Dr. Huussen's contemporary concern, made totally explicit only in his very last remarks, is central government incursion upon university autonomy in the Netherlands, a development which threatens to make the universities mere extensions of the Hague bureaucracy. No doubt his previous scholarly work, which includes separate studies on central bureaucracies and on the codifications of Dutch and French law at the turn of the eighteenth century, enabled him to take a long, profound—and pessimistic—view of a corrosive process at work all over the Western world.

And if the underlying issue is omnivorous, engulfing bureaucracy, where should we turn but to the Soviet Union for a model, and what better topic than the historical roots of the Nomenklatura? So we are brought to the heart of the essay, to Russia in the eras of Catherine and Alexander, a Russia beyond the limits of the Enlightenment, where central bureaucratic power, functioning in a Kafkaesque world of unknowable law, made the operation of enlightened principles impossible. Catherine's and Alexander's modern notions shimmered in the air, nothing but fancies or phantasmagoria—the grillen of the lecture's title.

Dr. Huussen's involvement in matters Russian began early, with his research on the Codification of Dutch law. It transpires that the Great Instruction of 1767 was of considerable interest to Dutch scholars, diplomats, and jurists, the latter themselves struggling with the complicated business of producing a civil code. Dutch translations of the Instruction appeared in 1769 and 1804. In turn, Count Zavadovskii, head of the Alexandrine codification commission, earnestly wrote for advice to Professor Cras of Amsterdam, in a letter which is reproduced here as an appendix. All of this provides some piquant material from which Dr. Huussen was doubtless able to fashion some curious footnotes for his earlier work.

But through this pinhole is projected a much larger issue: the very nature of European law and society from early modern times to the present. The fulcrum of the discussion is the personal security of the individual before the law, protected from the ravages of bureaucracy by a firm bulwark of constitutional guarantees. Set against this value and standard, all efforts of Catherine and Alexander can only fail to impress.

Dr. Huussen is apparently without Russian, but his reading has ranged far in time through half a dozen languages, and a quick run through of his footnotes would repay any Catherinist or Alexandrist. Despite some monumental omissions, it is an interesting bibliography not least because it gives a glimpse of recent work done in the Netherlands, and points to the rich holdings of Russica in the Hague archives.

W. R. Augustine


In his introduction to Merchants and Entrepreneurs, Alfred Rieber likens the social history of Imperial Russia to an aerial photograph in which much remains blurred or is visible in outline form only. On the whole the analogy is apt, for image and reality are still muddled for all too many facets of daily life and labor in Imperial Russia. Yet there is some reason for supposing that the picture is fast changing, not least of which being Rieber's own penetrating examination of why the merchants did not evolve from caste to class, did not come to comprise an element of the bourgeoisie as had happened so commonly in Europe. Merchants and Entrepreneurs is an important addition to the body of literature on Russian social history which has grown so rapidly over the past half dozen years or so. True, much remains to be done. But from the special sessions at conferences to specialist conferences, from doctoral research to major scholarly works,
the basic lineaments of the social history of Imperial Russia are steadily coming into sharper focus as scholarly interest and research activity quicken.

The process of modernization in Russia was intimately bound up with the penetration of capitalism into a society which had developed under conditions of an absolute autocracy. As a result, legal and administrative barriers separating the merchants from the other estates or soslovii collapsed. Of course, it is one thing to change legal statutes; it is quite another to change established behavior patterns and social relationships. Rieber's basic thesis centers on this important point. He argues that despite the erosion of legal barriers to entering into the merchant estate, merchants and other social groups continued to be strongly influenced by the soslovii traditions. The perpetuation of such traditions combined with the inherent conservatism of the merchants, in Rieber's opinion, prevented the formation of a middle class in Russia. Social change was occurring to be sure, but the tempo of change which might eventually have seen the amalgamation of the owners of the means of production, the creators of dominant social values, and the leaders seeking political power Rieber's definition of the basic components of a middle class was overtaken by events of a grander scale.

The book is organized around three themes. The first describes the evolution of the merchants from the early eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. The emphasis in the three chapters comprising the first part of the study is on the formal relationship between the merchants and the state and on the social values which helped to create and sustain a sense of collective identity. Rieber presents a picture of a social group possessed by sufficient wealth to finance the early stage of industrialization, but possessed as well of a submissive streak which seemingly prevented them from pursuing economic or political objectives beyond the confines of soslovii self-interest. Even within the cities in which they were permanently resident and from which so many derived an income, merchants were notoriously indifferent to public welfare. After the municipal reform of 1870 provided the opportunity for greater autonomy, this reputation persisted, even if not everywhere deserved. Shunning education, disdainful of innovation, fiercely patriotic, full of chicanery, the typical merchant described by Rieber was still ready to ape the manners, if not acquire the status, of the nobility. Another important, and indeed fascinating emphasis in Rieber's enquiry is that of core-periphery contrast. The distinction is drawn between the social values, economic objectives and so on of the merchants of the core region, that is, central European Russia as typified by the Moscow merchants and the predominantly non-Russian periphery where Jews, Ukrainians, Germans, Poles, and Greeks held sway.

The core-periphery contrast is further emphasized in the second part of the study which describes the rise of the entrepreneur. Rieber uses a fairly loose definition of entrepreneur a social type engaged in large-scale private economic activity who is not simply an owner of the means of production nor simply a member of the bourgeoisie. Three so-called entrepreneurial interest groups are considered in the discussion: the Moscow, St. Petersburg, and southern. However, it is the Moscow group which figures most prominently and comes across most clearly, quite possibly because the sources available for such an enquiry are a little thicker on the ground than on the periphery. What emerges, nonetheless, is a sense of regional variation in social standing, economic interest, and technological innovation. The entrepreneur on the periphery had little regard for the typical Moscow entrepreneur who is described as still clinging to the remaining vestiges of the family firm and the patriarchal social values which underlay it. Disdainful the entrepreneur on the periphery may have been of the motives and methods of his Moscow counterpart, but the latter was not without political savvy. Catering to Great Russian nationalist sentiments in some government ministries the fiercely nationalist indeed, chauvinistic typical Moscow entrepreneur was quite capable of securing a measure of protectionist government support for his position.