This book makes an important contribution to the current re-evaluation of the origins of Stalinism. Although it is widely acknowledged by Western scholars that the Soviet grain crisis of 1927–8 and Stalin’s Siberian tour of January 1928 were crucial factors in the decision to abandon the New Economic Policy (NEP) and return to a more ideologically rigid policy of collectivisation and rapid industrialisation, studies have hitherto concentrated on the role of leading personalities and ‘high politics’. In this book, Dr James Hughes presents an in-depth examination of the crisis of the NEP from the regional perspective of Siberia and analyses the events and pressures ‘from below’, at the grassroots level of Soviet society.

Using publications of the Siberian party and statistical investigations of the countryside, Dr Hughes offers new insights into several largely uncharted features of the Soviet system in these years. These include party-peasant relations, the kulak question, Stalin’s patron-client network in the provinces, the regional impact of the grain crisis and the use of emergency measures to overcome the crisis. The author concludes that Stalin’s experience of conditions which were unique to Siberia accelerated his negative reappraisal of the NEP and initiated the descent into the cataclysm of his ‘revolution from above’ in late 1929.

*Stalin, Siberia and the crisis of the New Economic Policy* will be widely read by specialists and students of Soviet history, with special reference to the economic and social history of the 1920s, regional policy under the NEP, and the background to collectivisation.
STALIN, SIBERIA AND THE CRISIS OF THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

Soviet and East European Studies: 81

Editorial Board
Stephen White (General editor)
Judy Batt  Michael Kaser  Anthony Kemp-Welsh  Margot Light
Alastair McAuley  James Riordan  Judith Shapiro

Soviet and East European Studies, under the auspices of Cambridge University Press and the British Association for Soviet, Slavonic and East European Studies (BASSEES), promotes the publication of works presenting substantial and original research on the economics, politics, sociology and modern history of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.
Soviet and East European Studies

81 JAMES HUGHES
Stalin, Siberia and the crisis of the New Economic Policy

80 ILIANA ZLOCH-CHRISTY
East–West financial relations
Current problems and future prospects

79 MICHAEL D. KENNEDY
Professionals, power and Solidarity in Poland
A critical sociology of Soviet-type society

78 GARETH M. WINROW
The foreign policy of the GDR in Africa

77 JOZEF M VAN BRABANT
The planned economies and international economic organizations

76 WILLIAM MOSKOFF
The bread of affliction: the food supply in the USSR during World War II

75 YAACOV RO’I
The struggle for Soviet-Jewish emigration 1948–1967

74 GRAEME GILL
The origins of the Stalinist political system

73 SANTOSH K. MEHROTRA
India and the Soviet Union: trade and technology transfer

72 ILYA PRIZEL
Latin America through Soviet eyes
The evolution of Soviet perceptions during the Brezhnev era 1964–1982

71 ROBERT G. PATMAN
The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa
The diplomacy of intervention and disengagement

70 IVAN T. BEREND
The Hungarian economic reforms 1953–1988

69 CHRIS WARD
Russia’s cotton workers and the New Economic Policy
Shop-floor culture and state policy 1921–1929

68 LÁSZLÓ CSABA
Eastern Europe in the world economy

To continue at back of book
STALIN, SIBERIA AND
THE CRISIS OF THE
NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

JAMES HUGHES
University of Keele
for my parents

John and May Hughes
Contents

List of tables ............................ page x
Preface .................................... xi
Note on transliteration and dates; weights and measures .......................... xiii
Map of Siberia in 1928 ....................... xiv

Introduction ................................ 1
1 The Siberian peasant utopia ............... 5
2 The party and the peasantry ............... 26
3 Who was the Siberian kulak? ............... 64
4 The crisis of NEP .......................... 97
5 The end of NEP ............................ 123
6 The emergency measures ................. 149
7 The ‘Irkutsk affair’ ....................... 184
Conclusion ................................. 205
Appendix ................................... 213

Glossary ................................... 217
Notes ....................................... 219
Bibliography ............................... 246
Index ..................................... 255
Tables

