

ROMAN SZPORLUK

Pokrovsky's *Selected Works*

IZBRANNYE PROIZVEDENIIA, 4 vols. By *M. N. Pokrovsky*. General editors: *M. N. Tikhomirov* (vols. 1 and 2), *V. M. Khvostov*, *L. G. Beskrovny* (vols. 3 and 4), and *O. D. Sokolov*. Introduction by *O. D. Sokolov*. Editors of volumes: *L. V. Cherepnin* (vol. 1), *L. G. Beskrovny* (vol. 2), *O. D. Sokolov* (vol. 3), *L. G. Beskrovny* and *L. M. Ivanov* (vol. 4). Moscow: "Mysl'," 1965–67. Indexes of names and places in all volumes. Vol. 1: 725 pp. 2.00 rubles. Vol. 2: 664 pp. 2.00 rubles. Vol. 3: 671 pp. 2.40 rubles. Vol. 4: 639 pp. 2.40 rubles.

In 1932, shortly after Pokrovsky's death, a committee was appointed in Moscow to prepare the publication of his complete works. Pokrovsky was soon condemned, however, and the project was abandoned before it had been properly begun. For many years none of Pokrovsky's works were published in the Soviet Union. The edition under review is his first appearance in the USSR after a break of thirty years. Of its four volumes, *Russian History from the Earliest Times* (*Russkaia istoriia s drevneishikh vremen*) forms volumes 1 and 2; *Russian History in the Briefest Outline* (*Russkaia istoriia v samom szhatom ocherke*), volume 3; and volume 4 is made up of shorter pieces. The complete edition opens with a long introduction by O. D. Sokolov.

There are several questions with which the reader might approach Pokrovsky's *Selected Works*. How representative is this selection of the writer's known works, and how well has it been presented? Does it add to the specialist's knowledge of Pokrovsky and his time by making public some previously unknown material or offering a new interpretation of the already known? Inasmuch as three of the four volumes of the *Selected Works* consist of Pokrovsky's histories of Russia which have been published many times before, it may be proper to compare the latest edition of each with its predecessors.

Russian History from the Earliest Times, Pokrovsky's most ambitious and most important work, was published for the first time in 1910–13, in five volumes (ten books). Books 9 and 10 were confiscated immediately after their appearance and were destroyed so diligently that only one Russian library appears to have an original copy of book 10, and only two or three have those of book 9. The reissue put out in 1913–15, also marked as a first edition, was in fact the second revised (i.e., censored) edition. Originally the *History* was a collaborative effort of Pokrovsky and N. M. Nikolsky (who wrote the chapters

on church and religion); it also had an introductory chapter (prehistory) by V. K. Agafonov and illustrations with accompanying notes by V. N. Storozhev. The original text which had been cut by the censors was restored in the third edition (1920). The fourth edition (1922) omitted all of the text not written by Pokrovsky. The present edition of *History of Russia* is based on the one last seen by Pokrovsky (the seventh, 1924–25); the editors also consulted the edition published after his death (the eighth, 1933–34). The notes provided by the editors contain passages from the first three editions that the author later omitted. The editors have done an admirable job of checking and expanding Pokrovsky's references and providing additional notes. Pokrovsky's infrequent and all-too-concise notes appear at the bottom of the pages, those by the editors at the back of the volume. In those (rather frequent) cases where the editors' disagreement with Pokrovsky is particularly strong, they put their objections in footnotes under Pokrovsky's words.

Brief History was first published in 1920; the last version that Pokrovsky saw appeared in 1931. The latter text is reprinted in *Selected Works*, and has been edited as carefully as the earlier volumes. At the end of volume 3 the editors have placed those passages which Pokrovsky rewrote or deleted in his last version of *Brief History*. Thus the reader can easily check what Pokrovsky's revisions amounted to. (For the most interesting examples see volume 3, pp. 618–23.) The editors have also reprinted in full Pokrovsky's introduction to the tenth edition (written in 1931), in which he restated and defended his interpretation of Russian absolutism (3:616–17). Unfortunately the preface to the first edition has not been included despite its great interest. Was this omission made because Pokrovsky here had described his work as a companion volume to Bukharin's *ABC of Communism*?

