

the definitive modern edition of the Marx-Engels *Werke*, rather than the bowdlerized (and also translated) Soviet edition, would have cleared up a few points that remain suspended in indecision.

WOODFORD McCLELLAN  
*University of Virginia*

THE RUSSIAN CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERIMENT: GOVERNMENT AND DUMA, 1907–1914. By *Geoffrey A. Hosking*. New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1973. ix, 281 pp. \$18.50.

Professor Hosking's compact work offers an impressive quantity of new material on the State Duma from the Soviet State Archives. Particularly notable are the accounts of the progress of the land reform and small zemstvo bills, the naval staff and western zemstvo crises, and crises other than the Rasputin affair in the fading years of the Old Regime. The author also raises some basic questions on the movement of Russian society in the last decade before the Revolution.

The study centers on the Octobrist Party as the key element for cooperation with the government. Here Hosking is at his best in presenting an excellent vignette of the policy, composition, and position of the Octobrists. The core of the party emerges as a relatively conservative-liberal element, constitutionalist and even parliamentary in its maneuvers and intent as it faced a firm rightist stand from the throne—particularly on the powers of parliament. The weak point in its program was its Great Russian priorities. Its fundamental weakness stemmed from the ideological and structural looseness of its disparate membership.

Hosking holds that this lack of cohesion and the opposition or indecision of the zemstvo nobility on basic reforms, abetted by Stolypin's emphasis on the individual landholder in dissolving the commune, doomed the June 3 system and the chances of promoting reform—even without the world war. The evidence undoubtedly indicates that Stolypin's effort to create an operative majority in the Duma failed, but it does not necessarily show that this spelled the end of social reform without the stresses of war. Stolypin's tactics surely offered lessons for astute successors, and they emanated from special circumstances which would not inevitably be repeated. The growing industrial and educational plant, along with urbanization, could profoundly affect the class and bureaucratic structure. Acute crises arising from the disregard or insufficiency of the law on basic matters, especially the land question, would certainly quicken efforts toward solutions, such as a fuller understanding of the process of enclosure with an emphasis on communal separation and technological improvement. Stolypin must have known that in the long history of enclosure it had always succeeded with the growth of nearby urban markets. Then, too, the Duma was learning parliamentary skills such as the manipulation of the budget for the foreign ministry and armed services. Stolypin was properly parliamentary in resigning in the face of a parliamentary defeat. Above all, there was the gradual and insidious need for compromise—a rare commodity in the Russian political scene. After all, the entire time span concerned was eleven years, in the wake of six centuries of autocratic statism.

ALFRED LEVIN  
*Kent State University*