

and of social history. He brings together for the first time the important source criticism on the origin of serfdom by Soviet scholars of the past two decades which have so complicated the understanding of the issues that one can no longer facilely divide interpretations according to classical "juridical" or "socioeconomic" schools. Hellie's narrative is dense and occasionally repetitive, but the book is simply the best study in any language of its subject, and thus a major accomplishment.

Hellie is not so much interested whether the burden of evidence supports one or another theory on the origin of serfdom, as in explaining the interrelationship between the development of the early modern Muscovite state and its unique socio-economic and geographical environment. Contrary to Clarkson, Hellie scrupulously discusses the sparse evidence about peasant dependency in medieval Rus' to the 1580s, and his conclusions, if more limited than those of Kliuchevsky, Grekov, et al., seem to me more satisfactory. What the review misses is Hellie's appreciation that one cannot account for the growth of peasant bondage in the critical years from the 1590s to the 1650s without writing about the dynamics of early Romanov state building. And Hellie offers lessons from comparative history which, for me at least, make it quite clear that the origins, the comprehensive pattern, and the harshness of peasant bondage at that time were of a new order without precedent in the sorts of peasant dependency which one associates with medieval serfdom. It is with reference to these last two points that Hellie writes about effects of the "gunpowder revolution" in Muscovy, a lengthy digression which Clarkson inexplicably finds at once "valuable" and yet a failure in "altering the views of his [Hellie's] predecessors." Although this second half of the book is a book in itself, Hellie convincingly and with originality shows that the "revolution" decisively, but not inevitably, turned imperial decision-making and the efforts of minor service men (whom Hellie, contrary to Clarkson, takes pains not to call a "gentry") to creating the ponderous bureaucratic service state with which Muscovy emerged as a major power in Europe.

DAVID B. MILLER
Roosevelt University

PROFESSOR CLARKSON REPLIES:

Professor Miller is quite right; he does not attempt to rebut my comments. His appraisal of what Dr. Hellie has done does not seem to differ, except semantically, from mine. I wrote of Hellie's "wide reading of the extensive secondary literature, occasionally supplemented by direct reference to published source material"; Miller describes this process by writing that Hellie "is firmly in touch with the sources" and that he "brings together for the first time the important source criticism on the origin of serfdom by Soviet scholars." Perhaps Miller is thus in closer rapport with current usage of the term "sources."

It is harder to understand how he can write that "Hellie is not so much interested whether the burden of evidence supports one or another theory on the origin of serfdom"; my remarks on this score (and others) were based on passages quoted from Hellie's own book, strongly emphasized in his introduction and continued through parts 1 and 2. Nor do I see why Miller finds "inexplicable" my praise of the industry Hellie shows also in part 3, coupled with regret at its lack of originality.

Inexplicable to me is Miller's concluding remark about Hellie's nonuse of the

erroneous term “gentry” (neither Hellie nor I referred to “minor service men”); reference to the index would have given Miller a list (incomplete) of twenty-three pages on which Hellie applies this term “gentry” to the Russian lesser nobility, who were quite unlike the English gentry and bore no social or political resemblance to that specifically English category.

TO THE EDITOR:

Although I have no serious quarrel with Lauren Leighton’s enthusiastic review of *Russian Literature Triquarterly* (*Slavic Review*, September 1972, pp. 737–38), I would like to touch on a few points which Leighton seems to have overlooked, perhaps for lack of space, perhaps because one issue did not provide sufficient perspective.

The journal is entirely an individual enterprise, run by the two editors, without benefit or hindrance of institutional support. They are *free*! They even run their own press themselves. They certainly do it with extraordinary energy and flair, and they seem to have been unprecedentedly successful. They have elicited a resonant response from a readership that is expanding within the profession and extends even beyond it; and the contributions have come pouring in, from quite a number of talented people who did not before think the existing journals were for them. It is a remarkable achievement.

I cannot share Leighton’s enthusiasm for the poetry translations, though. The poems translated are of the greatest interest, and the translations often call attention to otherwise neglected poems or poets of great contemporary interest. But the overall quality of the translations is not high. If one uses as the standard “a poem that is a poem in English, as well as true in meaning to the original,” most of the poems do not hold up. The Brown-Merwin translations of Mandelstam are excellent; Kovitz is very good; George Kline and Walter Arndt certainly know what they are doing. But one must have a tin ear to admire most of the others. The literacy of many of the prose translations is also a little uncertain. More attention might well be paid, both in terms of the actual translations printed, and in terms of sponsoring some ongoing discussion and critique, to the problems involved in literary translation.

By the way, who *is* Alexander Kovitz? Leighton calls him “a rarity; an American poet who knows Russian.” His translations are good. But I haven’t been able to find a single volume of verse by anyone of that name. Has he published anywhere except *RLT*? My question suggests a need for some sort of identification of contributors, especially since a fair number are young and unknown. I know that citizens of Ardis treasure pseudonyms; but the nonpseudonymous at least should be identified.

The journal includes an account—sketchy, but useful—of the more important Soviet literary journals. There are also brief reviews of the latest books in the field, both Russian and English. The “humor” section has an occasional laugh, but tends to be a bit graduate-studentish if not sophomoric. So far only one essay (and some responses to it) has appeared in the “Moot Points” section. I did not find it very provocative, because while it clearly expressed a grievance, it did not give that grievance a sufficiently specific focus. The arguments that followed were not terribly interesting. In general, for all its energy and exuberance, the journal does not seem to have any very strong sense of direction or purpose.