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however, it contains a polemical element directed against Karl Kautsky's conception of imperialism as the quest of developed industrial powers for an agrarian hinterland. Bukharin's book *The World Economy and Imperialism*, published in 1918, was an extended version of the *Kommunist* article. The book, however, tends to backtrack on the more categorical formulations of the article. Where, for example, the book speaks of the trends in contemporary capitalist development as forming the 'prerequisite for production on a higher non-capitalist level' (p. 75), the article has 'the prerequisite for an organized socialist economy'.

This difference in tone is, in fact, symptomatic of the trajectory of Bukharin's thinking. For the integration of the world economy did not proceed as rapidly as Hilferding and Bukharin had envisaged, and, in *The Economics of the Transition Period* (published in 1920), Bukharin had to confess that the assumptions that he had harboured previously had turned out to be misplaced. The real value of Bukharin's book to the historian of the Russian Revolution, then, is that it helps reconstruct the thinking of Bukharin and his fellow Bolsheviks at the time they took power in 1917. It explains their optimism that a socialist economy was within their grasp and their conviction that a world revolution would come hard on the heels of the revolution in Russia.

James D. White
University of Glasgow

Peter Gatrell, *Russia's First World War: A Social and Economic History*. Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005. Pp. xx + 318; notes; bibliography; maps; index. £14.99 (paperback). ISBN 0 582 32818 7

The study of Russia's Great War experience was long hampered by a combination of factors: archival access was limited; interest in the subject was low, both in the Soviet Union and in the West; and historians who did write about the subject occasionally had difficulty fitting the story into a narrative framework other than 'Prelude to Revolution'. Those who tried, such as Norman Stone and Bruce Lincoln, were rewarded with multiple citations in the rising tide of books on the First World War in Europe. As these factors dissipated in the 1990s, a number of scholars took the opportunity to write specialized works on the period. This new literature was well received. Prize committees and book reviewers were clearly interested in the period and in the findings of the new research, but a different problem emerged: the monographs and journal articles either had to assume a knowledge of the period that most other scholars simply did not have or they had to spend a great deal of effort explaining events or developments that should have been common knowledge but were not. This lack of a reliable and relatively comprehensive guide to the period was felt not only among scholars of Russian history, but also among comparativists who focused on other countries. Among First World War specialists, there was a great deal of mutual urging to write a book that established the basic contours of the war and included the fruits of the recent research.

Everyone has reason to be pleased that Peter Gatrell was the scholar who took up this challenge. His background in social and economic history, along with his deep interest in all things related to the First World War in recent years, made him the ideal

person to do so, and this excellent book is the result. As the title implies, this book focuses on social and economic questions. There are sections on the war's effect on elite society and plebeian society, on ethnic minorities, on soldiers, on refugees and on women — all of them judicious, well researched and concise. In each of these areas Gatrell demonstrates an ability to synthesize scholarship in interesting ways.

The chapters on Russia's war economy are also sharp and well supported. There had been a tension in the previous literature between those who stressed economic collapse and those, like Norman Stone, who pointed out the tremendous achievements of a war economy that was able to out-produce Germany in terms of shells by the end of 1916. Gatrell resolves this tension by considering many different sectors of the economy at the same time. Thus, it was true (as hungry urbanites grousted) that, at the start of the war, peasants saw an influx of cash and that grain production was sustained. But it was also true that this cash rapidly lost value, especially in 1916, and that there were few consumer goods to purchase in any case. It was also true that munitions deliveries, although catastrophically bad at the start, recovered over the course of 1915 and 1916 before collapsing in 1917. An excellent chapter on wartime finance ties together wartime innovations in taxation and attempts to persuade citizens to purchase war bonds with the difficult negotiations with the Allies to provide ever increasing lines of credit to the struggling Russian government. Gatrell is keen to suggest in this chapter that Russia's private banking system played a larger role than one might have expected in financing the war effort.

Despite the explicit focus on social and economic history, there are substantive discussions of political and military developments in the war. These sections fit well with the rest of the book. Much of the recent scholarship that Gatrell draws upon (including his own monograph and articles on population displacement) has been concerned with deepening the political history of the war, going beyond court politics, party politics and the 'crisis of elites' to treat the expansion of the political field, the ethnicization of political life, the maturation of Russian nationalism and the technocratic statist turn in Russian political practice. Gatrell deploys these findings wisely. On the one hand, he stresses the many intersections between political, military, social and economic history over the course of the war. On the other, he points out that this very interconnectedness became a political issue in its own right during the war, as those involved in the war effort took the government to task for its failure to co-ordinate total war effectively. Gatrell demonstrates that this failure was the result of the fact that the tsar's ministers were normally more interested in preserving their specialized fiefdoms and the autocratic principle than in working together. Even the tsar's establishment of 'special councils', in 1915, to co-ordinate economic, social, and military affairs was defensive in nature, done only to prevent the formation of committees outside of the cabinet structure. Rather than entrust important affairs to notable citizens outside of government, the new special councils were all chaired by Nicholas's ministers. As a result, the 'bureaucratic principles that had governed Russia's mobilization thus far continued to apply' (p. 92). However, these bureaucratic principles proved unable to turn the tide of the war or to effectively ameliorate the worsening conditions across the empire. Gatrell strongly suggests throughout the book that even brilliant leadership could not have overcome the basic facts of poverty and 'backwardness' in the economic realm, but his account of wartime politics shows why the tsarist government was held responsible for the inevitable hardships of the war.

