

## PROFESSOR DESAI REPLIES:

I regret my failure to spot the typist's transition from "effective but not imposing" to "impressive but not imposing" in my review (*Slavic Review*, March 1977) of Abram Bergson's Wicksell Lectures. However, the review was addressed precisely and explicitly to Professor Bergson's thesis that Soviet economic performance has been less than remarkable. Instead of challenging this conclusion, the review described it as "plausible" and focused rather on the methods by which it was reached by Professor Bergson.

## TO THE EDITOR:

In his review of my essay in the collection, *The City in Russian History* (*Slavic Review*, March 1977), Boris Pushkarev takes issue with my view that after the municipal "counterreform" of 1892 neither state nor city government coped successfully with the tasks of urban development. This, I suggested, was a particularly important problem because of the pressures created by the very rapid growth of the urban population. The reviewer states that I fail "to say that between 1904 and 1913 alone, municipal expenditures doubled in constant rubles, and increased 55 percent on a per capita basis." "The trend," he contends, "was one of expansion, despite the ill effects of the counterreform. . . ."

In the interest of accuracy, my argument was actually as follows: "While city budgets *grew significantly* during the period 1892–1917, they did not grow quickly enough to cope with the needs of a rapidly growing urban population" (p. 185). While the reviewer may disagree with this point of view, his figures, for which he provides no source, do not refute it. Furthermore, figures on spending increases must be adjusted to account for state subsidies designated for garrison construction and other tasks unrelated to the development of the city economy, if they are to reflect the situation accurately. The fact that reported figures for income and expenditures at times differed considerably from the actual figures must also be considered. For example, Baku reported figures in 1913 that were inflated fourfold. In addition, data must be refined to take into account the heavy statistical weight of Moscow and St. Petersburg, whose budgets comprised about one-third of total city spending.

But the important point here is whether spending increases were sufficient to improve or even maintain existing urban standards of living, particularly in light of the increase in population. I argue that in general they were not, although one can note substantial advances in the funding of public education as well as more general developmental "spurts" in a few provincial cities, most notably Riga and Khar'kov. On the eve of World War I, for example, the annual expenditure by guberniia cities for "public care" (welfare and social services) still averaged only 36 kopecks per head.

On the matter of mandatory city payments for troop maintenance and other responsibilities unrelated to the city economy, the reviewer states that I do not "mention that such expenditures averaged about 10 percent of municipal budgets nationwide." However, this statistic does not alter the point made in the essay (pp. 183–86) that these payments constituted a substantial and unnecessary burden for city governments already faced with insufficient sources of income. Even in Khar'kov, where significant developmental progress can be noted after the electoral triumph of the "progressives" in 1910, the city spent roughly 12 percent of its budget for troop maintenance (1910–12), about the same percent for health and sanitation, only 1 percent for public care, and nothing at all for low cost housing, rent subsidies, or planning.

Finally, on a rather insignificant point, I stand by the statistic on Vitebsk at the turn of the century, a statistic which is meant to refer to publicly financed schools.