characterizes the attitude of the native Jews as "one of deep ambivalence, a mixture of empathy and discomfort" (p. 175).

German-Jewish organizations were at first unsympathetic to migrating Eastern Jews and very slowly came to their defense. Prussia's expulsions of immigrant Jews in 1905-06 shattered the indifference of the liberal leaders of German Jewry. Wertheimer explains that they began to protest the government's discriminatory policies directed against the Eastern Jews as part of their program of defending the civic equality of native Jewry. Their motives were "based less on altruism than a calculated assessment of the best interests of German Jewry" (p. 173).

For some readers the evidence of German Jewry's "empathy" and "genuine concern" for the Eastern Jews in Wertheimer's account will not seem very impressive. It would be difficult, however, to dispute his contention that "in the absence of opinion polls and survey data, we simply do not know how many German Jews harbored negative views, let alone acted upon them" (p. 143). His attempt to correct commonplace generalizations about the encounter of native and immigrant Jews in Imperial Germany is most convincing in his analysis of the objective sources of social tension and the effects of the government's treatment of the Eastern Jews on this relationship.

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To us in the West one of the most puzzling social and religious phenomena in pre-revolutionary Russia is the holy fool, a simpleton, a dispenser of wisdom, sometimes prone to bizarre forms of behavior, to whom pre-revolutionary Russia seemed irrepressibly attracted. Our knowledge of these holy fools has come mainly from the writings of Dostoevskii, Leskov, Tolstoi, and, more recently, Solzhenitsyn. Ewa Thompson broadens the context within which we have traditionally viewed the holy fool: by examining them within a sociological and historical framework.

Thompson's thesis is that the Christian basis of the holy fool has been vastly overexaggerated although it should not be ignored altogether. She argues that the holy fools were much closer in nature to the Siberian, Turkic, and Finnish shamans than to any Christian models. Thompson develops her argument by first examining the characteristics of the holy fools, including their clairvoyant powers, deliberately wild manner of dressing, mental abnormalities, incomprehensible language, and frequently abusive behavior. Regardless of their hostility towards those of whom they did not approve, their disregard for cleanliness, and the fact that the vast majority of them were either imbeciles or idiot-savants, the holy fools were not only accepted but even venerated by pre-revolutionary Russian society despite sporadic attempts, first under Peter the Great and then later in the century, to incarcerate them in mental institutions.

Thompson goes on to refute the notion that Russia's holy fools were a spin off of the Byzantine ascetics, the saloi, by showing that, unlike the early saints who cultivated a lack of worldly wisdom and attempted to sublimate the personality and devote themselves to a life of service, the holy fools were aggressive and accusatory, highly visible and, in Thompson's words, "recipients of charity rather than dispensers of it." Moreover, with respect to the six holy fools who were canonized as national saints, Thompson shows that their canonization took place
in spite of rather than because they were holy fools. Most of the canonizations were motivated by political considerations.

Thompson believes that shamanism had a far more important effect on the growth of the phenomenon of the holy fool inside Russia through the prolonged contacts that took place between Russia and the shamanic Siberian, Finn, and Turkic cultures. She shows that the Russian holy fools and the shamans shared many of the same Russian characteristics. Both were perceived as possessing supernatural and clairvoyant powers. Both dressed similarly, outwardly displaying iron or other metal objects on their bodies as opposed to the early Christian monks who concealed their chains beneath their clothes. Like the shamans the holy fools pursued showmanship rather than cultivating a life of silent asceticism.

Thompson concludes her study with an analysis of the image of the holy fool in Russian literature and culture. She makes the excellent point that during the last decades of Imperial Russia the traditional holy fool such as we find in Pushkin's Boris Godunov or Tolstoi's Childhood is transformed into a rich and educated member of society who, on the one hand, represents the values of the holy fool yet conforms sufficiently to accepted social mores of the day in order not to alienate the new, more sophisticated reader. Tolstoi's Pierre Bezukhov belongs to this class of the new "stylized holy fool." Finally, the author attempts, less successfully here, to explain the behavior of the nineteenth-century intelligentsia with reference to "holy foolishness." She postulates, for example, that historically the swiftness with which Russia's leaders have been deposed and the extreme vilification that has accompanied this process can be explained with reference to the treatment of holy fools by the Russian population whose veneration of them was also accompanied by their brutal mocking of them. She also suggests that the ability of Soviets today to tolerate whatever the state doles out to them is linked as much to the tenets of holy foolishness which justified brutality of means to achieve worthwhile ends as it is to Marxist dialectic.

This book is a bold effort in that it attempts not only to explain the phenomenon of the holy fool but, as its title suggests, to understand Russia. There are moments, however, where the book reaches beyond itself in attempting to explain too many facets of Russian intellectual life with reference to the holy fools. Thompson's treatment of the holy fools' contribution to both the message and style of the revolutionary movement among the intelligentsia is a case in point. For example, she sees a parallel between the passionate engagement and the disregard for structure exhibited by both the revolutionaries and the holy fools. Although both groups may have, in fact, shared these qualities, I am not convinced that there is a line of direct influence between the two. The holy fools were, as Thompson shows, a pervasive phenomenon in pre-revolutionary Russia. That fact alone, however, does not argue for their influence among the intelligentsia, many of whom were already alienated from the religious tradition which the holy fools were supposed to represent. In other areas, as well, the facts seem to be moulded too tightly to fit the thesis. In her discussion of War and Peace, for example, the author states that "the narrative chaos of War and Peace reflects the lack of orderliness in the lives of the vast crowd of yurodyuie who served as models for the novel's major characters." It seems that Tolstoi's narrative structure can more accurately be interpreted as a reflection of the general life of the times, thrown into disarray and confusion by the Napoleonic invasions.

Thompson tackles a difficult question in attempting to sort out the influence of early shaman culture in Russia. The nature of the contacts between Russia and her shamanic neighbors was of several sorts. They consisted of the early journeys of Novgorod and Moscow merchants to Siberia, the settlement of the Tatars along the Volga, and the Slavic settlements in areas once inhabited exclusively by the Finns. Thompson argues that these prolonged cultural contacts alongside the intermarriages that went them must inevitably have produced a certain amount of