The appearance of Pokrovsky's two histories of Russia in an excellent edition presumably is a welcome event for the Soviet reader. It should also be greeted by those readers abroad who have had access to the English versions published earlier. *A History of Russia from the Earliest Times to the Rise of Commercial Capitalism* (first published in 1931, reprinted 1966) was an authorized translation by Jesse D. Clarkson and M. R. M. Griffiths of the first two volumes of *Russkaia istoriia s drevneishikh vremen*. However, following the author's wish, this translation omitted certain sections of the original, most notably the entire chapter entitled "The Struggle for the Ukraine." Pokrovsky was dissatisfied with certain parts of his work and wanted to have them deleted: for example, he had asked Clarkson also to omit the final chapter in volume 4 (which to this reviewer is one of the most interesting in the whole book). Pokrovsky's desire for textual revisions was, moreover, connected with his general conception of the projected Clarkson edition. He wanted that work to constitute a three-volume survey of Russian history

that would combine the material from both of his Russian-language histories. Shortly before his death on April 12, 1932, Pokrovsky wrote to Professor Clarkson that he was "firmly determined" to complete the last part of his *Brief History*, covering 1917, by the forthcoming fifteenth anniversary of the October Revolution. As volume 1 of the English translation had brought the story to "the rise of commercial capitalism," Pokrovsky further suggested in his letter (published in *Selected Works*, 3:613–14) that the projected volumes 2 and 3 be called "History of Russia to the Rise of Industrial Capitalism" and "The Fall of the Feudal System and the Proletarian Revolution." Volume 2 was to contain the remaining parts of the older work, and volume 3 the final part of *Brief History* (1890s–1917). (They were never published.) Thus the texts hitherto available of the English and Russian versions of the *History of Russia* do not coincide; in addition the latest Soviet edition has an impressive critical apparatus lacking in the English version. Similarly, the high editorial standards of the latest *Brief History* should make it valuable even to those who have read the Mirsky translation (1933, reissued 1968).

Volume 4 contains a selection of articles on Lenin, the history of the revolutionary movement, historiography, education and scholarship, and the archives. With the exception of foreign policy this selection reflects all of the main subjects on which Pokrovsky wrote. The sections on historiography and the archives are fairly representative of Pokrovsky's views; the section on education is also valuable, though Pokrovsky's statements on the teaching of history should have been included.

The selection of articles on Lenin and the history of the revolutionary movement is much less satisfactory. The editors have failed to present fully Pokrovsky's view of the Russian Revolution. Indeed, they do not seem to be sure what they think Pokrovsky's view was. On the one hand, the introduction notes disapprovingly that Pokrovsky considered the February Revolution to have been already socialist; on the other hand, with equal disapproval, it quotes Pokrovsky's statement that Russia was not ready for socialism even in October 1917. These two positions are not irreconcilable, of course, but the editors neither disclose the missing links in Pokrovsky's argument nor—which would have been preferable—do they let Pokrovsky speak for himself. Pokrovsky wrote many articles on the 1917 Revolution and its antecedents, but for these subjects the reader will have to refer back to earlier collections of Pokrovsky's articles, such as *Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia* or *Imperialistskaia voina*, or to the very interesting and important *Ocherk istorii revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Rossii XIX i XX vv.* (Two different editions of the latter appeared in 1924 and 1927; according to the editors shortly before his death Pokrovsky was preparing the third.) *Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1st ed. 1929, 2nd ed. 1931) includes, for example, the anti-Trotsky essay entitled

"The October Revolution as Depicted by Its Contemporaries," which is praised very highly in the introduction but has not been included in volume 4. Also missing are Pokrovsky's articles "Lenin in the History of the Russian Revolution," "Lenin as a Revolutionary Leader," and "Lenin and Foreign Policy."

