their lack of support in the period concerned. These circumstances more or less characterized all Russian parties after 1905–7, including the Social Democrats, who were in a sad state of disarray from both internal dissension and official repression by the summer of 1907. These circumstances also lend themselves to the presentation of partisan or splinter attitudes as representative of entire parties or political currents.

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A SOLDIER'S NOTE-BOOK, 1914–1918. By *General A. A. Brusilov [Brusilov]*. West Point Military Library. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1971 [London, 1930]. xi, 340 pp. \$13.00.

Churchill said that war is too important to leave to the generals. But General Brusilov views the Russian political leaders as no better, because a sensible military regime under Alexander III was followed by the "bewildering shilly-shallying"

under Nicholas II. The last tsar pushed for disarmament, but he followed a foreign policy that led to war with Japan and the Revolution of 1905. He also agreed to an alliance with Germany, only to have it end in a fatal war with his mighty neighbor. Moreover, the general holds that the opposition to the Duma led to bitter conflict between it and the moderately capable Sukhomlinov, minister of war, with bad results for the army. The domination of the Ministry of War by grand dukes and court favorites also was ruinous. Here, and not in a treasonable conspiracy of Guchkov and Polivanov, lay the cause of the disaster, in spite of George Katkov's allegations to the contrary.

The author tells the story of technical backwardness already made familiar by Golovin. The army had too few cannon (especially heavy ones), too few shells, and almost no proper artillery training. Machine guns, airplanes, field communications, field transport, medical equipment—all were gravely deficient. There was no unity of command, with the Guards, General Staff, and line army vying for prestige. The selection of commanders was slipshod, and the incompetent were not weeded out but merely sent to lesser posts. The Grand Duke Nicholas, however, impressed Brusilov as the best commander in chief available, although he admits the faulty strategy of 1915, which produced such ghastly losses. When the tsar assumed command, an already bad situation became much worse.

General Brusilov stresses that the Russian soldiers did very well in the first year of the war and indeed achieved a real miracle in the great offensive of 1916. But the odds against them were already too great. The people were alienated, and as the tsar stubbornly refused to make concessions of any importance, the monarchy fell. The author holds that by May 1917 troops were refusing to obey orders on all fronts, so that the failure of the Kerensky offensive was already certain. The October Revolution was a logical consequence.

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THE BAKU COMMUNE, 1917–1918: CLASS AND NATIONALITY IN THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION. By *Ronald Grigor Suny*. Studies of the Russian Institute, Columbia University. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972. xvii, 412 pp. \$15.00.

In nearly every city and village of the Caucasus, indeed throughout the Soviet Union, memorials, parks, public institutions, and thoroughfares have been named in honor of the twenty-six commissars of the Baku Commune who were executed in the desolate expanse of Transcaucasia in September 1918. Countless books and articles have appeared regarding the short-lived Commune (April–July 1918) and the martyrdom of the commissars, yet the question of political and moral responsibility for the course of events is still to be settled conclusively. In Soviet historiography alone, the shifts in interpretation have been remarkable. And while materials relating to the Baku Commune abound, there has been no basic scholarly monograph on the subject in a Western language. Professor Ronald G. Suny has attempted to redress the balance that has concentrated so heavily on central Russia, particularly Petrograd and Moscow, and tended to blur the significance of the Caucasus and other outlying regions in the history of the Russian Revolution.

The author has completed the undertaking with commendable patience amidst bewildering and often contradictory source materials and has striven to present