

The book is impressively documented. Occasionally Stone relies too heavily on Soviet historiography, which on some issues may have a particular slant. He gives short shrift, for example, to the various voluntary organizations on the Russian home front (War Industries Committees, Union of Towns, and so forth) but refers mainly to Soviet writings which have good reason to show such groups in an unfavorable light. Sometimes Stone's conclusions outrun his evidence. As noted earlier, he makes a good case that material shortages were not the main reason for Russian setbacks, yet his own evidence demonstrates that a serious shell shortage did exist in 1915 and that it was a factor in the disasters of that year, though not perhaps the decisive one. Later, he argues that the army did not dissolve in 1917 yet notes evidence that its morale and fighting effectiveness had declined nearly to zero.

For all its drawbacks this study contains much new and fascinating material. It resurrects a gloomy, desperate struggle which should not have been forgotten. Perhaps future students of modern history, stimulated by this account, will accord the Eastern Front the attention it deserves.

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THE SECRET POLICE IN LENIN'S RUSSIA. By *Lennard D. Gerson*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976. xvi, 332 pp. + 8 pp. photographs. \$15.00.

The early years of the Soviet secret police apparatus have gone without detailed, objective historical treatment for a surprisingly long time. Surely the first eight and one-half years (down to the death of Felix Dzerzhinskii rather than, strictly speaking, Lenin's own demise) is the most researchable period of police history. Yet this epoch of the Cheka is critical, as a myth and as a seminal period, for understanding the future of the police in Soviet politics. I have never studied the first years of the Soviet system intensively and am not competent to criticize Professor Gerson's treatment in terms of specifics, but the study is clearly written, meticulously documented, and as unbiased as a man of evident humanist sympathies can make a discussion of such a grim subject. I should think the book (as previous reviewers have suggested) will retain a valued position in the array of works on the formative years of the Soviet regime. My own interest in the book is primarily for the light it throws on the future; in stressing the advantages and disadvantages Gerson's approach presents in this context, I must acknowledge that my critique may at certain points appear to fault the author for not doing things he never set out to do. It seems to me important, nevertheless, to suggest what remains to be done as well as how much this monograph has already accomplished.

Gerson emphasizes Lenin's personal role in sponsoring and encouraging the Cheka, particularly in its ruthless disregard for procedure (or, precisely, for everything we associate with the rule of law). This fatal tendency in the Soviet system goes back, then, to its origins. Stalin enters the narrative only in the most peripheral manner, as an *apparatchik* with obvious affinities for the dark machinations of police activity. Gerson also clarifies the way in which the structure and spheres of activity of the Cheka—institutional features of lasting significance—evolved. The All Russian Extraordinary Commission (VCheka) took over political police activities as early as December 1917 because the Left Social Revolutionaries had to be given posts on the Collegium of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs. Consequently the formal break in continuity with tsarist administrative institutions was exceptionally sharp. Not until February 1922 did the police apparatus return (as the notorious State Political Administration—GPU) to its "normal" position as part of the internal affairs organization, and then only as a superficial concession to critics of Cheka arbitrariness.

ness. By 1922 the basic spheres of Cheka activity—secret informer networks, concentration camps, praetorian internal troops, and frontier guards—had been firmly established. Moreover (although here he adds little to Herbert S. Dinerstein's Rand Research Memorandum, over a quarter-century old), Gerson shows how the Cheka was set apart in ethnic and social recruitment from the East Slavic masses at this early date.

My principal regret is that Gerson did not pursue this and related themes by intensive biographical research. Most of the top police officials down to 1938 (and quite a few party *apparatchiki*) got their start in Dzerzhinskii's Cheka. Some even outlasted the Great Purge. Gerson discusses few of these early careers, but it appears that the material for such treatment, though very scattered, is available. We might learn a good deal by not merely locating the origins of such political police activity, but by specifying the rather varied types of activity which constituted intensive socialization experiences for future police and party officials. I should think it might be possible even to work out quantitative patterns of career evolution. Gerson is at one with his colleagues who have studied the first decade of Soviet history in omitting such career pattern analysis. It would be unfair, therefore, to fault this solid monograph for adhering to the conventions of its particular branch of historiography.

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THE VLADIMIROV DIARIES. YENAN, CHINA: 1942–1945. By *Peter Vladimirov*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1975. x, 538 pp. Photographs. \$10.95.

When Peter Vladimirov's diaries were published in late 1975 they immediately became the focus of debate in the West. Few doubted that the memoirs—in whatever form—were genuine. Rather, the controversy revolved around the extent to which they had been altered by Soviet authorities for current political purposes. Certainly, it is quite apparent that Vladimirov's diaries, based on his service as a Comintern liaison officer in Yen-an during 1942–45, suit Moscow's present purposes almost too neatly. For example, Mao Tse-tung is consistently depicted as an aloof, scheming Machiavellian, a master of ruthless opportunism deeply hostile to the Soviet Union.

Yet, given the dearth of such "inside" material on the Chinese Communist leadership during the key Yen-an period, one is hesitant to dismiss the diaries as simple Soviet fabrications. Indeed, Vladimirov's account of the inner-party debate over the CCP's official "history" of 1945 helps explain why this document is much less decisive in praising Mao than is true of Stalin in his own "history" of 1938 (p. 395). On the other hand, Vladimirov seems to be in error in describing the bookish Ch'en Po-ta, one of Mao's political advisers, as "sociable," and having many friends (p. 52). Is Vladimirov (or possibly the Soviet editors) mistaken here, or did Ch'en's fluency in Russian tend to make him a more attractive figure to Russians like Vladimirov than to Western observers in Yen-an who were not fully at home in either Chinese or Russian?

In sum, it is very difficult to appraise the absolute validity of Vladimirov's memoirs, and the American publishers do caution the reader to regard the account as both "a historical and a contemporary document." Nonetheless, the diaries are highly absorbing, and they add further detail to our scanty knowledge of the CCP during one of its most formative periods. As such, they command the close attention of anyone with a keen interest in the history of the Chinese Communist movement.

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