
This book contains, besides the editor’s substantial introduction, twelve essays: four are new, eight previously published. It seems strange that the latter group includes two (Nikita Struve’s on August 1914 and Alexis Klimoff’s on Solzhenitsyn in English) that—excellent though they are—have already appeared in the well-known and indispensable compilation edited by Dunlop, Haugh, and Klimoff, a volume that every serious student of Solzhenitsyn must have at hand. There is perhaps more justification for including the less readily accessible articles of Conquest, Erlich, and Medvedev on The Gulag Archipelago that came out in periodicals, and those (originally published in French, here in English) of Aucouturier (“Solzhenitsyn’s Art”) and Nivat (“Solzhenitsyn’s Symbolism”), and that of Kasack (“Epic and Dramatic Structure in Solzhenitsyn’s Work”), which was published in Germany. Outstanding in this group is the brilliant elucidation by Georges Nivat of the plangent cultural-historical resonances in The First Circle and Cancer Ward: “this vision of the rupture of History and renaissance of values.”

The original contributions are by Robert Louis Jackson (“‘Matryona’s Home’: The Making of a Russian Icon”), Patricia Blake (“Solzhenitsyn and the Theme of War”), George Gibian (“How Solzhenitsyn Returned His Ticket,” on The Gulag Archipelago), and the philosopher Walter Kaufmann (“Solzhenitsyn and Autonomy”). Gibian provides some thoughtful comments on the literary qualities of Gulag; but the first of these new studies, that by Jackson, is a masterpiece of precise insight that should become a classic of Solzhenitsyn criticism. Acutely perceiving the significance of the reference to Turgenev early in “Matryona’s Home,” Jackson penetrates to the heart of this widely admired story to reveal the subtlety in its “theme of disfiguration,” where the railroad crossing is “the tragic junction between all forces in Russian life: those fated to destroy, those fated to perish and those fated to bear witness to the disaster and, perhaps, record it.... The accident is but the focal point of a tragic action which embraces all society.” Like Tolstoi and Dostoevskii at their greatest, Solzhenitsyn at his best represents a total and most rare merging of history and art, as Jackson rightly concludes.

Collections of essays are inevitably of mixed quality; here, some are very fine indeed, and most of the rest are good; but it is puzzling why so much of the limited space has been used for reprinting material easily accessible elsewhere.

Michael Futrell
The University of British Columbia


This volume of the most serious serial publication in the field of East European history is concerned with the history of pre-Petrine Russia. It includes only two studies, different in their scope and method but both innovative and important.

Ch. J. Halperin’s paper on “The Russian Land and the Russian Tsar: The Emergence of the Muscovite Ideology 1380-1408” (pp. 7-82, bibliography pp. 83-103) is an attempt to differentiate the ideological character of various literary works written during the quarter of a century after the Kulikovo battle. On the one hand, the Skazanie o Mamaevom poboischche, written under the influence of Metropolitan Kiprian, stresses the self-sacrifice of the prince, who spilled his blood for the sake of Christianity. On the other “the pagan paean of the Russian Land” (p. 19) constitutes the main idea of the Zadonschina. The Troitskaia Chronicle presents the Muscovite state as a defender of Chingissid
legitimacy and stresses that it fought a usurper. The vita of Dmitrii Donskoi also emphasizes the concept of the saintly ruler, but one who is the Tsar of the Russian Land as well. These and other minor examples illustrate the heterogeneity of Muscovite ideology, and Halperin is at his best when discussing individual works.

One does wonder, however, if that ideology has any general characteristics. Halperin is fascinated by the idea of the “translatio” of the Russian Land conception. The identification of Muscovite Russia with the Russian Land appears to have been the most important ideological feature of the period. But at the same time Halperin demonstrates that “translatio” was already present in twelfth-century Suzdal. The same is true of the other central ideological feature, the myth of the ruler. Halperin calls the Dmitrii Donskoi vita “the apex of Muscovite ideology,” embodying a “total identification of the myth of the Russian Land with the Muscovite dynasty” (p. 78). But the myth has its sources not only in Byzantine political thought: its transplantation onto Russian soil first occurred in Tver.

Thus, Halperin’s paper leads to the conclusion that the Muscovite ideology in the period immediately after the Kulikovo battle was the ideology of a state conscious of its limited strength but even more conscious that its victory was a point of departure for the identification of Moscow and Rus’. Various methods were employed to achieve this identification, and one is inclined to speculate whether the variety did not indicate some inadequacy in each.

The world of facts as seen by ordinary people is the subject of M. Welke’s study about “Russland in der deutschen Publizistik des 17. Jahrhunderts (1613-1689)” (pp. 105-276). The project was a courageous one: to look over all the German “newspapers” of the seventeenth century and systemize their information on Russia. Welke found 9478 such articles (in 177,672 pages, in 34,670 newspaper issues). His purpose was not to analyze or verify the information included in those articles, but only to show what the seventeenth-century German reader knew about Russia. Up to now, the historian’s general impressions have been formed by essentially negative special descriptions, such as those of Olearius. Welke convincingly argues that such works were written mostly by diplomats, who were rather remote from everyday life and had little contact with local society. Usually they also relied heavily on earlier works, thus reflecting the past rather than present realities. Besides, these works had a rather small circulation, and hence they influenced the reading public far less than did members of the historian’s craft.

Not so the newspapers. Up to mid-century, the mostly Protestant press stressed the possibility of Russian help in the changing fortunes of the Thirty Years War. Even Russian losses in the war with Poland in 1632-34 were presented as successes. Russia appeared to German society as a growing European power, victorious in its struggle with Poland, and the most active Christian power in the struggle with the Ottoman Empire. In mid-century, with the considerable increase of non-Russians seeking their fortune in the Russian state, there was a change in the nature of the reports published. Foreign officers and other specialists saw the autocratic tsar and his subjects in their everyday life. The German reader learned that there was no real difference between the ruler of Russia and those of other European countries. The slave society described by Herberstein and others became a society subject to tumults and uprisings, culminating in the one led by Stepan Razin. Here it must be noted that in the framework of a most convincing scheme, Welke sometimes goes a bit too far: Struys’s book on the Razin uprising certainly provides a good example of an accurate, contemporary account.

As Welke concludes, 25 percent of the German reading public were regular readers of the press. That means that at the end of the seventeenth century for the German speaking world Russia was no longer an exotic, remote and different country. We may anticipate a more profound treatment of various problems hidden until now in this specific