

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

in theory he was a partisan of private land property for peasants, but "in practice I doubt whether it should be given to them."

The authors review Witte's achievements in negotiating a huge loan from France, which staved off government bankruptcy; the organization of elections to the State Duma, "with considerable efficiency and with a minimum of either disorder or government interference"; his influence on the drafting of Fundamental State Laws (sanctioned by the tsar on April 23), which "were a constitution just as surely as were the constitutions of The Netherlands, Denmark, and Prussia in 1848, 1849, and 1850, respectively" (p. 290); and his legislative program for the Duma, "modest and incomplete" yet "sensible and forward-looking."

In a perceptive concluding evaluation of Witte's "evasive" and "enigmatic" personality, the authors opine that the problem of combining order and basic political reform in the face of emotional and irrational forces then present "may have been insoluble."

The text, heavily documented (821 references to sources), is followed by documentary appendixes and a twenty-one-page bibliography, including some unpublished material found by Professor Thompson in Soviet and American archives. By way of minor nit-picking one may note that contrary to the authors' assertion, Trotsky was in 1905 a member of the Russian Social Democratic party, although, like Plekhanov, he did not classify himself as either a Menshevik or a Bolshevik. Also, listing grand dukes in the index under their patronymics only ("Aleksandro-vich") is unenlightening, though very amusing.

To conclude, this is an important, competent, and well-balanced book dealing with a turning point in Russian history, when the government was headed by a remarkably gifted yet very unbalanced statesman.

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SOCIALISM AND THE GREAT WAR: THE COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL. By *Georges Haupt*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972. x, 270 pp. \$17.00.

Where did the socialists go wrong? An older school casually disposed of the question in this manner: in 1914, nationalism proved stronger than socialist internationalism, period. Today, we can no more tolerate this facile observation (one can hardly call it analysis) than we can accept the old charge that evil munition-makers planned the great catastrophe in order to line their silken pockets. We have begun to understand that nationalism was much *less* strong than we used to think; that there was some chance that Russia, properly mollified, might have let Serbia go under, thus at least postponing the disaster; that few Frenchmen had forgotten Alsace-Lorraine, but also that even fewer (in 1914) wanted to die to get the provinces back; and so on. But we still do not know precisely why socialists in France and Germany failed so miserably to exercise at least moral suasion and, in the summer, outright obstruction.

The ghosts of the First International haunted the Second. Stung by the incessant anarchist *and conservative* criticism of Marx's "general staff," the founders of the Second International waited eleven years—until 1900—to found the International Socialist Bureau, and then they gave it no power. There was no mechanism through which socialists could act quickly and decisively. This does not mean that