

with Russia. The reviewer might also have noticed the central importance given in the study to the elucidating of community, as opposed to diversity, a method differing strikingly from techniques employed by Soviet writers on the same subject. Among many other choices, the reviewer might have pondered upon the success or failure of the book's persistent attention to Tashkent as the focal point of recent Central Asian developments, but he did not mention it.

Instead, he became preoccupied with Mme. Carrère d'Encausse's section about political events from the fall of Tashkent onward. This concentration upon roughly 25 percent of the text also led him into several difficulties. Thus, he imagines that the book has a chronological arrangement, "historical sequence," whereas the sections are organized according to function or discipline. Similarly, because the reviewer looks at a fraction of the whole, he considers the documentation "inadequate," though the work is heavily footnoted (762 notes) and each author is a writer of experience for whom further progress in this direction would have been unwieldy and pedantic.

Attention to the footnotes shows also that Mme. Carrère d'Encausse relies a great deal upon Russian, Tajik, Uzbek, or Turkish sources, many of them original or significantly close to it, rather than leaning unduly upon secondary materials issued here or in Europe. Notwithstanding Mme. Carrère d'Encausse's laudable effort to draw upon available basic documents, the reviewer complains (page 487) that in the book "contributions to this field by . . . Western writers . . . are not mentioned." That remark confirms the other evidence suggesting that the reviewer has ignored the major remaining part of this study. Directly contrary to what he avers, in this work Geoffrey Wheeler and also his journal, *Central Asian Review*, have been cited repeatedly (pages 54, 111, 295, 297, 333), as has Richard Pierce's own writing (pages 104, 274, 281, 328), as well as the excellent research produced by Alexandre Bennigsen, Johannes Benzing, E. H. Carr, Olaf Caroe, Joseph Castagne, G. N. Curzon, Henry G. Farmer, K. Grönbech, Baymirza Hayit, W. A. Douglas Jackson, Lawrence Krader, R. A. Lewis, O. Olufsen, Alexander Park, Eugene Schuyler, R. N. Taafe, Zeki Velidi Togan, Thomas G. Winner, and many other specialists in Soviet or Central Asian affairs.

Both the review which treats a broad-gauged work as if it were simply another monograph of the traditional genre and the library card catalogue which offers but one territorial, subject approach to a multi-study obstruct advances in modern scholarly communication—each in its own way. This process of communication becomes more vital by the day to the success of all our efforts; yet the system appears so cumbersome and imperfect that either it will fall under its own weight or become quite rigid, serving principally to sustain itself. Not only can the essential business of linking researcher to resources even now be wonderfully improved in its old framework by better performance, but new departures may yet be instituted before it is too late and scholars are buried under the avalanche of books. But I am a pessimist in this regard. Inertia will soon have us talking only to ourselves, and each will then have the satisfaction of seeing a return to the exquisite delights of medieval scholasticism, a trip which I am confident some practitioners of foreign area studies will be only too happy to make.

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TO THE EDITORS:

It is always refreshing to observe a young graduate student who has just cut his critical teeth and is out to make his first "kill" in a letter to the editor. But it is not

always enlightening. I feel obliged to correct for your readers some of the distortions and misrepresentations in Mr. Cracraft's comments (*Slavic Review*, September 1967) on my review of *The Icon and the Axe* (*Slavic Review*, March 1967).

Of course, Cracraft is entitled to his opinion of the book in question and my review of it, but he misleads your readers when he offers those opinions as though they were eternal verities. For example, Cracraft alleges that the "rich factual meat" is what makes *The Icon and the Axe* a valuable work and that Billington's theories are derivative, old-fashioned, and dispensable. What is puzzling is that Cracraft smuggles these views in behind Professor Riasanovsky's name. He should not conceal the originality of his contribution. For to my knowledge no other reviewer of Billington's book would concur with that judgment, not even Riasanovsky in the passage which Cracraft quotes. On the contrary, a careful reading of Riasanovsky's review reveals that he shares some of my enthusiasm for Billington's ideas, although with reservations. Riasanovsky describes the book as "bold and opinionated," and states that "Billington's views are independent and some original," that "Billington's study has depth," etc.

As to Cracraft's contention that *The Icon and the Axe* is in his judgment a good book badly reviewed, I can only quote from a letter sent me by the author: "I am very glad that you have conducted a long overdue inventory into the general question of textbooks, and I am of course pleased that you were able to read my own so closely and accurately sort out, as relatively few have, a number of things I was trying to do." Please note that the author does refer to *The Icon and the Axe* as a textbook.

Finally, Cracraft seems to experience the greatest difficulty in accepting the printed word. First, he labors heavily over a series of quotations, all of which reflect the central thesis expressed in the title of my review, namely, that Billington's book represents a new style in surveys. Secondly, he seems to find it unthinkable that one would dare to make sweeping criticisms of existing textbooks or to propose dispensing with them altogether. Here I sense a deep seated reverence for the role of the textbook in undergraduate education. I apologize for touching a sensitive nerve, but I do mean what I say. It may seem sacrilegious to those with an incorrigibly conventional turn of mind, but I do indeed suggest that dreary textbooks be abandoned in undergraduate courses for those like Billington's which are impressionistic and written in what Cracraft chooses to call an "alarmingly flashy" style. And I think my proposals are quite consistent with many of the plans current in this country for revising undergraduate curricula in order to give more emphasis to motivation and involvement rather than remolding the undergraduate in the image of his professor. I make my proposals on the basis of nine years' experience teaching American undergraduates. Because he is apparently a product of the very different English university system, I would suppose that Cracraft is unaware of the problems of undergraduate education in the United States and therefore not qualified to comment on that subject.

On the whole, Cracraft's remarks would be better suited to a British debating club than a scholarly journal. For the burden of his argument is carried by loaded qualifiers, a flow of reckless hostility, and quotations from my review twisted out of their original context. More's the pity. For there are issues here which call for a meaningful exchange of informed opinion rather than a shrill defense of orthodoxy.

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