

M.J. Lewis and Roger Lloyd-Jones. *Using Computers in History: A Practical Guide*. London & New York: Routledge, 1996. Pp. xiii, 248. Cloth, \$59.95; Paper, \$18.95.

The advent of the computer allows the historian to manipulate data and extract meaningful information from a conglomeration of facts and figures. Unfortunately, there are few guides to the process of using a computer to manipulate data in a meaningful fashion. The writers of most computer manuals are more interested in presenting the how and why of computers and computer programs than in describing their use by real people. Few technical books on computers really guide the struggling reader through an actual example of their use. M.J. Lewis and Roger Lloyd-Jones have written a book that fills this void and bridges the gap between the technical writer and the user of computers. Beyond this, they have written a book that is easily read and followed through the intricacies of actually using a computer for a practical purpose.

Using Computers in History is a practical book designed to acquaint the historian with the use of spreadsheets and databases in the study of history. This is a worthwhile book because it not only covers the theory of spreadsheets and databases; it also has several practical exercises that take the reader through the use and presentation of historical data using the concepts described earlier in the book. While the book is based on the Windows 3.1 operating system, the writing is so clear that users of DOS programs and Windows 95 can easily follow the text and complete the practical application.

It needs to be emphasized: This book describes the use of computers and then provides examples of how to use the information presented. This is something usually left out of most books on computers. It was written for British readers, and the examples used are British.

Using Computers in History introduces the reader to the theory behind spreadsheets and their application to Clio's art. It describes a number of purposes or functions of spreadsheets for historians. These functions include the storage and retrieval of data, the calculation of results from original data, and the presentation of these results in a graphical form. The practical application exercise allows the reader to test several propositions about the standard of living in nineteenth-century England by using spreadsheets. Similar exercises allow the reader to present data using graphs and charts.

The latter half of the book is dedicated to using a database to organize and manage historical information. The practical application builds a database of information on cinemas in Sheffield, England, circa 1931. Exercises require the reader to construct the database and to answer several questions based on the information in it.

Using Computers in History could be used in an upper-level undergraduate class in the historian's method or as a supplementary text for a project based on extracting

meaning from various historical data. The book is also a valuable tool for the teaching historian, as it provides the necessary background for the actual use of computers in history.

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Peter Waldron. *The End of Imperial Russia, 1855-1917*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. viii, 189. Cloth, \$49.95; ISBN 0-312-16536-6. Paper, \$18.95; ISBN 0-312-16537-4.

The End of Imperial Russia, 1855-1917, which is part of St. Martin's European History in Perspective series, analyzes the decades leading to the Bolshevik revolution in 1917. Peter Waldron focuses his attention on one of the most important and controversial eras in Russian history. Most historians of Russia agree that the changes and turmoil of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries set the stage for the events of 1917 and afterwards. In this work, Waldron divides his era into five major themes.

First, the Russian autocracy, often seen as one and the same with the state in Imperial Russia, initiates reform and counterreform. The author clearly shows that the nobility was not united, especially during the reign of Nicholas II (1894-1917). Some of the nobility supported reform, while others vehemently opposed it. Waldron emphasizes the reign of Nicholas II, while leaving the reform efforts of Alexander II (1855-1881) and the counterreform initiatives of Alexander III (1881-1894) relatively unexplored. A fuller explanation of the Great Reform era (1860s) and the Counterreform era (1880s) would have provided the reader with a better understanding when analyzing the end of the Romanov monarchy.

The second theme is that of the economic sector, both agricultural and industrial. This is a well-balanced chapter that provides a vivid picture of the economic realities facing peasant and working class Russia at the end of the century. Waldron dedicates much time to explaining the redemption payments that newly-freed serfs were required to pay, which resulted in many of them not truly being economically free.

Waldron's third theme addresses the social changes taking place in the last decades of Imperial Russia. He briefly discusses the changing role of women, the rural to urban shift, changes in the commune structure, the fading importance of the nobility, and the explosion in art, music, and literature. The Silver Age of Russian culture, especially literature, reflected many of the social changes taking place in Russia. Waldron emphasizes the works of Fedor Dostoevskii, Leo Tolstoi, and Anton Chekhov as a few examples of the artists who illuminated the changing world in front of them. It is unfortunate that the author compiles such a broad range of social topics into one brief section.