
REVIEWS

RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM FROM IVAN THE GREAT TO THE REVOLUTION. Edited by *Taras Hunczak*. Introduction by *Hans Kohn*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1974. xi, 396 pp. \$17.50.

This is a useful collection of essays by specialists on the history of Russian territorial expansion in Europe and Asia. Though the subtitle suggests that the story is taken up to 1917, the emphasis is overwhelmingly on the period of conquest, or of maximum interstate conflict, and virtually ends with the incorporation of the respective territory in the Russian empire. The main title is still more misleading. Most people who open a book on imperialism expect to learn about the political and social system imposed by the conqueror on the conquered. Only one of these essays—by Geoffrey Wheeler on Central Asia—fulfills this expectation. The book should have been entitled “Russian Expansion.”

With one exception, the individual contributions are excellent—clearly reasoned and written in intelligible language without any fashionable gobbledegook—and will serve as useful summaries for advanced students of Russian and general European history. The introductory pages by the late Hans Kohn are up to his high standard and remind the reader of how much we have lost by the death of this distinguished scholar to whom the book is dedicated. The essays by two accomplished historians, Ragnild Hatton and Walter Leitsch, along with essays by Professor Henry Huttenbach (including his essay on “Pan-Slavism or Pan-Russianism”), give a good overall picture of Russia’s historical relationship with its neighbors to the west and northwest.

The view to the southwest and east is somewhat less balanced. Traian Stoianovich has interesting things to say about the role of the grain trade in Russia’s Balkan policy, but treats political relations and attitudes rather summarily. There is, for example, no discussion of the Russian mentality expressed in Khomiakov’s *Letter to the Serbs*. However, Mr. Stoianovich might well reply that there is already plenty of literature on political aspects, and that the economic side has been relatively neglected. Firuz Kazemzadeh gives a useful summary of the long drawn out efforts of Russia to subdue the Caucasian mountaineers, but curiously, while quoting Soviet historians who praised the resistance under Ghazi Muhammad and Shamil, does not mention the campaign of denigration in the later Stalin era. Mr. Sung-Hwan Chang’s essay on the Far East is stronger on the Korean than on the Chinese side of the story.

The exception to the generally high quality is the contribution by Emanuel Sarkisyanz, who seems largely concerned with defending Russia’s record by a series of sneering half-truths about other empires. It hardly seems necessary to insist so vehemently that Russian imperialism was no worse than other imperialisms. Almost all serious historians outside the Soviet Union would readily admit this. It remains true, however, that the Russian empire is the only one which still exists, and that its exponents insist that it is not an empire at all. Although Mr. Sarkisyanz is defending the old Russian empire, not the new, readers will get a more balanced picture from Colonel Wheeler, who writes with a thorough knowledge of both the Russian and the British empires. His comparisons are

based not on clichés but on facts, and he writes with compassionate understanding of the dilemmas of the rulers and of the sufferings or frustrations of the subjects in both empires.

HUGH SETON-WATSON
University of London

RUSSIA AND KAZAN: CONQUEST AND IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY (1438–1560s). By *Jaroslav Pelenski*. Near and Middle East Monographs, no. 5. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1974. xii, 368 pp. 90 Dglds.

Professor Pelenski here provides an extensive (and expensive, as one has come to expect in Mouton's clothing) study of the "Kazan' problem," primarily from the point of view of what he sees as the development of Muscovite imperial ideology with regard to the conquest of the Volga khanate. Three of the book's four parts are devoted to what one might call the conceptualization of the conquest in various Muscovite writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and one—the first—is a brief but detailed survey of diplomatic relations between the two Volga states from 1438 to 1552.

Students of the subject will find *Russia and Kazan* helpful in a number of respects. Professor Pelenski has canvassed, and cited, the relevant source material most thoroughly, and he has been particularly energetic in reviewing the scholarly literature in several languages, including many very obscure items. He puts forth a number of original interpretations and hypotheses, particularly with regard to the various forms—"legal," "historical," "dynastic," "national," "ideological"—of justification for the conquest that, in his view, were developed by Muscovite writers. He brings together a great deal of useful information not only in the text itself, but in the maps, illustrations, appendixes and even in the index. He provides three new Old Russian texts in translation (pp. 277, 278, 292–93).

Yet all of these contributions notwithstanding, one is left unconvinced that Professor Pelenski has succeeded in his objective of producing a "model of an emerging imperial ideology" (p. 20, also p. 283). One's skepticism is based upon a paradoxical sense that, while the author has without question studied the primary sources intensively, he has not analyzed them as profoundly or critically as one must, and at the same time he has "read too much into them." It seems to me with regard to the first problem, for example, that in part one, devoted to the historical narrative of Muscovite-Kazani relations, one is provided with an account that for all its detail leaves unanswered a number of the major questions about that relationship: What was the internal socioeconomic and political structure of the khanate? How did this mechanism relate to Muscovite and Crimean politics in good times and bad? Were Muscovites really always so intent upon "conquering" Kazan'? What does "conquer" mean in relations between sparsely settled trading principalities—one sedentary and the other based upon nomadic political traditions? I attempted to answer some of these questions in a dissertation to which Professor Pelenski refers; it became clear to me even before it was submitted that it could not be published without additional massive and meticulous study of Tatar genealogies, of patterns of government (if that is the word) and diplomacy, and most of all of the history of the major sources, the Muscovite chronicles. Professor Pelenski is aware of some of the inadequacies of the chronicles as sources (p. 93, n. 2; p. 139, n. 1) but still thinks that they provide "significant evidence for the attitudes and