

attempts at ideological explanations of War Communism only as a means to discredit opponents who resisted the introduction of NEP; but Gimpel'son does not explain the reasons for abandoning War Communism or the nature of this opposition. Consequently, his interpretation of Lenin's remarks remains merely interesting conjecture.

In fairness to the author, one should note that he never claims to have exhausted all questions or to have provided final answers. Thus, despite its problems, the easy-flowing question-and-answer style, the comprehensive essay evaluating Soviet studies on the topic, and the succinct coverage of major issues influencing attempts at interpretation render this book a significant contribution to the historiography of War Communism.

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THE SOCIAL PRELUDE TO STALINISM. By *Roger Pethybridge*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974. vii, 343 pp. \$18.95.

It is time to recognize and deplore the dearth of authentic social studies in our scholarly literature about Soviet history and politics. Most of our scholarship over the years, and even today, is more aptly termed regime studies, focusing on high politics to the exclusion of society and social history. There are various reasons, good and not so good, for this, ranging from the kinds of sources that have been available to Western scholars, to the prolonged (and unfortunate) hegemony of the totalitarianism approach, which tended to explain all Soviet political and social development as a function of the ideological and organizational nature of the Communist regime. Whatever the reasons, the situation is lamentable. Until social history and analysis have taken their place in our scholarship, our factual and interpretative understanding of the Soviet experience must remain elliptical and inadequate.

This perspective is the great virtue of Roger Pethybridge's important, though uneven, study of Soviet political and social development between 1917 and 1929. While not seriously disputing conventional explanations of Stalinism, which he rightly regards as the "main political problem of the Soviet era," Pethybridge argues that these explanations overemphasize political factors while obscuring social ones. Making a persuasive case for social history in the introductory chapter, he centers on the interaction between Bolshevik programmatic ideas and Soviet social reality. His main purpose is to analyze several "social ingredients" that contributed to the coming of Stalinism.

Pethybridge's treatment is most valuable when he deals with specific aspects of social history. Three of his six chapters are particularly noteworthy in this respect. One analyzes the far-reaching impact of the Russian Civil War on the development of Soviet society and the political system, a critically important but virtually unstudied question. Another examines the dimensions of illiteracy after 1917 as they affected Bolshevik programs for social change. The third studies the social origins of the Soviet bureaucracy that grew up after 1917 and became a central feature of Stalinism. Here, and elsewhere, Pethybridge deepens our analysis by inverting the customary focus, as illustrated by his approach to the bureaucracy: "Scholars have dwelt on the coercive impact of Soviet bureaucracy on society once it had reached its peak of power under Stalin's control. Instead

of proving this over again, we wish to point out the reverse influence (that of society on bureaucracy) at work during NEP."

The Social Prelude to Stalinism is, then, a book to be welcomed and read carefully for its fresh perspective and new departures. It is, however, also a book that disappoints in important ways. Not the least are too many carelessly written or poorly conceived generalizations. Are we to take seriously, for example, the statement that Stalin's exploitation of the peasantry in the 1930s was "a result of the economic policy formulated by E. Preobrazhensky" (p. 103), that there was a "monolithic Bolshevik party" (p. 291) between 1917 and 1929, or, presumably as interpretation, that with Stalin's purges the "authoritarian streak that has run through utopian thought in history turned into stark totalitarian reality" (p. 314)? Pethybridge's treatment of Bolshevik programmatic thinking is especially disappointing, if only because the considerable diversity of ideas inside the pre-Stalinist party is too often reduced misleadingly to "a single theory" (p. 25), "continuing fanaticism" (p. 6), or simply "utopian" (*passim*).

There are larger interpretative problems as well. The prevailing scholarly view has long been that Stalinism was the logical, even inevitable, outcome of the Bolshevik revolution. This assumption has rested in part on interpreting War Communism as primarily ideological rather than military in origin, and NEP, a plainly non-Stalinist period and set of official policies, as merely an impractical interlude or retreat in party history. Pethybridge accepts these questionable interpretations, but in doing so he raises dubious arguments against scholars such as Carr who have explained War Communism differently, and scarcely acknowledges the sizable body of recent Western and Soviet scholarship that gives a quite different picture of NEP.

Indeed, despite his own warnings against the "dangers of Whig history" (pp. 90 and 304), Pethybridge apparently sees Stalinism as the necessary and inexorable outcome of Bolshevism in power, the result of either a "vast gulf between small-scale economic realities and large-scale industrial ambitions" (p. 197), Lenin's "voluntarist step of a political *coup d'état* in October 1917" (p. 313), or both. Anyway, his flatly dismissive treatment of the ideas, potential, and defenders of NEP (pp. 63, 113, 197–98, 229, 239–41) suggests that there was no Bolshevik alternative to the cataclysm of 1929.

To be fair, this remains the majority view of Stalinism and early Soviet history in our scholarship. Nonetheless, far too much opposing evidence and scholarship has appeared in recent years to accept it so uncritically, or to conclude, as Pethybridge does, that Stalinism's "political, economic and unique personal qualities have been fully analyzed" (p. 302).

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JOSEPH STALIN: MAN AND LEGEND. By *Ronald Hingley*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974. xxii, 482 pp. \$15.00.

The author, in his preface, tells how his biography of Stalin differs from other recent approaches. Unlike Professor Tucker, Dr. Hingley's emphasis does not lie in the ideological sphere; nor is he concerned with combining a biography of Stalin with a general history of the period, as has been done by Professor Ulam. Dr. Hingley is interested, rather, in the personality of Stalin and in the legend