1 Social categorisation of Siberian peasantry, 1924  page 73
2 Social categorisation of Siberian peasantry, 1925  74
3 Social categorisation of Siberian peasantry, 1926  76
4 Social categorisation of Siberian peasantry, 1927  86
5 Social categorisation of Siberian peasantry, 1927, 1928  95

APPENDIX
A.1 Grain marketings and procurement in the USSR, 1925/8  213
A.2 Grain production and state procurement in Siberia, 1913 and 1925/9  214
A.3 Changes in the ratio of procurements in areas of West Siberia, 1926/8  214
A.4 Data on cases held under Article 107 in areas of south-west Siberia  215
Preface

Recently, a notable feature of Western studies of Soviet history of the 1920s and 1930s has been the controversy aroused by the work of a younger generation of social historians. Their conceptual approach eschewed the conventional wisdom of concentrating on leading personalities and ‘high politics’ and offered fresh insights and a more profound understanding of the events of this period by examining the interaction and influence of political pressures and movements ‘from below’, at the grassroots of Soviet society, on the determination and implementation of Stalin’s ‘revolution from above’. I considered that this methodological framework could be usefully applied to the era immediately preceding Stalin’s revolution of the 1930s: the period of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in the 1920s. I have embarked upon a study of one region: Siberia. My goal is to stimulate further debate on the impact of NEP at the grassroots and to explain better why Stalin and the majority of the central party leadership decided to abandon it in early 1928 and return to a more ideologically rigid policy of collectivisation and rapid industrialisation.

The sources I have relied upon are primarily Siberian party publications (stenographic records of plenums, annual reports, journals) and statistical investigations of the countryside of the period, previously unused in the West. Although this inevitably raises the problem of bias, I believe that the Bolshevik party until 1928 was still one in which differing viewpoints and perspectives could be expressed openly and this is reflected in the sources. I have chosen to rely on details provided by modern Siberian historians, as, having had the opportunity of frequently crosschecking many of their references, I can testify to their general reliability in this respect, though clearly their interpretations suffer from the ideological constraints under which they operate.

The preparation of this book owes a debt of gratitude to numerous
people and institutions. My special thanks go to Dr Dominic Lieven of the London School of Economics who, as my doctoral dissertation supervisor, was a constant source of invaluable critical assessment and advice on my work, and guided me to its successful completion. Professor R. W. Davies and Dr S. G. Wheatcroft of the University of Birmingham gave direction to my initial interest in the problems of NEP and Stalin’s Siberian tour of January 1928 by suggesting that I undertake an in-depth regional study. Dr Robert Service of the London School of Slavonic and East European Studies, who together with Professor Davies examined my dissertation, offered generous and informed suggestions for revisions. Thanks are due also to Mr Frank Wright of Queen’s University Belfast for his inspiring teaching skills that first sparked my interest in Soviet History. I am also indebted to Siberian colleagues of the Institute of History, Philology and Philosophy, at Akademgorodok, Novosibirsk; Professor N. Ia. Gushchin, V. A. Zhdanov and V. A. Il’inykh, who made my short working visit to Siberia in April 1986 so productive. The Department of Education of Northern Ireland provided a research award (1982–6) and the British Council a study scholarship to Moscow State University for the year 1985–6, and I would like to extend my thanks to these institutions and to the editorial board of *Soviet Studies* for permitting me to draw extensively from my previously published article on the ‘Irkutsk affair’ for use in chapter 7.

The book is a much revised version of my doctoral dissertation, and all opinions expressed here are my own, as is the responsibility for any errors. Finally a special thanks to my sister Collette Steele who typed numerous drafts of the manuscript, and to my wife Julia, without whose partnership and assistance this work would not have been accomplished.
Note on transliteration and dates; weights and measures

Library of Congress practice on the transliteration of Russian has been followed, except for names of persons and places in the text which have a widely accepted English form.

Soviet practice has been adhered to in the use of dates: 1927–8 refers to the calendar year; 1927/8 refers to the agricultural year 1 July–30 June, and the economic year 1 October–30 September.

Equivalent weights and measures

1 desiatin = 1.09 hectares = 2.70 acres
1 hectare = 2.47 acres
1 pud = 16.38 kilogrammes = 36.11 lb
1 ton = 61.05 puds