

ADEL UND ADELSOPPOSITIONEN IM MOSKAUER STAAT. By *Hartmut Rüss*. Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des östlichen Europa, vol. 7. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1975. x, 196 pp. DM 40, paper.

In this analysis of the Muscovite service aristocracy, Rüss devotes particular attention to the relationship between the members of the upper elite and Moscow's grand princes from the late fourteenth through the mid-sixteenth century. He disagrees sharply with the school of Soviet historiography which sees Muscovite centralization as a process carried out by the grand princes with the support of the lower-ranking servitors (*dvoriane*) over the strong opposition of "reactionary" boyars and appanage princes with "feudal separatist" tendencies. Instead, Rüss contends, the relationship between the Muscovite sovereign and his high-ranking servitors was marked throughout this period by cooperation and mutual interdependence.

At the same time, Rüss argues, this small group of the upper elite retained a near monopoly of top military and administrative positions and a major share in political authority from the reign of Dmitrii Donskoi on. Thus, the Muscovite elite had neither reason nor opportunity to band together corporatively for defense of its rights. And when the decisive break with traditional politics occurred, in the form of Ivan IV's expression of his autocratic powers, the elite was totally incapable of organized resistance, lacking not only the will but also the practical and conceptual capacities required.

Although his overall conclusion that there was no significant boyar opposition to Muscovite centralization is sound, Rüss exaggerates both the influence exercised by the elite throughout the period and the restraints imposed on the sovereign's authority by custom and tradition. Even his own evidence indicates that rulers before Ivan IV had adopted policies designed to ensure control over the elite and restrict its real share in the exercise of power. Moreover, a strong argument can be made that the increasingly bitter conflicts within the elite—over status, power, and influence—contributed at least as much as, if not more than, elite cooperation to the consolidation of power in the hands of the sovereign.

Nevertheless, Rüss's monograph is a major—and provocative—contribution to the current reassessment of the position of the Muscovite service aristocracy and its role in the development of Russian absolutism, and it deserves careful consideration.

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ÖFFENTLICHE MEINUNG UND IMPERIALE POLITIK: DAS BRITISCHE RUSSLANDBILD 1815–1854. By *Hans-Jobst Krautheim*. Osteuropastudien der Hochschulen des Landes Hessen, series 1. Giessener Abhandlungen zur Agrar- und Wirtschaftsforschung des europäischen Ostens, vol. 81. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot in Kommission, 1977. 411 pp. Paper.

At the close of the Napoleonic Wars Great Britain's imperial position was well established: the defeat of France, Britain's chief rival, was confirmed at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, in a settlement essentially concerned with European matters. Nevertheless, Anglo-French imperial rivalry persisted, worldwide to some extent, but with a marked Mediterranean focus; Bismarck at one point was able to dangle before Napoleon III the bait of the Mediterranean as a French lake. At the same time, Napoleon's expedition to Egypt served to emphasize to the British the importance of the Near Eastern route to India. But Russian interest in the Near East, long focused on Constantinople, increasingly asserted itself. Moreover, Russian interest reached into central Asia, and had in it the seeds of a threat to India itself. Britain and Russia together had