

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

the emotion-filled story of the Baku Commune with impartiality, even while revealing an admiration for the Communards, directed by Stepan Shahumian and Prokopii (Alesha) Japaridze. Analyzing the socioeconomic and nationality structure of Baku, Suny has sought to discover the fine line that differentiated class warfare from interracial enmity. The study entails considerably more than the title indicates, for somewhat less than half the book deals specifically with the Commune itself. Rather, the main focus is on the long train of events, from the turn of the century onward, that culminated in the proclamation of Soviet rule in Baku. Using several contemporary newspapers, including the *Izvestiia* of the local soviet, the author has effectively recreated the dizzying array of political-administrative bodies that operated in Baku after the February/March Revolution—dumas, unions, national councils, soviets, and ad hoc committees—and the state of constant flux that existed within each of those bodies. The kaleidoscopic sequences resulting from political confusion and impulsive action are skillfully demonstrated.

The use of rather detailed works by several first-generation Soviet historians, writing primarily in the 1920s, has provided considerable insight into the problems of the Commune and, as if by the process of osmosis, has figured appreciably in shaping the author's own assessments. The steady reliance on these sources, particularly in the introductory chapters of the book, may lead the discerning reader to question the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party's actual influence in Baku before the February Revolution or to wonder about certain interpretations, such as the one that contends that the local Bolshevik leadership refused to seize power before April 1918, out of fear that an upheaval might occasion profuse interracial bloodshed.

The study could have been strengthened through investigation of the readily available collections of documents of the imperial Russian government and the viceroyalty for the Caucasus and by the inclusion of the corpus of non-Bolshevik Muslim and Armenian literature on the subject. The author has repeatedly drawn attention to the importance of the Armenian element in Baku and its dominant political organization, the Dashnaksutium, which held the loyalty of most soldiers serving in the Commune's Red Army. Shahumian and his comrades freely conceded that the future of the Commune rested in large measure on the willingness of the non-Communist socialist parties to uphold Soviet rule in the face of encirclement by the combined Ottoman-Azerbaijan army. Yet there is no substantive evidence that the firsthand accounts of prominent Armenian political and military figures have been incorporated into the study, although a few such publications are listed in the bibliography.

The newspapers that have served as primary source material in the history of the Baku Commune become at best fragmentary secondary sources when researched for authoritative information regarding events beyond eastern Transcaucasia. The author's frequent reliance on those publications in that context accounts for numerous minor errors in detail and for oversimplification in describing the state of affairs in western Transcaucasia. To assert, for example, that the socialist political leaders in Tiflis had determined, as early as January 1918, to cast off the Russian orientation, in sharp contrast with their comrades in Baku, is to disregard the prevailing realities in the western provinces and along the Caucasus-Turkish front. Finally, a word of caution is necessary regarding the system of dating, since the apparent misconception that the Julian calendar was in use throughout the period under consideration has given rise to some imprecision.

The Baku Commune should become, even with these points of concern, a noteworthy contribution to the history of the Caucasus and of the first Soviet administration in its oil-rich metropolis on the Caspian Sea. Professor Suny has brought to his study a sense of immediacy, sympathy without overt partiality, and much basic—though selective—information on a subject too little known among Western historians.

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OBORONNAIA PROMYSHLENNOST' SOVETSKOI ROSSII V 1918–1920
GG. By *D. A. Kovalenko*. Moscow: "Nauka," 1970. 416 pp. 1.87 rubles.

According to the author of this monograph the defense industry played a more positive role in the Civil War than Soviet historians have generally realized. For despite the catastrophic decline of industrial production for the economy as a whole and continuous shortages at the front, the tremendous effort to direct all output toward supplying the army resulted in significant increases of new and repaired military equipment during 1919 and 1920. This success helps explain the otherwise almost unbelievable victory over the counterrevolutionaries and interventionists.

Based on intensive study of both archival and printed sources, this is a very full book. Principal topics include the prerevolutionary armaments industry and its shortcomings, the sabotage and lockouts of the bourgeoisie, the countless organizational changes affecting industry, the movement toward and away from workers' control, the struggle to safeguard military supplies, the decisions of the political leaders, and of course the genius of Lenin. One of the most interesting discussions is about the spontaneous conversion of war plants under workers' control to non-military production well before the Brest-Litovsk peace with Germany in March 1918. This contrasts sharply with the strict centralized chain of command in the defense industry by 1919, when workers in "militarized" factories, for example, were assimilated to the stern discipline of soldiers at the front, and when 60 percent of all factory workers produced for the needs of the Red Army.

Perhaps the most serious weakness of this work is that it often loses its monographic focus and wanders as a general dogmatic history of the entire period, with only special reference to the defense industry. The author's freshest and most revealing material is thus buried to some extent in another party hagiology. One example among many is the uncritical lumping together of all foreign anti-Soviet forces, whether the Austro-Germans in 1918 or the Allies in 1919, without distinction as to circumstances or motives.

This should not obscure the author's very real achievements, based on years of archival research. Again and again we see the Soviet commitment to direct "everything to the front" whatever the cost, and the accompanying increase in output of key supplies in the midst of collapse. This is a useful addition to our knowledge, and one that will be particularly valuable for specialists of "war communism" and the wartime origins of planning and the command economy.

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