
REVIEWS

ORIGINS OF INTELLIGENCE SERVICES: THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST, PERSIA, GREECE, ROME, BYZANTIUM, THE ARAB MUSLIM EMPIRES, THE MONGOL EMPIRE, CHINA, MUSCOVY. By *Francis Dvornik*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1974. xvi, 334 pp. \$15.00.

General William J. Donovan, who died in 1959, on the basis of his own experience in World War II as director of the Office of Strategic Services, planned a collection of studies on military intelligence. Although Donovan's projected volume never came to fruition, the well-known Byzantinist and historian Francis Dvornik, based on his preliminary work as a contributor to the book, decided to go beyond his own research area, the ancient and medieval periods, to see what should be included in a study on this theme. In that manner he worked through extensive source material, partly in translation, and examined all the relevant literature.

Military intelligence—like bribery—is carried out mainly in secret. The contemporary public learns little about it, and succeeding generations seldom have the opportunity to come upon this sort of material in the archives, because much of it is soon destroyed. Under such conditions, there was little that could be revealed on this topic. Nevertheless the author undertook to survey the visible means of intelligence services, especially the postal and communications services, for which we have at least fragmentary evidence for many cultures. The book is divided into six sections, covering the areas mentioned in the subtitle.

In his study of the ancient world, the author finds that the Persians had a much better organized postal system than the Greeks, and for a long time even than the Romans. In fact, the Romans learned much from the Persians in this connection. We have more detailed information about the realm of the caliphs, whose history the author amply lays before us (with minor mistakes here and there, especially with regard to transliteration). In the caliphate the postal service (*barid*) was very well organized—again, a worthy inheritor of the Persian system. We possess handbooks for postmasters, which describe their duties thoroughly and make clear that they had to report everything worth knowing in the provinces, especially incipient uprisings. The relay stations of the state postal service permitted rapid communication to the capital and back. Still better organized—and again building on ancient traditions—was the Mongols' postal service, even if military intelligence was communicated on it only now and then. However, the far-reaching successes of the Mongols' intelligence system can be deduced from their military campaigns. The postal service of the Golden Horde was taken over by Russia, but not developed any further. The numerous Mongol and Tatar expressions in this area, beginning with the word *iamshchik* itself, testify to the dependence of the Russian postal services on the invaders from the East. The section on Russia is especially brief, and in fact offers—much like the other sections—only a description of the establishment of the postal service in addition to a general history.

The book has an index, and each section ends with a carefully assembled guide to the literature in Western languages and in Russian. The work gives us a com-

prehensive picture of communication services from ancient Persia to the beginning of modern times. We learn little about military intelligence and espionage or their practitioners: only as much as may be extracted from the sporadic references in the sources on this topic. But that is an important result and makes the writing of this book worthwhile.

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EASTWARD TO EMPIRE: EXPLORATION AND CONQUEST ON THE RUSSIAN OPEN FRONTIER, TO 1750. By *George V. Lantzeff* and *Richard A. Pierce*. Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973. x, 276 pp. \$15.50.

This book is a product of Robert J. Kerner's "frontier school," one of the few clearly identifiable schools of thought in American historiography on early Russia. Like Raymond Fisher, Lantzeff was a second-generation scholar and, despite his early death, developed his own heirs—Richard Pierce, Alton Donnelly, and John Harrison, among others. This posthumous book serves a useful function in pulling together the narrative on that restless line of the eastern frontier from the rise of Muscovy to the eighteenth century. That has been done here as well or better than anywhere else. In unadorned, spare language Lantzeff and Pierce have summarized judiciously and fully the moderately well known story of the fighting, trading, bargaining, and initial settlement of the Russians, implying a direct linkage and common (and perhaps conscious) purpose shared by Novgorodian and Suzdalian princes, and eighteenth-century explorers of Kamchatka. All this is done mainly from "published materials, both primary and secondary," used carefully and thoroughly. No other book provides such a dependable and usable account, although John Harrison's recent *Founding of the Russian Empire in Asia and America* covers much the same ground less substantially but in more vigorous prose.

Like Lantzeff, Pierce does not permit himself any extensive speculation on the causes, the dynamics, and the significance of this frontier in human terms. Not until the last short chapter is there clear reference to the "causes," and even then we are given no more than a recitation of the traditional explanations. None of these explanations (such as geographic determinism, quest for furs, and urge to the sea) is systematically examined in the preceding text and tested by the documentary evidence available. There is no description or analysis of the participants, either state or private. We learn little new of the state institutional structure in Siberia, a subject Lantzeff made such an important contribution to in his earlier monograph. Private entrepreneurs, except for the Stroganovs, barely come alive. Nor are we given any insight into what the frontier meant to the rest of Russian society, or what impact the conquest had on the subjugated peoples. These comments are not by way of criticism; the preface states unambiguously the rather limited scope of this study.

This review must end with praise for a volume worthy of the memory of Lantzeff. It will remain a highly useful capstone of the Kerner school. We must now venture out to some of these other questions.

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