

flected in a more generous response to their workers' needs would have been welcome. Regrettably there is no bibliography, although the introduction and its footnotes contain useful information.

To say that more questions are raised than are answered in this thoughtful and often stimulating book is not to denigrate its scholarly contribution, which is substantial. Indispensable for the specialist, it will also have great interest for all who are concerned with the political and social forces at work during this critical period in Russia's history.

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GERMANSKIE KAPITALY V ROSSII: ELEKTROINDUSTRIIA I ELEKTRICHESKII TRANSPORT. By *V. S. Diakin*. Leningrad: "Nauka," 1971. 288 pp. 1.26 rubles.

Although it has long been common knowledge that German capital accounted for the bulk of all investment in the Russian electrical industry until at least 1914, previous investigators have studied this subject only within the context of some larger problem, such as foreign capital, German capital, or imperialism. This monograph thus fills a hole in the wall of Soviet historiography on Russian economic development under capitalism. And since this well-made brick fits snugly into place, it tells us a good deal about how the wall is being built.

Diakin agrees with the general opinion that few if any Russian industries were as totally dominated by foreign owners or as highly monopolized as the electrical construction industry. The two leading firms in Russia, Siemens-Halske and A.E.G. (Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft), were always effectively directed from Berlin and always stood far above any Russian or Belgian competitors. Diakin does try to show, however, that even in this industry there were clear and growing limits to foreign domination. Especially in the industrial surge before World War I, Russian banks and entrepreneurial groups won a larger place for themselves in the electrical industry—reorganizing old firms, founding new ones, and jockeying for advantage between various foreign financial combinations.

Russian groups, like that of P. O. Gukasov or the Russo-Asiatic Bank, constantly played up their national character in the competition with their German rivals—for example, in their successful struggle to secure concessions for the generation of hydroelectric power for St. Petersburg (the Imatra Company). This tendency toward a more national and less dependent Russian electrical industry accelerated in 1914. Diakin's principal conclusion thus reinforces the position of Gindin, Bovykin, and others who have succeeded in discrediting an earlier Soviet interpretation of Vanag and Ronin, who argued simplistically that Russia was totally subservient to foreign finance capital in the era of imperialism. Having reached somewhat similar conclusions in my own research, I am quite willing to be persuaded by Diakin on this point.

The fascination of this work lies less in this rather obvious conclusion, however, than in the author's methodology and sources. Like some other recent Soviet works in economic history, Diakin's study is based on painstaking investigation of the existing business records of the companies involved. This allows him to attain an admirable completeness for an entire industry—a completeness which West

European (and to a lesser extent American) scholars achieve for only a very few individual firms. (The Western scholar gains access with great difficulty, and then he often finds that periodic housecleaning has sadly depleted the materials.) Yet one should hope that Soviet scholars such as Diakin, so strong on certain factual intricacies, will also come to use somewhat more flexible and imaginative approaches. Then they will be able to make a great and perhaps unique contribution to our understanding of pre-1914 capitalism, not only as it operated and evolved in Russia but in the rest of the world as well.

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COUNT WITTE AND THE TSARIST GOVERNMENT IN THE 1905 REVOLUTION. By *Howard D. Mehlinger* and *John M. Thompson*. Indiana University International Studies. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1972. xiv, 434 pp. \$17.50.

This is a vivid and well-documented description of the achievements, vacillations, and failures of Count Sergei Witte as first prime minister of the reformed Russian monarchy in 1905–6. The authors are generally correct that up to now “no full-scale attempt has been made to analyze the leading role of Count Witte during the crisis of revolution”—though they could have referred to Marc Szeftel’s “Nicholas II’s Constitutional Decisions of Oct. 17–19, 1905 and Sergius Witte’s Role” (in *Album J. Balon*, Namur, Belgium, 1968). “The revolution,” they write, “has never been viewed in depth from the vantage point of the government” (p. xi).

They aptly relate the tragic story of how, during the climax of the revolutionary movement, Witte pressured the alarmed and hesitant tsar to accept and publicize a program of far-reaching reform, and how bitter disappointment struck him as the Manifesto of October 17, promising civil rights and popular representation, was followed by a new wave of strikes, pogroms, and mutinies. Seeing the distrust of the country toward bureaucratic government, Witte tried to involve liberal public figures; but they demanded, as the price of cooperation, the immediate convocation of a constituent assembly that would have the power to abolish the monarchy altogether. The backward-looking tsar accepted Witte’s reform program only as a means of restoring order, and lost trust in him when this expectation did not materialize.

Witte’s heart and head were constantly in conflict: emotionally he was a partisan of autocracy, but rationally he saw the need for basic reforms and sincerely wanted to implement them; however, seeing the impossibility of this amidst political and social chaos, he gave priority to repression, together with reactionaries whom he despised. By December 1905, “he was overworked and emotionally and physically exhausted . . . , a terribly disappointed and frustrated man” (p. 155).

Still, in 1906 he continued to strive for reform. The authors give him credit for proposals to dissolve the village commune and give peasants full property and civil rights; “the fruits of his efforts were to be reaped by Stolypin.” This may be so, but it is characteristic of Witte’s contradictory nature that later, when Stolypin’s agrarian laws were discussed in the State Council, Witte vehemently objected to them, asserting that they would bring “little benefit but much confusion and harm” (*Stenograficheskie otchety*, March 15, 1910); the next day he even confessed that