

are quite helpful, although a clearer explanation of the role of a chancellery in a European government might have helped Americans better understand Nabokov's position. One can always quarrel with translations, but this one seems quite good and readable. (Who can argue with a translation corrected by the author's own son when that son was the famous author and English stylist, Vladimir V. Nabokov?) The Nol'de article is not as well done, and the first paragraph contains that nightmare of translators, the negative which did not get translated.

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PETR TKACHEV, THE CRITIC AS JACOBIN. By *Deborah Hardy*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1977. xiv, 339 pp. \$12.50.

This is the second biography in English of one of the more controversial figures of the Russian revolutionary movement. Unlike some of the radicals he knew and argued with, Tkachev did not succeed in creating an organization that influenced the course of events in Russia. Nor did he leave behind him a doctrine with which to inspire the opponents of tsarism who were seeking a solution to the problems of economic underdevelopment. If Tkachev has any claim to a place in the revolutionary pantheon, it is largely because of his role as a possible precursor of Lenin, with whom he shared similar views on the need for "a tightly disciplined conspiratorial party." The extent of Tkachev's and Lenin's debt to Blanqui has been disputed by scholars and socialists who have been disturbed by the liberties Lenin is supposed to have taken with Marxism.

Unlike A. L. Weeks, the first Western biographer of Tkachev, Deborah Hardy eschews, for the most part, any attempt to link Tkachev with Lenin. Instead, she provides a detailed account of his social background, copious writings, and revolutionary activities at home and abroad, which were fairly typical of prominent Russian rebels in the 1860s and 1870s. With the help of archival material in Western Europe, and a wide range of printed sources in Russian, Hardy records and discriminatingly analyzes Tkachev's intellectual development, his journalistic endeavors, and his attempts to create a circle of like-minded individuals who would be unwilling to accept either Bakunin or Lavrov as their guide.

Tkachev emerges as a lonely and secretive man, better at wielding the pen than at organizing resistance to authorities or making converts among fellow revolutionaries. As a writer he displayed wide interests and a degree of realism that was uncharacteristic of many of his contemporary rivals who competed for the attention of the educated public. Hardy's careful biography tells us all we need to know about Tkachev and his impact during his lifetime.

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THE PRECARIOUS TRUCE: ANGLO-SOVIET RELATIONS 1924-27. By *Gabriel Gorodetsky*. Soviet and East European Studies series. New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1977. xiv, 289 pp. \$18.95.

Building skillfully on the solid foundation laid by Richard Ullman in his three-volume study of Anglo-Soviet relations in the early years of the Bolshevik regime, Gabriel Gorodetsky has taken up the story and carried it from the advent of the first Labour government to the rupture that followed the Arcos raid. In the process he shows, in the first place, how fearfully symmetrical this relationship was. On either side strong

antipathy, resentment, suspicion, and fear shaped perceptions and informed actions which often produced results that were "ironically" (a word frequently used by Gorodetsky) skewed to their originators' intentions. On each side, moreover, domestic politics and foreign politics interacted so forcefully and continuously that most attempts to say which had causal primacy, and when, are futile. Gorodetsky just as effectively establishes his second principal point, that Anglo-Soviet relations in these years were profoundly asymmetrical: the Russians, in their quest for signs of political legitimacy and for benefits of foreign trade and credits, assigned the highest importance to their dealings with Great Britain and made persistent, and sometimes extraordinary, efforts to secure their ends. The British, on the other hand, were preoccupied with other matters and gave only intermittent and limited attention to Russia, and finally showed an unnerving readiness to accept a break in formal diplomatic relations with Moscow at a time when the Soviets were already ostensibly filled with fear about a renewal of Western intervention.

The prime value of an exhaustively documented study of this kind is that it warrants confident conclusions about some heretofore controvertible issues. Gorodetsky makes it abundantly clear, for example, that Austen Chamberlain's Locarno policy and his post-Locarno dealings with Moscow were, at worst, no more than passively anti-Soviet. British officials never contemplated a revival of military intervention or even an economic blockade, either on their own or through the agency of several of Russia's near neighbors. Attaching overpowering importance to the reconciliation of France and Germany, the British shaped their course to accommodate Stresemann, who steadfastly refused to jeopardize his own satisfactory relations with Moscow. On the Soviet side, Gorodetsky is equally definite in stating that the emergence of Stalin caused revolutionary activism to become subordinate to national rehabilitation. The disputes between the Stalinists and the Opposition lose none of their theological complexity, or aridity, in this recounting, which does much to clarify both Britain's central role in the disputes, and the cynical adroitness of Stalin's use of the intricate negotiations with the T.U.C. over the "united front from above" to discountenance and divide his enemies. With even-handed detachment the author shows how British leaders foolishly set aside the sound advice they got from their representative in Moscow (Sir Robert Hodgson), and how clumsily the Soviet regime handled the unexpected onset of the General Strike and its consequences.

Few serious studies of this sort are entirely beyond criticism. In this case, it should be noted that the explication of the motives and calculations of the "die-hards" who promoted the Arcos raid is thin, and that some aspects of Stalin's defeat of the Opposition still remain obscure. More important, it might be asked whether the British government really did have available, as implied in Gorodetsky's judgment, a potentially more realistic and fruitful policy than that of Chamberlain's cool "reserve" and studied indifference. Despite the admission that the Arcos raid itself was a piece of sterile folly, and that the British creditors of Russia would have done well to respond more actively to Soviet offers of informally arranged partial restitution, it nonetheless appears doubtful that cordial and constructive relations between the two countries could have been achieved given the fact that they were virtually "negative identities" to one another and had very uneven stakes in economic rapprochement. As it was, the events of this period cast a long shadow toward the 1930s, a period that awaits analysis on the scale and with the finesse of an Ullman or a Gorodetsky.

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