I expect that this book will quickly find a wide audience. Specialists in the period are sure to find much that is new. Historians of Russia who may regret a lack of familiarity with the war years will now have a reliable guide. European historians are explicitly engaged in the conclusion, which suggests comparative issues that the study has raised. Those Europeanists are likely to use this book as the new standard work on Russia's war. Finally, the book is short enough and clear enough to use in undergraduate classes. The only concern here is that Gatrell does assume a knowledge of introductory economics and of basic Russian history: students will need to know what import substitution is, what autocracy is and what zemstvos were. Teachers will need to be confident about the basic training of their students before assigning this work. This caveat is, of course, no criticism. It is remarkable that Gatrell is able to narrate the complicated social, political and economic history of Russia's war effort as clearly and simply as he has. *Russia's First World War* is sure to remain a foundational text for a long time as a result.

Joshua Sanborn
Lafayette College

Israel Getzler, *Nikolai Sukhanov: Chronicler of the Russian Revolution*. St Antony's Series. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2002. Pp. xix + 226; illustrations; appendices; notes; index. £42.50/$60.00 (hardback). ISBN 0 333 97035 7

This volume is an intellectual biography of Nikolai Sukhanov, author of *Zapiski o revolutsii*, the best memoir account of the 1917 revolution in Petrograd. A talented publicist with Socialist Revolutionary (SR) and Menshevik ties, Sukhanov knew the revolution's leaders and had the knack of always being on the spot. His incessant note-taking served as the basis for his seven-volume account, which he commenced in mid-1918 with recollections still fresh. The fortuitous coming together of Sukhanov (revolutionary activist and chronicler) and Israel Getzler (biographer of Left-Menshevik leader Iulii Martov and historian of the 1921 Kronstadt Rebellion) yields interesting results. Although Getzler regrets that the disappearance of Sukhanov's personal papers prevents a full-scale biography, the current study admirably fulfils the field's needs. The author neatly divides Sukhanov's life into six compact chapters, each covering an important phase of his political development. Prior to 1917, as an SR, Sukhanov took a great interest in the peasantry and wrote favourably about the peasant commune – an outlook he did not abandon even during his later Marxist career. He espoused socialist unification and, after the war's outbreak in 1914, wrote trenchant anti-war critiques, which he managed to publish inside Russia. No facile propagandist, Sukhanov's writing always bore the stamps of broad learning and intellectual depth.

The outbreak of the February Revolution gave Sukhanov a brief opportunity for real political leadership (of a left-centrist tendency), until the return of major Menshevik–SR figures guided the Soviet's orientation sharply towards the right. By March, Sukhanov, still in the Soviet Executive Committee (where he would serve until June 1918), saw his role reduced primarily to that of a commentator on and recorder of events in which he participated but did not shape. Even so, he enjoyed

considerable status, not least as editor of the influential Left-Menshevik *Novaia zhizn'*. With the mid-1918 purging of non-Communist parties from the Soviet Executive Committee and the closing down of his newspaper, Sukhanov set about writing his famed memoirs, for which we are all in his debt. At first, he retained active ties with the Mensheviks and openly and bitterly criticized Bolshevik jacobinism and War Communism. In 1920, he resigned from the Menshevik Party, while asserting his continued support of many Menshevik ideas. After 1921, he accommodated himself to the New Economic Policy, attempted unsuccessfully to enter the Communist Party and, like many persons of his approximate background and experience, filled mid-level positions in Soviet institutions, mostly those associated with agriculture. By 1928, as an alternative to Stalinist forced grain acquisitions and collectivization – policies that he characterized as renewed War Communism – he championed the peasant commune as a basis for socialist agriculture. His apartment served as a kind of oppositionist salon, until his first arrest in 1930. A typical series of events followed: charges, denials, confessions (later partially withdrawn), imprisonment and exile, release, re-arrest and ultimate full 'disarming' (*à la Darkness at Noon*). Aspects of the latter Getzler characterizes as inexplicable, although he suggests possible threats against Sukhanov's loved ones as explanation. Sukhanov was shot in 1940 for treason and rehabilitated in the early 1990s.

Sukhanov's relatively unbiased outlook on the peasantry and the *obshchina* marked him off from most persons of a Marxist orientation, whether Menshevik or Bolshevik. He believed in the possibility of fruitful economic and political development, under moderately leftist guidance, on the basis of co-operation among modernizing elements. Getzler shares some of these characteristics. For example, he regrets that most Western commentators about the economic debates of the 1920s fail to mention Sukhanov's arguments about the peasant commune, which Getzler clearly takes seriously. Even so, the nuanced and tolerant Sukhanov–Getzler approach sometimes reflects ideological biases. Sukhanov always held Marxism to be superior to SR theory in its take on society and class. For him, peasants could not be seen as the equivalent of the proletariat as a revolutionary class. Getzler often wends his way deftly through such conceptual obstacles but occasionally not deftly enough, as when he states that, 'unlike many SR enthusiasts, Sukhanov was no naive utopian but had a healthy respect for market forces and economic interests' (p. 13). But even early Populism displayed greater economic sophistication than is widely believed, and SR neo-Populism focused heavily on economics. Likewise, why criticize, even indirectly, the SRs for allegedly being a 'peasant' party? Their programmatic and theoretical focus included the peasantry among other social groups, but even were the 'accusation' true, so what? In view of the last century's experience, how is the proletariat a superior revolutionary class?

All of this raises a wider issue of the historiography of the Russian revolutionary experience. Entirely absent from Getzler's analysis is the widespread idea between 1917 and 1921 of Soviet power as real multi-party radical democracy. Even the soft Sukhanov–Getzler approach constitutes a Marxist and revisionist Menshevik take on what happened. The indubitable importance of this approach is in part suggested by the fact that Sukhanov's early political orientations and policies played direct roles in what he espoused throughout his career and in what happened to him. His first arrest was in association with the investigations into the so-called 'Peasant Party', and he was later heavily implicated in the equally fabricated 'Menshevik Party affair'. For decades, the