

In his new book Professor Lincoln examines the preliminary stage of the reforms introduced by Tsar Alexander II in the early years of his rule. The author's primary argument is that it was a combination of two factors that made it possible for the reforms to be carried through. Firstly, Russia's international position had grown steadily weaker over the century (a fact which the Crimean War defeat made once more abundantly plain), and, secondly, there existed a group of "enlightened bureaucrats" who in the 1840's and 1850's had made themselves thoroughly familiar with the country's situation. The latter element in particular can explain "how the Russian bureaucracy, which contemporaries and historians have condemned as ponderous, inefficient, and corrupt, could have produced such a vast corpus of reform legislation in the space of about five years".

SMITH, S. A. *Red Petrograd. Revolution in the Factories 1917-1918.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, London, New York 1983. x, 347 pp. £ 25.00.

This interesting book (originally a Birmingham doctorate thesis) concentrates almost exclusively on the factory workers in Petrograd and their struggles on the shop-floor. The author argues that in 1917 the working class in Petrograd was roughly divided into two groups: "on the one hand, were peasant workers, women workers and workers new to industry, who comprised around 60% of the workforce; on the other, were older, proletarianised, skilled, male workers." It was especially the latter group that built the factory committees and trade unions after the February Revolution. According to Dr Smith Bolshevik agitation was not quite as important in the achievement of work-based organizations as it is often supposed to have been.

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