

one is aware of the distortion that can arise from cultural bias, hasty generalization, and simple ignorance. They often provide information about aspects of Russian life which native sources describe inadequately. Yet one wonders whether to accept their testimony unless it can be independently verified. They have engaged the particular attention of Western scholars, who in the last few years have produced a large number of reprints, new editions, and translations, some with extensive commentaries. Yet no one has undertaken to analyze travelers' accounts as a genre, to compare and classify them, and to establish standards by which they can be judged and used. How does one distinguish between good coin and bad? Are some kinds of observer or report or information more reliable than other kinds? Are there typical or recurrent categories of error, or ways of uncovering it? Are there common attitudes or interpretations? Or can one generalize at all about such matters?

Francesca Wilson's book does not pretend to such an analysis, but will perhaps serve as a preliminary step toward it. Twenty-eight travelers are individually discussed. Within the chronological limits indicated in the title, most of the great names are there: Fletcher, Olearius, Collins, Custine, Haxthausen, Wallace. Each is given an average of fewer than ten pages, which include a biographical sketch, a summary of the account, and selected passages cited or paraphrased. The emphasis is fairly stated in the introduction: "The present collection . . . is not concerned except incidentally with Russian history. The documents chosen describe the Russian scene and the Russian people: how they lived in their cities and their villages, what they ate and drank, how they built their houses, tilled their fields, worshipped at home and in their churches, bore the tyranny under which they lived, celebrated birth, marriage and death—day to day things, not high politics or international relationships. For this reason, few ambassadors' reports are included." The structure and compass of the book preclude either analysis or comparison, and all that local color becomes a bit oppressive. But reading it may stimulate interest in some of the more neglected accounts, and in the further study of the relationship between the foreign image and the Russian reality.

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ROSSIIA NA DAL'NEVOSTOCHNYKH RUBEZHAKH (VTORAIA POLOVINA XVII V.). By *Vadim A. Aleksandrov*. Moscow: "Nauka," 1969. 240 pp.

In this study Aleksandrov covers a wide range of topics relating to Russo-Sino-Mongolian relations in Trans-Baikalia and Cis-Amuria in the second half of the seventeenth century: the economic development of these regions under Russian rule, Russian trade with Central Asia and China, and the diplomatic and military activities of Russia, the Manchu Ch'ing dynasty in China, and the lords of Dzhungaria and northern Mongolia. He introduces much new material, drawing heavily from the archives of Nerchinsk, Irkutsk, and the Siberian Department. He has not used any Chinese-language accounts or Western studies.

It is the new material and often untraditional interpretation of certain developments and figures that make this book an important one in its field. The early Russian development of Trans-Baikalia and Cis-Amuria is shown to have been greater than hitherto realized, as was the role of Russian merchants in the trade with

Central Asia. The unofficial trade after the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689 turns out to have been larger than the official trade. The Dzhungars and Khalkhas played a more significant role in Sino-Russian relations than earlier writers have assigned to them; they had much to do with the course of events culminating in the settlement of 1689. Aleksandrov sees the mission of Spafarii-Milescu to Peking in 1675–76 not as a failure but as a useful effort serving to alert and inform Russian and Manchu alike concerning the intentions and determination of the other. Golovin, the Russian representative at Nerchinsk, had military authority to defend Nerchinsk and Albazin, not just plenipotentiary diplomatic power. The settlement at Nerchinsk negotiated by him had its positive side for Russia: the ambiguities of the territorial delimitation opened the way to future negotiations on the Sino-Russian boundary; and by retaining Trans-Baikalia, even though losing Cis-Amuria, the Russians checked Manchu expansion into eastern Siberia.

This able work is flawed somewhat by its *ex parte* pleading, stemming from a desire to reaffirm the Soviet Union's historical claim to the left bank of the Amur. Thus the Russian conquest of eastern Siberia is characterized as annexation and peaceful settlement, producing progressive economic development and benefits for the natives. (Would Aleksandrov so characterize the European presence in the New World?) The Manchu dynasty is presented as having no jurisdiction over Trans-Baikalia or Cis-Amuria; it only raided these regions and did not develop them. Its policy, unlike that of the Russians, was aggressive, and at Nerchinsk it carried out military blackmail. Its actions constituted aggrandizement, not the preservation of a long-standing empire. Nor does Aleksandrov appreciate the threat in the minds of the Manchus posed by the presence of the Russians on the Amur. He seems unwilling to admit that the Sino-Russian conflict grew out of a collision of *two* imperialisms, and not to have grasped the difficulties of adjusting to each other that were felt by the representatives of two different international systems—China with its tributary states and Russia as one of several equals in the European state system.

There is no bibliography or index.

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THE RUSSIAN SECRET POLICE: MUSCOVITE, IMPERIAL RUSSIAN AND SOVIET POLITICAL SECURITY OPERATIONS. By *Ronald Hingley*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970. xiii, 313 pp. \$7.50.

Oxford's distinguished Chekhov scholar here makes the most extensive of his several forays into the writing of popular history. *The Russian Secret Police* does not purport to add to research, but it represents a brisk and well-organized summation of a wide body of secondary material in Russian and other languages. Hingley writes succinctly, and his descriptions are enlivened by a gift for wry insight. Who else has noted that the pages substituted for the Beria biography in *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia* include a photograph of "two dead whales and several dead walruses on an ice flow"? The book deserves a good reception from the general reader of Russian history, for whom it was presumably intended.

The question of continuity between tsarist and Soviet Russia underlies the whole book. Almost half of it is devoted to the pre-October period, and the conclusion reconsiders the question of continuity in retrospect. Hingley sensibly notes