

study; the remaining eleven chapters were apparently not completed. *Vstrechi s Leninym* was to be included as an appendix.

The portrait of Lenin, to quote Poletaev, is still *nedorisovannyi*. Some of its basic contours, however, have already been etched sharply and clearly by the masterful hand of Valentinov, to whom we are greatly indebted for this latest sketch of the Bolshevik leader—a sketch which, like his earlier ones, constitutes a solid achievement and a work of art.

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VIOLENCE DANS LA VIOLENCE: LE DÉBAT BAKOUNINE-NEČAEV.

By *Michael Confino*. Bibliothèque Socialiste, 24. Paris: François Maspero, 1973. 212 pp. Paper.

When that perverse old reactionary Dostoevsky created Peter Verkhovensky, little did he know of the trouble he was storing up for the poor devils in the history business. So strange and complex was the model, Sergei Nechaev, that the literary image—never meant as the man *wie er eigentlich gewesen ist*—has come to stand for him. Why, even today, does a novelist still speak for the historian? Well, why not? The reality of Dostoevsky (and Camus) is no less true than the historian's version. But for those who relish the *variety* of reality, there remains the nagging desire to know the facts.

The documents that Michael Confino has assembled are useful, pertinent, and timely. They include the "Catechism of a Revolutionary" and letters of Bakunin, Lopatin, and others. Some have appeared in print before, others come from the archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale, none are really new. Only Confino's intelligent editing and his ninety-page introduction make them come alive and form a pattern. The result is an excellent statement of the Nechaev myth. Confino has outlined many of the key problems and has made some perceptive associations that escaped previous investigators. When coupled with his own previous studies (editions, rather) in *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, this new discussion of the Bakunin-Nechaev quarrel stands as easily the best available, and Confino's analysis of the "Catechism" is both new and convincing.

On the question of Nechaev's spectacular and, so far as anyone can determine, largely unmerited rise in the revolutionary movement, Confino tends to go along with the old school in citing the "hate, energy, and action" that impressed some of Nechaev's contemporaries. Of *course* the revolutionary Oblomovs (if that is not already a contradiction) marveled at Nechaev's energy; having little themselves—they were too lazy even to hate—they gravitated toward a man who shouted and waved his arms and pulled guns out of his coat. But those Oblomovs, who made Nechaev, were a minority. Confino tends to slide over the extremely hostile reactions of the old "Ruble Society" (including Lopatin, who virtually destroyed Nechaev in Geneva in May 1870), of Zasluch, Mikhailovsky, and many others.

There are a few other problems, all minor and none able to detract from the value of this excellent study. Closer attention to better sources would have saved Confino from making some misleading comments on the 1869 translation into Russian of the *Communist Manifesto*. There are elements in the Nechaev-Liubavin episode over the translation of *Capital* that Confino does not discuss; and use of

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.

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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.

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