For Pokrovsky's polemical writings the reader will still have to consult *Istoricheskaia nauka i bor'ba klassov* (published posthumously in two volumes, Moscow and Leningrad, 1933). In many ways it is fuller and more interesting than volume 4 of *Selected Works*. *Istoricheskaia nauka* contains the Pokrovsky side of the Trotsky-Pokrovsky controversy about the nature of Russian autocracy (1922) and also several later articles against Trotsky, among them a review of Trotsky's *My Life*. None of these has been included in *Selected Works*. However, if the 1933 set is more interesting than the 1967 one, it is also less reliable and occasionally misleading. The reader of the anti-Trotsky articles, as reprinted in *Istoricheskaia nauka*, will not know, for instance, that Pokrovsky did in fact agree with Trotsky on some important issues and had openly said so. In the 1933 edition all statements to this effect were omitted together with the word "Comrade" before Trotsky's name.

While preceding editions practiced distortion, the main shortcoming of the edition under review is narrow selection. With the exception of *History of Russia from the Earliest Times*, the sizable corpus of Pokrovsky's pre-1917 work is represented by just two historiographical articles. His early works include essays on the medieval history of Western Europe written for the book of readings edited by Paul Vinogradov (1896–99); articles on the society, politics, and foreign relations of Russia published in the *Granat Istoriia Rossii v deviatnadsatom veke* (1907–10); the pamphlet *Ekonomicheskii materializm*, in fact an attack on economic materialism, which was published in 1906 and promptly confiscated and destroyed by authorities (just two or three copies of the original issue have been preserved in Russia); numerous biographical articles in the *Granat Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*; and, finally, articles and reviews in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and émigré newspapers and journals. Regrettably, Pokrovsky's articles on foreign policy have also been omitted, and that great series of diplomatic documents inaugurated and for a time also coedited by Pokrovsky, *International Relations in the Age of Imperialism* (*Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia v epokhu imperializma*), is not even mentioned in the long introduction to *Selected Works*. One would have also liked to find in *Selected Works* some of those prefaces and introductory essays which Pokrovsky wrote for his editions of documents on Russian history from Pugachev and the Decembrists through Alexander III and Pobedonostsev to the 1905 revolution, World War I, and the Bolshevik revolution. Under Pokrovsky's leadership a generation of archivists and researchers participated in a comprehensive program for the publication of historical sources. In trying

to explain these omissions this reviewer is inclined to suspect that the editors wished to avoid any censoring of Pokrovsky. If for ideological or political reasons some pieces could not be published in full, the editors chose not to include them at all. Perhaps they hope to put out a "supplementary" volume one day when the standards of orthodoxy become less rigid.

Another, rather minor, shortcoming of the *Selected Works* is the exclusion of the "chronological tables" which Pokrovsky had added to his *Brief History*, following Lenin's advice. (Similar tables were later appended to the longer history as well.) According to the editors the tables were superfluous because Pokrovsky's work was not to be used as a textbook. If so, why have they so often taken the trouble to correct Pokrovsky's ideologically erroneous statements? Could not the mature readers for whom the edition was addressed (fifteen thousand copies, while Kliuchevsky was printed in seventy-five thousand) be allowed to form their own opinion?

In an edition like this the reader would also have appreciated a good bibliography of works on Pokrovsky and by him (to supplement the fullest but incomplete and dated bibliography in *Istorik-marksist*, 1932, no. 1-2). But perhaps such a bibliography might cause embarrassment: those who wrote on Pokrovsky between 1934 and 1956 may prefer to have their contributions forgotten.

To what extent does the publication of *Selected Works* enrich or revise the present state of knowledge on Pokrovsky and Soviet historiography in general? First of all, as is evident from Sokolov's long introduction, quite a few works of Pokrovsky survive in manuscript. Sokolov has relied heavily on Pokrovsky's unpublished autobiographies, notebooks, and letters. He has quoted Pokrovsky's recollections on his intellectual interests as a young student, his involvement with the "legal Marxists" and *Osvobozhdentsy*, his participation in the 1905 revolution, and his relations with Lenin both then and subsequently in exile. On the latter subject several accounts by Pokrovsky have been preserved, including a memoir now at the Institute of History of the USSR Academy of Sciences. Sokolov has also quoted several times from a *zapisnaia knizhka* now at the Museum of the Revolution and from letters written after 1917. (Among the latter there is a revealing piece in which Pokrovsky assessed his own scholarly stature and achievement: it was written in 1929 when Pokrovsky was nominated for membership in the academy.) On February 5, 1931, Pokrovsky wrote a letter "to the Secretaries of the Central Committee and the Chairman of the Sovnarkom" in which he defended his historical ideas from what he regarded as unjustified attacks. Sokolov has quoted a passage from this document, but there can be no doubt that publication of the entire letter would help a great deal to clarify the question of Pokrovsky's

