

comings of translation and bibliographical quotation (none of them major), this volume must be hailed as remarkable in its kind. One must also add to this praise great regret for Michel Laran's untimely death in the same year in which this book appeared.

MARC SZEFTEL
University of Washington (Emeritus)

THE RUSSIAN TRADITION. By *Tibor Szamuely*. Edited with an introduction by *Robert Conquest*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975. xii, 443 pp. \$12.50.

What the late Professor Szamuely offers in this compellingly narrated, incisively argued, and erudite book is an interpretation of the Russian political tradition. His presentation is original not so much for any particular theme, but for its elaboration and synthesis of a number of familiar theories that stress the continuity and uniqueness of Russia's historical development. The organization of the book follows the author's view that the Russian tradition had two mutually hostile but intimately related strands—the absolutist state brought to clear definition by Ivan IV in the sixteenth century, and the revolutionary movement created by the intelligentsia in the nineteenth century. Accordingly, part 1 is entitled "The Russian State Tradition," and part 2, "The Russian Revolutionary Tradition." Neither section is based on research that goes beyond what is available in print, but the second part is much more detailed than the first, reflects a fresh and penetrating reading of the available primary materials, and is virtually a monograph in its own right.

The thesis is as follows: After a period of gestation during the Mongol conquest, the Russian state emerged as a synthesis of oriental despotism, Muscovite patrimonialism (bondage of all classes), and Byzantine caesaropapism. It "held every aspect of the nation's life within its grip. There was no room left for the autonomous activity of either individual, local community, or social class" (p. 36). Legitimacy was provided by a proto-ideology that exalted Russia and its political system as the embodiments of true faith, social justice, and a world redemptive mission. By the nineteenth century, the state had lost its legitimacy; the power base itself was obsolete and in need of modernization. The reforms begun in 1861 were Russia's first attempts at genuine Westernization, as far as political culture was concerned. By this time, however, the second indigenous tradition—both nemesis and perpetuator of the first—had made its appearance. Within the revolutionary movement, the essential development was the emergence of a Jacobin tendency, running from Chernyshevskii through Nechaev and Tkachev to *Narodnaia volia*, and ultimately to Lenin, who rejuvenated Jacobinism by infusing it with elements adapted from an all-too-suitable Marxism. Like the old autocratic state, Russian Jacobinism had no use for Western political culture and sought to achieve its social ideal by the unrestricted action of an omnipotent state. Jacobin analysis was precisely correct about the weakness of the old order during the painful transition to capitalism and constitutionalism, and the Bolshevik Party was uniquely suited to exploit the vulnerability of the state. Thus, Lenin's victory in 1917 nipped the tender shoots of genuine Westernization in the bud. The Revolution conquered the state, and the two Russian traditions (oriental despotism and the revolutionary ethos) coalesced to form the heart and backbone of the Soviet system.

Although Professor Szamuely's narrative ends with 1893, it is very contemporary, even monitory, in spirit. By its nature controversial and endlessly debatable, this book will nonetheless stand as a worthy memorial not only to the author's intellectual powers but also to his intense concern for the future of the *Western* tradition.

NATHAN SMITH
Washington College

DIE STAATSBEDINGTE GESELLSCHAFT IM MOSKAUER REICH: ZAR UND ZEMLJA IN DER ALTRUSSISCHEN HERRSCHAFTSVERFASSUNG, 1613–1689. By *Hans-Joachim Torke*. Studies in East European History, vol. 17. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974. x, 328 pp. 80 Dglds.

In his ambitious and important new book, Hans-Joachim Torke studies the interaction of government and society in seventeenth-century Russia. The focus of his work is what he calls the "*zemlia*"—the politically active elements of society which remained, to some extent, outside the sphere of state activity. Although Torke admits that the term "*zemlia*" is difficult to define sociologically, it is clear that it includes the urban population and probably also those noblemen who were not active in state service. Politically disenfranchised groups, such as the serfs, obviously played no role in the "*zemlia*."

Torke divides his study of the "*zemlia*" in the seventeenth century into chapters on elected local administrative bodies, the collective petitions of the merchants and the gentry, the *zemskii sobors*, and urban revolts. His ordering of topics is deliberate. He argues that the nonstate sectors of Russian society articulated their desires first—in the latter half of the sixteenth century—through the elected *gubnyi* and *zemskii* institutions, then, in succession, in the *zemskii sobors* during the Time of Troubles and the years immediately following this period, and finally in the collective petitions of the 1620s and 1630s. The first and greatest urban revolt broke out in 1648 largely because the government had ignored the grievances of the petitioners.

As Torke points out, the power of the tsarist government overshadowed the "*zemlia*" at the best of times. The *gubnyi* and *zemskii* elders, from the beginning, had to perform burdensome administrative tasks for the state. Thus, the difficulty of finding men to fill these offices is not surprising. Moreover, in more general terms, the position of Russian nobles and merchants was far weaker than that of their central European counterparts, because they not only had no corporate institutions or rights but, throughout the Muscovite period, they showed little awareness of a need to win recognition of their rights and privileges as an estate. When they expressed themselves at all, they made concrete demands for relief from immediate grievances. Yet, Torke argues, we must not exaggerate the weakness of the groups that made up the "*zemlia*." The very existence of the elected local officials testifies to the limits of the effective power of the central administration: the state was forced to depend on the "*zemlia*" to perform some of its essential functions. Moreover, in moments of crisis, the nonstate sectors of society could force the tsar's government to meet its demands.

Torke suggests that it was precisely the strength of the "*zemlia*" that was its undoing. In the crisis of 1648, the government rightly saw the first important signs of political cooperation between the service gentry (who were still the core