

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR:

Professor Riasanovsky is correct about some regrettable errors which crept into my book, *The First Bolshevik: A Political Biography of Peter Tkachev*, reviewed in the June 1969 issue. The publisher's editor, in rewriting my "Note on Transliteration," introduced a silly mistake which I, of course, should have caught: a reference to Tkachev's birth date rather than to his death date. Corrected, the line should read: "Tkachev's death year is given as 1886 instead of the date he knew, 1885." In the bibliography Florinsky became "Flerovsky," although Florinsky and his book were correctly cited on page 32. Beyond these failings, I am unaware of any other serious mistakes, including transliteration. Perhaps understandably bothered by these errors, Professor Riasanovsky wrote, I feel, a somewhat disappointing review of my book. He ignored some of the valuable elements in my work: Tkachev's projected "workers' dictatorship"; his "KOB" (*Komissiiia obshchestvennoi bezopasnosti*), anticipating today's KGB; Tkachev's concept of a future nationality policy for a Socialist Russia, which he described as "national in form, Socialist in content"; his theory of "permanent revolution"; his belief that the "kulaks" (his term) were ruining the Peasant Commune and the chances of this institution's being the starting point for Socialist reconstruction of the village. And so on. May I be so immodest as to suggest to readers of the *Slavic Review* that for an ably written exposition and review of my book they examine the October 1969 number of the *Bulletin* of the Institute for the Study of the USSR (pp. 45-49).

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Professor Riasanovsky does not wish to reply.

TO THE EDITOR:

Professor Robert H. McNeal, in his article "Lenin and 'Lise de K . . .'" (September 1969, pp. 471-74), has seen fit to characterize as a fabrication a purported memoir of a wealthy Russian lady, published in 1936, that says that Lenin had a secret love affair with her between 1906 and 1914. Authenticity and veracity will be more than ordinarily difficult to check in the case of a secretive, underground politician who was to have kept such an affair secret even from his own confidants.

Professor McNeal fails to shed any light on the problem because of his unusually careless handling of both sources and facts. His principal error is a case of mistaken identity among sources. As his main source he uses a book by A. Beucler and G. Alexinsky, *Les Amours secrètes de Lénine: D'après les mémoires de Lise de K . . .* (Paris, 1937). He believes that a Russian version published in *Illiuistrirovannaia Rossiia* in 1936 is the same text as the Beucler-Alexinsky book, and that the lady's original memoir, on which Beucler and Alexinsky based their version, either is lost or never existed. Careful reading of the relevant passage in David Shub's *Lenin: A Biography* (New York, 1966, pp. 459-60) shows otherwise. The version in *Illiuistrirovannaia Rossiia*, entitled "Lenin v deistvitel'nosti: Ego roman k Elizavetoi K***" and copyrighted by G. Alexinsky (a French translation in *L'Intransigeant*, also in the fall of 1936, is mentioned by Shub—I have not been able to locate a copy in the United States), purports to be a memoir by Elizabeth K***;