frequently alleged change of view during the last year or two of his life. From another source, A. I. Gukovsky's article in *Voprosy istorii* (nos. 8 and 9, 1968), we learn that Pokrovsky's correspondence with his prerevolutionary Moscow publishers has also been preserved. Clearly, there was material available for publication in an edition like this. Indeed, the original intention of the editors, as stated in volume 1, was to include previously unpublished texts. By the time they had reached volume 4, however, the editors concluded there was nothing new in these manuscripts after all.

The introduction, a sixty-six page survey of Pokrovsky's life and writings, shows that its author, Sokolov, knows the subject thoroughly. Few scholars seem to have had equally open access to the Pokrovsky papers. In the past ten years or so articles on Pokrovsky by Sokolov have appeared regularly in Soviet historical journals, and a full-length monograph by him will come out, one hopes, in the near future.¹ The introduction adds relatively little new to what Sokolov has written earlier. It may be possible to cite new facts and draw new interpretations from the as yet unpublished work, but the introduction has not done enough of this. There are still certain periods in Pokrovsky's life that have been relatively neglected but which are particularly deserving of study. The early years before Pokrovsky became first an "economic materialist" and then a Marxist is one such period; the émigré years in France (1909–17) is another. During this time Pokrovsky broke with Lenin, associated with the Vpered Group and collaborated with Trotsky (he wrote for Trotsky's *Pravda* and the Trotskyist St. Petersburg *Bor'ba* and published jointly with Trotsky *A Jubilee of Our Shame*).

Pokrovsky's last years still remain obscure. One would like to know more about who were Mikhail Nikolaevich's friends and enemies in those days. Sokolov's introduction is even less informative on this period than some of his earlier articles. Finally, although this may be asking for too much, a Soviet scholar should undertake a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the "Pokrovsky Affair": his condemnation and rehabilitation, their causes, course, and meaning. Pokrovsky was not only a historian but also a major political figure: a study of his work in Narkompros and the various Soviet scholarly and educational institutions remains to be written.

A biography of Pokrovsky is one desideratum, a fuller study of his works on history is another (even if inseparable from the first). In particular, the earliest works, written when Pokrovsky still belonged to "academic scholarship," and those on international politics and diplomacy seem to this reviewer to have been insufficiently examined. Among other things Pokrovsky was the editor of many collections of primary sources. Regrettably, until the

1. As this manuscript was about to be sent to press, copies of the book reached this country: *M. N. Pokrovskii i sovetskaiia istoricheskaiia nauka* (Moscow: "Mysl'," 1970).

present day Soviet and Western students have neglected also this important part of his work.

One of the preconditions of successful research is scholarly and comprehensive publication of Pokrovsky's works, somewhat on the pattern of the work under review. A twelve or fifteen-volume edition of Pokrovsky's writings is not needed, not to mention his complete works, which would be unbearably repetitious. Three or four volumes of published and unpublished works in addition to those four volumes already published, however, would be a valuable contribution. They might cover topics such as the history of the revolutionary movement, the world war and the revolution, international relations, the revolution's cultural and educational policies, and, finally, Pokrovsky's diaries, autobiographies, and correspondence. It is sometimes said that Pokrovsky has been—or is being—rehabilitated in the Soviet Union. The only way to “rehabilitate” a writer is to make his writings available again, to bring them back into *nauchnyi oborot*. By this standard, *Selected Works* represents a major, but only a first, step.