

of the last Romanov tsars is also a history of Russia in those years. This book may be profitably read, especially by newcomers to the field, as a stylized chronicle of Russian history centered on the imperial family and the court. As history it stops somewhat short at points where sophisticated readers might expect some fascinating insights. We learn all too little about the inner life and psychology of the autocrats. What better opportunity could there be of observing exalted men under extreme stress or of gaining a deeper understanding of the unspeakable tragedies of supreme—and mostly unwanted—responsibility in a country so difficult to govern as the Russian Empire?

Even commonplace historical subjects are treated casually or passed over. Reading this volume one keeps wondering about the politics of autocracy. How did the tsars effect basic changes such as the emancipation of the serfs? How did they cope with the ceaseless wheeling and dealing that took place behind the bland façade of monolithic unity? Although the author devotes more than a third of his book to the reign of Nicholas II, he has little to say about one of its most crucial aspects, the pseudoconstitutional phase, 1905–14. He does so in the clichés of the time rather than in the light of more recent analysis. Nor do we learn much about the complex relationship between the tsar and Stolypin. The author seems unaware of the recent scholarly discussion over sociopolitical trends in Russia before 1914; he never even mentions the disturbances of July 1914.

Harcave implies in his conclusion that the collapse of the empire was caused by the incompetence of its rulers, especially the last one. Had Nicholas II “been endowed with administrative competence, with diplomatic prudence in the handling of affairs in the Far East, and with luck, he might have avoided that first fateful loss of footing—in the Revolution of 1905” (p. 480). If there had been no first revolution, there would have been no second revolution, and all would have been well for Russia and the world.

This book was obviously intended for the same common reader who has been so engrossed in the story of *Nicholas and Alexandra*. While lauding its combination of popular orientation and soundness of scholarship, scholars may yet deplore the lack of the subtler insights into the dynamics of Russian development available in current professional literature. Harcave’s bibliography, incidentally, reflects the same orientation. In his eagerness to work from the sources he has paid little heed to recent monographic studies and reinterpretations of Russian developments.

THEODORE H. VON LAUE
Washington University, St. Louis

RUSSIA UNDER THE LAST TSAR. Edited by *Theofanis George Stavrou*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969. viii, 265 pp. \$7.50, cloth. \$2.45, paper.

Graduate students cramming for comprehensive examinations are always on the lookout for shortcuts to that glib expertise they are expected to acquire, and Stavrou’s little book will do quite nicely for the purpose. Most of these eight essays (originally lectures) will give the enterprising student enough material to enable him to sound as if he has read the authors at greater depth.

Three essays—Arthur Mendel’s, Thomas Riha’s, and Theodore Von Laue’s—bear on the question of Russia’s constitutional development: was tsarist Russia’s progress toward Western, constitutional government interrupted by World War

I and/or the personal deficiencies of Nicholas II, or was this progress ephemeral to begin with? Mendel focuses on the question itself, Riha gives a brief description of Russia's constitutional development from 1905 to 1917, and Von Laue addresses himself to the general problems of industrialization. The discussions are not without value, but one wonders, in this age of rhetoric about cross-cultural studies, when the social sciences will begin to produce scholars who can get beyond the question of whether a non-Western society has a chance of being like us ("optimistic" view) or is doomed to be not like us ("pessimistic" view).

Robert Byrnes's essay on Pobedonostsev offers not only a concise summary of his earlier works on Pobedonostsev's thought but also a very good statement regarding the distinguishing features of Russian conservatism. It is regrettable that he does not go further and try to account for these features. Donald Treadgold offers the novel (to me) idea that Russian radical thought was losing its influence in 1894–1917—a useful and perhaps even seminal idea in the form he has given it, but not yet fully stated or well supported in this short essay. Alexander Vucinich offers valuable new insights and information on the ups and downs of science and Russia's educational institutions under Nicholas II. Disappointingly, he does not consider soil science, one of the fields in which Russians led the world. Roderick McGrew discusses the general outlines of foreign policy in 1894–1914, indicating that much of Russia's difficulty sprang from the problems she faced rather than the inadequacies of her statesmen. He is, I think, largely correct in what he says about Nicholas II's reign, but he sometimes treats geopolitical necessities as if they were objective entities instead of scholarly generalizations for making sense out of history. Some of his paragraphs could be used to make a case for Switzerland's inevitable yearning to push toward the sea. Gleb Struve makes it clear that he likes the poetry of Nicholas II's time, but his essay will have little meaning for the student who, like myself, does not comprehend the isms of literary history.

GEORGE L. YANEY
University of Maryland

EDUCATION AND THE STATE IN TSARIST RUSSIA. By *Patrick L. Alston*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969. ix, 322 pp. \$8.50.

This volume is a welcome addition to an all-too-brief list of modern works dealing primarily with *education* in the Russian Empire. Political and social histories of the Romanov regime are numerous, and many current analyses of Soviet education look back at least as far as the 1860s in order to establish a better perspective. But comprehensive studies of pedagogical policy, thought, and practice in tsarist Russia are rare indeed.

Unfortunately, a brief review of this important contribution is insufficient to deal at length with even its major strengths and weaknesses; therefore, only samplings can be offered. First among the positive aspects may well be the translation and interpretation of hundreds of documentary sources unavailable to most students of the subject. A second value is the attractive literary style in which these elements are presented (always cautious and scholarly, yet never pedantic), and the excellent selection, organization, and arrangement of a stupendous quantity of material. Lastly, several of the author's views demand serious attention, particularly his conclusions that "in general education tsardom was working hard, productively, and intelligently at the moment when military disaster retired it from history" and