

NEP to general collectivization. Lewin maintains that the leaders of neither Left nor Right favored the Stalin collectivization plan (indeed neither side had shown great interest in collective farms either in policy or in theoretical discussions). He writes in conclusion: "The spectacular 'great turn' at the end of 1929, and the well-nigh incredible venture of the winter of 1929–30, were the culmination of a chain-reaction which had been set off by the 'procurement crisis' of 1928. This crisis, in its turn, had stemmed from the interaction of three major factors: the overthrow of NEP, the structure of the Soviet State and the personality of its leader" (p. 516). Lewin illustrates in detail Stalin's arbitrary exercise of power during 1928 to secure peasant grain and financial contributions to the state. Lewin contends that the procurements crisis of late 1927 and early 1928 might have been handled by raising prices and/or by imports (measures adopted later anyway), and that the forcible procurements initiated by Stalin, accompanied by a reign of terror in the villages reminiscent of the Civil War, engendered a still more serious production crisis, along with widespread social and political upheavals, which then "committed [the government] to policies which went far beyond anything that even its most determined leaders would have wished" (p. 250).

The *smychka* had indeed been the precarious foundation of both economic and social stability in the 1920s, and once it was shattered it seemed—at least to Stalin—that there was no alternative but to proceed with forcible collectivization, a policy to which Stalin was committed anyway as the sole means of securing independent grain supplies for the government to relieve it of dependence upon the peasantry. What followed, then, was a brutally applied policy of collectivization that was ill-advised economically and almost wholly unprepared for administratively. Lewin adds a good deal to our specific understanding of that process and its consequences in the final section of this excellent volume.

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THE RUSSO-GERMAN WAR, 1941–45. By *Albert Seaton*. New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1971. xix, 628 pp. \$15.00.

This thorough study by a British colonel professionally familiar with both German and Soviet military establishments may well be the best one-volume account of the Soviet-German campaigns and the strategic thinking on both sides of the front. The lay reader will often be more interested in the author's suggestive opinions regarding the reasons for successes and failures than in the abundant technical detail; he will also do well to read the political sections with some caution.

One finding implicit in the account is the extent to which every one of the major protagonists—Germany, Russia, Britain, the United States, and Japan—suffered from grievous miscalculations and poor intelligence. In the Nazi case, to be sure, Hitler probably would not have been deterred from attacking the Soviet Union even if better intelligence had been at his disposal. In essence Seaton finds that Hitler lost the war when, by political misjudgment, he embarked on a two-front war. Though he was not alone in underestimating the enemy and therefore engaging in unrealistic planning and in attacking with inadequate forces and resources, Hitler alone was responsible for the defeat at Stalingrad and for the rigid insistence on holding the ground, which cost Germany the initiative in the war. More questionable is the author's inference that both Britain and the Soviet Union

owed their survival to geography and climate rather than to their own endeavors.

Regarding Stalin, Seaton concludes, "like Hitler, he had no sense of what was practicable, and for this his lack of military education and experience was responsible." Yet his overall judgment is more positive: "The Soviet High Command did make errors, some of them grievous ones . . . , and many of these were probably due to Stalin's dominance of the *Stavka*. Yet . . . the war direction of the GKO and the *Stavka* was in many ways superior to that of the German OKW and OKH." More specifically he says that "Soviet war leadership in 1941 and 1942 was generally better than the German at the top, but deteriorated rapidly through the lower echelons of command" (pp. 84–85).

By contrast with his military analysis, some of Colonel Seaton's comments about peoples and politics strike this reader as both flawed and superfluous. They also reveal some of his likes and dislikes (notably Winston Churchill among the latter). His account is punctuated with rather primitive anticommunism, crude ethnic stereotypes, and even an occasional assertion that Hitler "understood Bolshevism better than did the Anglo-American leaders" and that his "estimate of Soviet intentions was correct" (pp. 34–35, 53). Perhaps because of the nature of available sources, his reconstruction is generally more convincing for the German than for the Soviet side.

The few factual slips (e.g., in identifying the NKO and the *Stavka*) are distinctly minor. Regrettably, the author does not appear to have used all the available sources (e.g., Khrushchev or Kuznetsov on Stalin's attitudes at the time of the German attack, Nekrich for the most "anti-Stalinist" Soviet account, and Bialer, Erickson, and Garthoff on Soviet civil-military relations). But he has done a valuable job in sifting the mountains of confusing evidence on the military aspects of the German-Soviet war.

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SIEGE AND SURVIVAL: THE ODYSSEY OF A LENINGRADER. By *Elena Skrjabina*. Translated and edited by *Norman Luxenburg*. Foreword by *Harrison E. Salisbury*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971. xi, 174 pp. \$4.95.

In the annals of World War II, and indeed of modern wars, the 900-day siege of Leningrad holds a special place in the long catalogue of disasters, horrors, and fortitude in the face of seemingly impossible odds. The struggle for survival of the city's over three million inhabitants and refugees, under conditions of a military siege, in the midst of the extraordinarily severe winter of 1941–42, without electricity, water, transportation, or fuel, and with hardly any food, has become an epic in recent history. If heroism is measured in terms of losses, privation, and suffering, then Leningrad, having paid the price with over one million civilian dead from hunger, cold, disease, and bombardment without surrendering, no doubt deserves its Soviet title of Hero City.

Leningraders seem to have a sense of history, and a great many of them from all walks of life kept diaries during those trying years. Many of these diaries have been published in the Soviet Union and abroad. Mrs. Skrjabina's contribution is mainly that of a young housewife and mother and a member of the "intelligentsia" caught in the disaster. The diary covers her experiences in Leningrad from the