excepted) lacked the virtuosic skills and talent for brilliant orchestral color which were to become the hallmark of Russian symphonic music of the twentieth century? For these and other nuggets the profane will be duly grateful.

A very different problem is posed by Emerson's overall approach and the style in which it is couched. As I have already hinted, her concerns are in the main ontological: What is a chronicle? What kind of "chronotopes" (Bakhtin's coinage) does Karamzin's history embody? What are the peculiar properties (and limitations) of a "romantic tragedy"? Is a libretto an authentic art form? Emerson's thoughtful parsing of these problems will interest readers with a taste for generic criticism. But a tolerance for abstract formulations and slightly Delphic utterances will also help. A fluent and nimble stylist, Emerson is no enemy of the quasi-paradox. Since, as is known, Mussorgskii's opera is based on Pushkin, not Karamzin, she tweaks our collective nose by declaring that "[Karamzin's] Boris can be sung, Pushkin's cannot." Since the "Slovo" inspired an opera by Borodin, not Mussorgskii, she cannot resist declaring that "the original Lay of the Host of Igor is much more Musorgsky's than it is Borodin's text." Since the vast majority of opera goers (in the West, at least) have read little Pushkin and no Karamzin, one is bemused when told that "watching multiple coauthorship at work" is one of the main pleasures which Boris gives its audiences. Since a chronicle is by definition the account of a historical fait accompli, the literal-minded reader can only wonder how, as the author claims, it can "shape, almost create a past event." These paradoxical sallies are deliberate of course: they are meant to provoke, and by provoking stimulate. But cracking the code can be wearying business, and not infrequently it tantalizes more than it illuminates.

All criticism, it has been said, is a form of autobiography. The provisos registered here reflect a reviewer whose interest in the ontology of literary forms is moderate and whose patience with the stylistic obliquities of modern critical writing is small. To each his own. Questions of taste aside, it is certain that Emerson has written a challenging and erudite study which breaks new ground.

Richard Gregg  
Vassar College


Arcadius Kahan had submitted the typescript of this book for publication shortly before his death in 1982. His university press and Richard Hellie as editorial assistant have done him proud with a massive quarto volume of over 300,000 words. Kahan would probably have had one caveat; the subtitle and the blurb make his work seem more definitive and comprehensive than he would have claimed. Quite untypically of the Chicago economics department, Kahan had always been slow to publish—the work under review easily outweights all his previous publications in this area—and repeatedly refers to the nine essays that constitute this volume as "provisional." Their provisional nature is partly a reflection of the state of Russian economic historiography, partly of Kahan's caution, but together they hardly constitute "an economic history." The structure of the book and its gaps tell their own story.

Its nine chapters contain one giant—the 104-page chapter on international trade—and two mice, one on internal trade (15 pages), the other on banking and credit (9 pages). Industry (the "hammer") earns twice as much space as agriculture (the "plow"). Other staples of modern European historiography are missing altogether. There are no national accounts, no effort at tracking the trend
in living standards, no interest rates, no price index. Literacy is hardly discussed (pp. 153-54), and the chapter on demographic history amounts to little more than old-fashioned political arithmetic.

Yet without great fanfare, Kahan marshalls a mass of evidence on the economy of eighteenth-century Russia. Chapter 4 contains 109 tables, chapter 8 has 32, chapter 3 has 77! Kahan proceeds without explicitly stated hypotheses or models, yet from the numerical mosaic, some striking images emerge. For example, the dominance of Tsardom is highlighted by a masterly analysis of eastern feudalism and of a ruthless secret police, plus—a rare light touch—an account of Empress Catherine's grants to her many lovers "either in appreciation of their service or as severance pay" of over one hundred thousand male serfs (p. 64). The impact of the army on demography is captured dramatically in the tables of chapter 1. Kahan's discussion of the public finances implies that the costs of the military draft (in effect a tax on the poor) rivalled that of all indirect taxes during the century. That old chestnut (at least to non-specialists) of obrok versus barshchina is handled in an authoritative way (pp. 67-69). Kahan's overall theme of commercialization and development is supported by firm evidence on the huge rise in exports, and scattered data on better communications, easier access to credit, and more internal trade. Another theme, "the legitimacy of the existing social and political order" (p. 363), is perhaps less well supported. For Kahan, serf support for the regime seems more important than police oppression in explaining social and political stability. He reminds us that serfs were quick to inform on fugitives and to administer the punishments meted out by the authorities, and slow to revolt. Yet surely the right mix of tsarist deterrents (the "knout") could have imposed this outcome on a backward and poor serf population, no matter how unwilling.

Despite the claims of Richard Hellie (p. 364), this is far from being an exercise in that mixture of applied economics and statistics called the "new economic history." Kahan naturally has a good intuitive grasp of the laws of supply and demand, but no-longer-new notions such as social savings, counterfactuals, leading sectors, or general equilibrium are absent. None of the data is subjected to even the most elementary econometric analysis. Only one of Kahan's illustrious colleagues in the Chicago economics department (Gary Becker) gets a mention, and that reference is quite redundant. Kahan's approach, utterly different from that of long-time colleagues such as Fogel, McCloskey, or Galenson, is typified by his long chapter on foreign trade. Far from being an assessment of trade's contribution to economic growth, it is a meticulous item-by-item, port-by-port account of trends over the century. There are tables on tow exports through the Sound and on the "volume of Russian-Chinese trade at Kiakhta," but no consideration of the relative importance of domestic and foreign trade. Indeed, the modern cliometrician is likely to find this concentration on the foreign sector in an economy where it probably accounted for only a minute part of output slightly unreal. That this is a work in the tradition of Ralph Davis or Jacob Price rather than Bob Fogel or Jeff Williamson should not be interpreted as criticism, though. Both types of work are needed.

The Plough, Hammer, and the Knout is clearly based on years of work, yet is very up-to-date in its sources. A curious aspect is Kahan's reliance on Soviet work for both data and interpretation. If politics tragically kept him out of Soviet archives, well over half the works cited in his bibliography are post-1917 Soviet publications, testimony to the vigor of Soviet scholarship in the field. Normally to attempt a work like this without primary sources would be a tall order, but Soviet historians apparently did that part of Kahan's work for him. Curious too is the absence of University of Chicago dissertations in the bibliography. Yet while he failed (unlike Becker, Fogel, Friedman, and so on) to generate his own "groupies" in Hyde Park, Kahan has long been regarded by specialists as a world-