

On the positive side, the book is pleasantly written, and despite its narrow focus, readers will turn to it as a convenient English-language account of the rebellion.

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DE LA RUSSIE À L'U.R.S.S.: L'HISTOIRE DE LA RUSSIE DE 1850 À NOS JOURS. By *René Girault* and *Marc Ferro*. Paris: Éditions Fernand Nathan, 1974. 222 pp. 28 F., paper.

This brief survey of Russian history from the mid-nineteenth century to the present consists of three parts. Part 1 examines Russian society on the eve of the Great Reforms, the nature of these reforms, and their immediate and long-term impact on Russian society. Part 2 reviews the main events leading to the Revolution of 1917, the Civil War, foreign intervention, and the situation that culminated in the rise of Stalin. Part 3 analyzes the results and the price the Soviet people paid for industrialization and collectivization, the various aspects of Stalin's dictatorship, and the changes in the USSR since Stalin's death.

Obviously this is not an exhaustive work, nor was it written for the specialist. It is, however, clear and informative in stating its main thesis, which argues that Russia experienced no great gloom before the October Revolution (as claimed by the critics of the tsarist regime) and, conversely, that she has enjoyed no rosy situation since the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917 (as contended by the admirers of the Soviet experiment). This theme is not new. It is, however, well argued here, and also well documented.

Although sound, the work is not without shortcomings. The most glaring is the failure to examine various aspects of foreign policy of Imperial Russia as well as of the Soviet Union. This omission is unfortunate, because it not only creates an imbalance in an otherwise well-organized work but it fails to take note of the influence foreign policy has historically exerted on domestic events and vice versa.

The volume has also several factual errors. On page 168, GPU is translated as "gosudarstvenny politichesky ouezd." It should be "gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie." Likewise, in a chart on page 169 Brezhnev is listed as having reached the topmost plateau of the party structure in 1956. Actually he became an alternate delegate to the Presidium at the Nineteenth Party Congress in October 1952. These errors are minor and should not distract the reader from a sound work.

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ALEKSANDER HERCEN. By *Wiktoria* and *René Sliwowski*. *Ludzie Żywi*, vol. 27. Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1973. 670 pp. 70 zł.

The present study is the result of the cooperative effort of an extraordinary husband and wife team, he a literary scholar and she a historian, both already well known in Poland and abroad for the high quality of their scholarly publications.

With regard to Herzen the Sliwowskis have done yeoman's service in more ways than one. Theirs is the first study of his entire life and work to appear in any

language. Furthermore, in their selection of the material—and without judicious selection this work could not have been written—the Śliwowskis have made an effort to balance and put into proper perspective the two aspects of Herzen's life, the public and the private. There are enough elements in his life to appeal to the appetite for the sensational. It is not for such readers, however, that this book was written. Herzen's personal life and indeed the tragic entanglements in the area of his family affairs are given their proper place in this study, but they are not at its center, and they are certainly not exploited from a sensational point of view.

What is at the center of this study is the personality of the man as a public figure from the time he began to write as a student at Moscow University, in 1832, to the time of his death in Paris in January 1870. The twenty-three years of his life spent in Western Europe (1847–70), years during which his publicistic and creative activity reached their greatest expansion, are thoroughly examined in parts 2, 3, and 4. We see Herzen at the front of the revolutionary demonstrations in Paris in the spring and summer of 1848, we see him at his desk in London working on his periodicals, *Poliarnaiia Zvezda* (*The Polar Star*) and *Kolokol* (*The Bell*), in constant touch with events in Russia, and we see his popularity reach its zenith between 1856 and 1862, when even the Russian government felt it impossible to ignore his writings. All this is recounted by the authors with scrupulous scholarly objectivity and without ideological bias by making use of the documents at hand. His links to the Polish émigrés are treated in detail.

Herzen's nobility of character is stressed throughout this study. He hesitated to engage in conspiratorial activity other than the dissemination of his writings in Russia; he disliked the radicals (Chernyshevsky and the *Sovremennik* group, including Nekrasov); he distrusted the aims and loathed the methods of the young extremists who began to arrive in Switzerland in considerable numbers in the 1860s, Sergei Nechaev the most notorious among them. They in turn hated him and tried their best to poison the last years of his life.

These last years were indeed tragic. His writings no longer found the same response; he no longer received as much material from Russia as before; and in a situation in which political views became polarized, his middle-of-the-road position of gradual reform ceased to be appreciated. Lack of support from his former contributors and animosity by the young embittered Herzen, whose forbearance had already been stretched to the limit by the complications of his family life.

There is not a single page in this thoroughly researched (forty pages of bibliography, detailed search in Russian and Polish archives, and perusal of hundreds of letters and other documents) and richly illustrated study (ninety-three photographs of family members and others) that does not make for absorbing reading. We see Herzen as an enormously gifted, energetic, and highly motivated figure, not an observer but an active participant as publicist and writer on the scene of public affairs in Europe. We also see him as a man whose personal idealism and human warmth quite often were exploited by others and frequently could not hold up to the general vicissitudes of life.

When death came, before he had reached the age of fifty-eight (diabetes aggravated by pneumonia), he died because he was broken physically, but to a large degree spiritually as well. One hopes that a competent scholar will soon undertake to translate this outstanding work.

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